

Eich cyf / Your ref:

Gofynner am / Please ask for:

Fy nghyf / My ref:

Llinell Uniongyrchol / Direct Line:

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Dyddiad / Date:

E-bost / E-mail:

28th July 2021

EDole@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

Cllr. John Davies

Chair of the ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group

(by email only: scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk)

Dear Councillor Davies,

I would like to thank you for your letter and astute comments in relation to our '*Partneriaeth*' being developed by Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Swansea. Your letter will be discussed at our next Shadow Joint Committee, and I have also asked officers to consider your views as they work on the arrangements to formally establish our collaborative arrangements for September onwards.

Below, I respond to each of the comments you note in your letter.

1. We felt strongly that the terms of the current legal agreement should be honoured by all six original members of ERW, especially in so far as winding down and redundancy costs.

I agree wholeheartedly with you, as do the members of the Joint Committee, that all original partners are liable for any costs associated with bringing ERW to a close. Respective responsibilities are clearly articulated in the Legal Agreement, and we will ensure that they are implemented.

2. There must be a very clear and robust governance and legal structure to support and guide the new partnership. We can see that work has started on this but there is still a lot of work to be done. We felt it vital that all three constituent Councils know what the parameters and ground rules are from the outset.

Since your meeting on the 28th June, there has been substantial progress in regard to the governance and legal basis of our '*Partneriaeth*'. A new Legal Agreement has been drafted and is currently being considered by each partner's Legal Officers. It is a detailed document which will ensure that the parameters and ground rules are clear from the establishment of the new regional arrangement.

3. There should be a clear Business Plan in situ ready for the start of the new partnership on 1st September.

This is being progressed by officers and will be shared with the Shadow Joint Committee early in the new school term.

Cynghorydd | Councillor - **Emlyn Dole**

Arweinydd y Cyngor

Swyddfa'r Arweinydd, Neuadd y Sir, Caerfyrddin, Sir Caerfyrddin SA31 1JP

Leader of the Council

Leader's Office, County Hall, Carmarthen, Carmarthenshire SA31 1JP



BUDDSODDWYR | INVESTORS
MEWN POBL | IN PEOPLE

Mae croeso i chi gysylltu â mi yn y Gymraeg neu'r Saesneg

You are welcome to contact me in Welsh or English

The Business Plan will build on the April-August 2021 Business Plan and will address Welsh Government expectations as well as some local priorities. The Business Plan will be reviewed on a regular basis and will be amended to reflect emerging challenges and issues.

4. We would like to see a scrutiny model similar to the current one, an informal model form part of the governance structure of the new partnership. We feel the current scrutiny model is effective, and efficient and cost effective. We would like to see a form of hybrid with informal regional scrutiny and strong local scrutiny. For this to work the functions of both will need to be clear. We would suggest that local scrutiny bodies monitor the impact of the business plan locally but that the regional scrutiny body should look at: value for money and the financial aspects of running the partnership, strategic oversight, risk management and the business plan across the region.

The role of Scrutiny will be clearly articulated in the new Legal Agreement. I have forwarded your comments to Tracey Meredith, Chief Legal Officer and Monitoring Officer Swansea Council, who is leading on this work. I agree that the current informal model has worked well and benefitted ERW. I will share the relevant draft section with you once it is completed.

5. We like to the Chair of the New Joint Committee to attend some of the regional scrutiny meetings to discuss performance of the body.

This is acceptable however it will depend on the availability of the Chair of the New Joint Committee.

6. We would like to see the Chair of the new scrutiny body invited to attend Joint Committee meetings in at least an observer capacity. This would aid and assist in improving dialogue between the Joint Committee and Scrutiny.

This is acceptable and is already incorporated in the draft Legal Agreement.

7. And finally, we would like the new regional scrutiny body's involvement in decision making to be more timely. We would like to see scrutiny involvement at an earlier stage rather than when the decision is done and dusted.

This is acceptable. I will ensure that our Business Support Officer will align meeting dates in order that reports are presented to Scrutiny prior to being considered at the Joint Committee and comments from Scrutiny are then considered prior to making decisions.

In addition, as an action from our most recent Joint Committee I was requested to clarify our position in regard to paragraph 3 of your 23rd March letter-

Clarity on funding the new model is required. How will the commissioning aspect work financially in the new model? Also, what will the likely financial burden be on those LAs who sign up compared to those who choose to commission services?

It was proposed that I would provide information on the background circumstances and stipulate what the arrangements would be going forward into the new partnership.

The **Partneriaeth** will be funded by Local Authority contributions and Welsh Government Grant Funding.

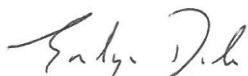
Currently ERW provides some key services to schools in both Neath Port Talbot and Ceredigion. These are predominately Welsh Government funded programmes in relation to leadership and professional development of the workforce. The funding allocated to each partner is recouped.

In regard to providing services to non-partners from the 1st of September, this will be a decision for the Joint Committee of the Partneriaeth. Currently I'm aware that Ceredigion, Neath Port Talbot and Powys are interested in securing certain services from the Partneriaeth. If the Shadow Joint Committee agree that the Partneriaeth will provide for others we will advise them of this decision.

Providing for non-partners would be a useful income stream and reduce the financial burden on partners however providing for others will not be at the detriment of the three partners. I envisage the Partneriaeth adding a 'Service-Charge' to the provision of services to non-partners which will include an element for strategic overview, workstream management and associated operational costs e.g., office costs, IT etc. If this is not acceptable to non-partners, then they will need to consider alternative arrangements for the provision of those services to their schools.

I hope that the comments above address the issues raised in your letter and I look forward to working with you in the future for the benefit of our children and young people.

Yours sincerely,



Cllr. Emlyn Dole.
Chair of ERW Joint Committee.