

CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 11.1.2022

Title: Mid Wales Education Partnership

Purpose of the report: To obtain authority for Powys and Ceredigion County Councils to work together, as the Mid Wales Education Partnership

For: For decision

**Cabinet Portfolio and
Cabinet Member:** Cllr. Catrin Miles

1. Background

Ceredigion is no longer a part of the Education in Regional Working (ERW) consortia. ERW began as an alliance of six local authorities delivering school improvement services. Ceredigion presented notice of its intention to leave ERW in March 2020, which became operational 12 months later.

Given this new landscape of regional working, it is vital that Ceredigion Local Authority works with appropriate partners to ensure that we are not insular and that we give schools the best possible opportunities. In order to work alongside the other regions and partnerships across Wales and secure the best outcomes for schools, it is necessary to commit to being a full and active contributor across the range of areas and groups in education improvement.

Ceredigion and Powys share a number of existing partnerships, specifically relating to the Mid Wales Growth Deal on economic regeneration. The Local Government and Elections Bill came to force in January 2021. Section 74 of the Act makes reference to the functions which the regulations may specify. This included the “improving education” function. However, the subsequent regulations (as issued so far) state that Corporate Joint Committees (CJC) must be established for the following functions: strategic development plan, transport and economic well-being only. The Mid Wales CJC has been established by regulations as a result. The principal Councils are Powys and Ceredigion County Councils (as well as the Brecon Beacons NPA in relation to the strategic development plan only). Therefore, education improvement is not a function which must currently be governed by the Mid Wales CJC.

Ceredigion shares many similarities and challenges with Powys, particularly those related to rurality. It is therefore natural that Ceredigion and Powys continue to work closely on the education agenda. The proposed Mid-Wales Partnership is voluntary, developing joint working in appropriate and suitable priority areas for both Local

Authorities. Detailed plans have been submitted to Welsh Government by both LAs outlining the areas of joint working.

It is proposed that the two local authorities agree priority areas, posts and officers working across the two counties of the partnership to collaborate on local and national developments.

The Mid-Wales Education Partnership established agreed ways of working in September 2021. It was agreed to function as a partnership rather than separate authorities with just one officer per workstream to jointly represent the Mid-Wales Partnership at meetings with Welsh Government and cross-regional working parties. This would ensure representation for schools in the Mid-Wales Education Partnership with the nominated officer responsible for all information sharing before and after meetings. The agreed system of briefing notes ensured all parties remained informed whilst only taking up one 'seat at the table'.

The focus of collaboration is currently on:

- ❖ Leadership development
- ❖ Support for Induction and Early Career
- ❖ Professional Learning for Teaching Assistants
- ❖ Deprivation and rural poverty
- ❖ Curriculum for Wales
- ❖ Improving pedagogy
- ❖ Research and enquiry

When permitted to collaborate, the Mid-Wales Education Partnership has relished the opportunity to engage with a range of partners including regions, other partnerships and individual local authorities to ensure equitable and quality professional learning experiences for all schools. We are currently working in collaboration on a wide range of national projects including: The National Professional Enquiry Project, the National Strategy for Educational Research and Enquiry, The National Pedagogy Project, The National Networks and The Wales Collaboratory for Learning Design. The Mid-Wales Partnership is taking an active role in these groups, co-ordinating and facilitating the work of practitioners, as well as producing and delivering professional learning on behalf of a range of stakeholders

Officers of the Mid Wales Education Partnership are full and active contributors to regional working in the following cross regional groups: The regional induction group, early career pathway development, digital professional learning, Curriculum for Wales, assessment. From the beginning of December, the Mid-Wales Partnership has been promised full access to the resources and applications for the regional leadership pathways as part of the regional consortia leadership group.

The Mid-Wales Education Partnership is able to bring additional capacity and expertise to existing cross-regional networks. There is a wealth of experience across the partnership including officers who have worked in school improvement at a local and regional level. Many of the officers in the Mid-Wales Education Partnership have worked closely with cross-regional colleagues in the past, developing resources and programmes to support professional learning. They have delivered and facilitated

the work of a wide range of groups of practitioners, undertaking rigorous evaluations of the impact of their work.

An officer from either Ceredigion or Powys represents the Partnership in national meetings. There are clear protocols and arrangements as regards to information sharing between officers of both local authorities and relevant officers have been informed of their responsibilities if they represent the partnership. Senior officers from Powys and Ceredigion meet every fortnight to further develop future joint working. This collaborative working is mirrored across a range of projects and workstreams.

The arrangement for joint working in appropriate and suitable priority areas for both Local Authorities will be governed by means of a Memorandum of Understanding to be agreed by both Authorities. A draft is presented as a Background paper below.

Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If, not, please state why

Wellbeing of Future Generations:

Summary:
Long term:
Collaboration:
Involvement:
Prevention:
Integration:

Recommendation(s):

to approve that:

1. Powys and Ceredigion continue to work together as the Mid Wales Education Partnership
2. Officers from across the Mid Wales Education Partnership will collaborate on a number of agreed local and national priorities
3. The Mid Wales Education Partnership is represented on the full range of cross-regional working parties to ensure equity of provision for schools in Powys and Ceredigion.
4. Ceredigion County Council enters into a Memorandum of Understanding with Powys County Council

Reasons for decision:

To ensure the Council is involved in regional and national discussions, in collaboration with Powys County Council

Overview and

Scrutiny:

Policy Framework:

Corporate Priorities:

Investing in People's Futures

Finance and Procurement implications: None

Legal Implications:

Staffing implications: Currently none, but, as the Partnership develops, there may be new joint posts in specific areas of educational improvement. Existing local authority staff may work in collaboration with their counterparts in Powys, which may involve working directly with both Ceredigion and Powys schools.

Property / asset implications: None

Risk(s): Risk on not being involved in regional and national discussions without collaboration with Powys

Statutory Powers: N/A

Background Papers:

Appendices: Memorandum of Understanding, Mid Wales Education Partnership

Corporate Lead Officer: Meinir Ebbsworth

Reporting Officer:

Date: 21.12.21