



ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group Notes – 3 June 2019

In attendance:

Cllr John Davies, Pembrokeshire (Chair)
 Cllr Paul Rapi, Pembrokeshire
 Cllr Lyndon Jones, Swansea
 Cllr Sonia Reynolds, Neath Port Talbot
 Cllr Rhidian Mizen, Neath Port Talbot
 Cllr Darren Price, Carmarthenshire
 Cllr Edward Thomas, Carmarthenshire
 Angela Davies, Powys
 Cllr Sandra Davies, Powys
 Cllr Endaf Edwards, Ceredigion
 Cllr Wyn Thomas, Ceredigion

Lynne Richards (Scrutiny Officer, Pembrokeshire)
 Elizabeth Patterson (Scrutiny Officer, Powys)
 Michelle Roberts (Scrutiny Officer, Swansea)
 Lisa Evans (Scrutiny Officer, Ceredigion)
 Llinos Jenkins (Scrutiny Officer, Carmarthenshire)

Invited to attend:

Geraint Rees, Interim Managing Director ERW
 Osian Evans, Executive Officer ERW

Apologies:

Cllr Mary Jones, Swansea

Item	
1.	Declarations of Interest None
2.	Notes of, Letter to and response from the Chair of the ERW Joint Committee arising from the ERW Councillor Group on 25 March 2019. Letter and notes accepted. The Councillor Group were disappointed not to have received a response to this letter from the Chair of the ERW Joint Committee. They recognised that it may have been a timing issue but would expect a more timely response. The Group were informed that the letter from the Joint Committee Chair would be circulated to the Panel shortly.
3.	Current position with ERW and presentation from Geraint Rees The Scrutiny Councillor Group thanked Geraint Rees for attending the meeting, making the presentation and answering questions.

Geraint outlined the current position and where next for ERW with a presentation. In his presentation he outlined

- What had been agreed by the Joint Committee including the purpose and structure/roles
- The current job situation
- Growing the collaboration and improving consistency across the region
- The 2019/2020 Business Plan
- Issues for the future and where ERW would like to be

The following was noted from this discussion with the Group:

- That things have moved on significantly and all six local authorities along with Headteachers from across the region have been working to move forward the reform programme. The Councillor Group were pleased that a more constructive relationship between all is developing.
- The Councillor Group heard that Neath Port Talbot Council had given one year's notice to leave ERW. Hearing that their leaving will be contingent on whether they feel the reform programme has moved forward effectively and if they believe it has, they may rescinded that notice to leave. They said they would take part fully in development of ERW over that time in order to drive improvement to where they would like it to be.
- That ERW is putting more emphasis on self-improvement, meaning a self-improving system by pooling effective intelligence and how it can be shared.
- The group were pleased to hear that some key staff appointments have been made and that a solution to filling the Heads posts have been found. Although Councillors were concerned that the Interim Managing Director will be finishing as soon as July and a replacement has yet to be identified. The Councillor Group would like this to be addressed as a matter of urgency.
- Need more 'fleetness of foot' in activities and in particular relating to Governance matters. Joint Committee only meets once a term so decisions have to wait for those meeting, slowing down activity. There are proposals to speed up the Executive Function with more delegated activity. Developing a 3:2:1 strategy, which will speed up process of some decisions. The emerging governance of ERW will develop alongside the new staffing model. Schemes of delegation need to be revised to improve speed of decision-making. Councillor Group would like more information on this at their next meeting.
- The Councillor group recognise that the reform program and the roll out of the new curriculum will require massive cultural shift for everyone. They asked if all six education authorities were fully on board with this. They were informed that each council has a different journey to take with this; but generating a critical mass to support and benchmark practice will be key.
- The meeting discussed the difficulties highlighted by the categorisation system including how the public, parents and the press perceive it as a judgement on how well the school is doing rather than its true role of a support framework.
- Currently a void in the region around leadership development, bringing on new leaders and that this needs to be addressed.
- Austerity has progressed to a serious pressure point for school leaders. Very challenging time but these needs to be offset by ERW using budget

	<p>to create good support. Need to add value to the system by offering what schools cannot do alone.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is in the system to develop the ERW culture? The Group heard that the design is key and directors are key players in this; joint training for challenge advisors, recruitment of permanent staff to the ERW structure with Headteacher's being involved in those appointments. • The link between ALN Units within Councils and their challenge advisors is very important. • An open platform to develop and share training and resources is envisaged; will be a digital platform that is adaptable and easily shared. • The administrative system to support area has not been defined yet but that is the next step. • The ERW Business Plan 2019/2020 was circulated to the Group. Joint Committee signed it off in April. It has and will in the future have far more alignments with individual LA education plans. Later in June all the actions associated with the plan will be fully costed. • Aligning grant to the business plan priorities will give more integrity to how it is shared across local authorities. Group emphasised the importance of showing how money is aligned across the region to provide confidence in the process.
<p>3.</p>	<p>Reviewing Terms of Reference The ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group amended their terms of reference as follows: From <i>'To provide critical and objective challenge to ERW'</i> to <i>'To provide critical and objective scrutiny to ERW'</i></p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Discussion on what should be contained in the letter to the Chair of the JC and items for the work programme and next meeting The following issues will be included in the letter from the ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group to the Chair of the Joint Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognise the will of ERW to change and progress. 2. Thank Geraint Rees, Interim Managing Director for his service over past year. What are the plans for filling this role? 3. Pleased Business Plan in place look forward to seeing costed actions 4. Disappointed in lack and timeliness of correspondence from Joint Committee, system needs to be agreed with Scrutiny to ensure effective and timely two-way dialogue. 5. Understanding the governance structure and the need to review scheme of delegation for decision making to ensure swifter and more responsive decisions. <p>The following items have been agreed for the next meeting:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Invite Lead Chief Executive to discuss progress with the reform programme 2. Fully costed Business Plan for 2019/20 3. Governance Structure including scheme of delegation 4. Progress with new managing director and/or meet the new MD 5. Invite two of the leads from the new structure: for Digital and Learning Systems and for Health and Wellbeing
<p>5.</p>	<p>Next Steps/Actions a) The next meeting of the Group to be arranged for September 2019.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">b) A letter to be written to the Chair of the ERW Joint Committee outlining the Scrutiny Councillor Group's views and recommendations.c) The Lead Chief Executive to be invited to the next meeting.d) The ERW Scrutiny Terms of Reference be updated based on the discussion.e) Work programme amended and relevant people invited to the next meeting based on the discussion. A draft agenda will be circulated for comment in due course.
6.	<p>Next meeting The next meeting of the ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group will take place on the 23 September 2019 (10.30am to 2.00pm) and to be hosted by Ceredigion Council.</p>