



Mr. Steve Davies  
Director of Education  
Welsh Government  
(By Email)

Dear Steve,

I refer to your letter of 7 February to Aled Evans.

Your assessment of where we are in respect of ERW is very probably accurate; but somewhat premature. You will appreciate that our first duty is to report fully to our Elected Members (not Welsh Government).

We will be doing that next month and, amongst other things, the report will fully and factually explain:

- Why we do not share your assertion that local authorities work most effectively in consortia (at least around here as currently configured). All the evidence suggests the opposite on quality, governance and financial/value for money matters and we will be spelling it out. In other words, sub-optimal outcomes for learners and confusion, frustration and inertia for leaders - a conclusion also reflecting the views of our head teachers, teaching unions and others (we have asked them at regular intervals); and
- Why your emphasis on how to deliver the National Mission is misplaced. It seems that you now regard consortia as the main (or only?) delivery vehicle for curriculum reform. But that is not what the Mission says - instead it references a "middle tier" of consortia and local authorities. Moreover, the extant National Model governing the consortia remit does

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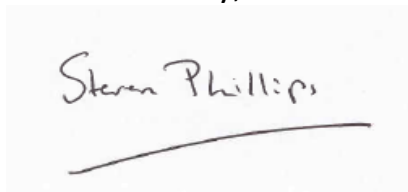
not even cover these issues in any substance because Welsh Government has repeatedly declined invitations to update it in recent years. In any event, we are very confident of putting the necessary arrangements in place – much of it is already there - and they will be covered in detail in our report. Conversely, we do not share your confidence that consortia can deliver given the series of well documented problems which we have consistently raised over a lengthy period.

I shall save the rest of the analysis for the Cabinet report (which we will share with you); but I do find it profoundly disappointing that the Welsh Government has refused to engage in any serious discussion over our concerns for a period of some three years now (notwithstanding the two meetings between your Minister and my Leader). That included a meeting between the two of us on 4 July 2017. The debate in the Joint Committee has been similarly unproductive in terms of finding solutions despite this Council giving notice to quit a year ago and being very clear as to the reasons why.

We also found it puzzling to hear that some of your Ministers were claiming to be caught unawares of all this when we gave notice a year ago. What is reported to them is a matter for you; but given the long history outlined above, I cannot see how anyone can credibly claim surprise that it has come to this.

Finally – and since you wrote - there have been significant developments this week as I'm sure you are aware. Ceredigion Council has tabled a proposal to reconfigure the ERW consortium (in part) on a Dyfed Powys footprint and the Chair of the Joint Committee resigned following the latest governance related problem which led to the cancellation of today's Joint Committee meeting.  
QED.

Yours sincerely,



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**Chief Executive**

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