



ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group

Date 10 September 2018

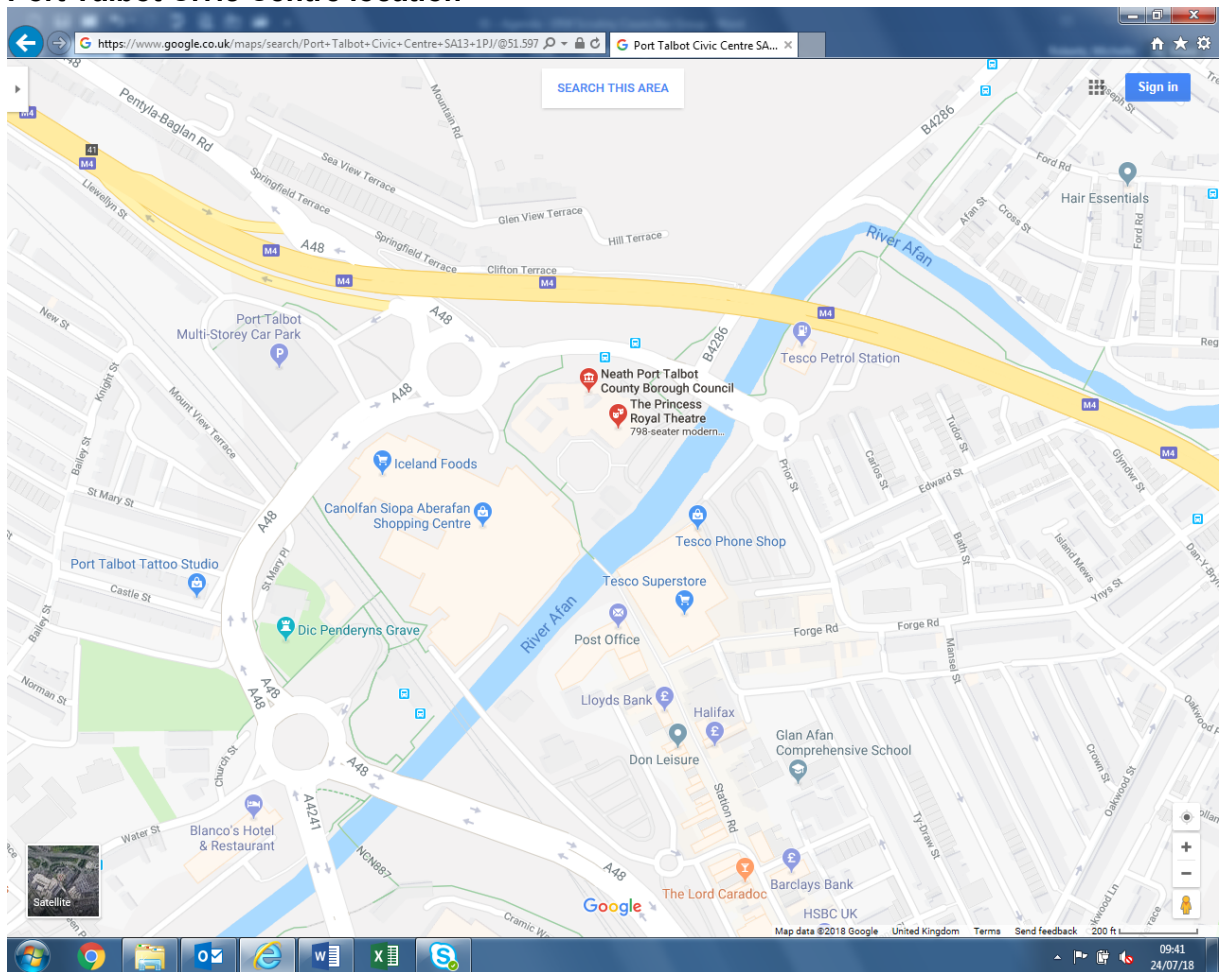
Time 10.30 am – 3.00 pm

Venue: Committee Rooms 1/2 in Port Talbot Civic Centre, Port Talbot, SA13 1PJ

Agenda

	Item	
10.30am	1	Arrival and welcome to Neath Port Talbot Welcome to Neath Port Talbot and introduction to meeting
	2	Apologies for Absence
	3	Declarations of Interest
10.35am	4	Letters, notes and other issues arising from the ERW Councillor Group on 9 March 2018 a) Notes of meeting on 9 March 2018 b) ERW Councillor Group Chairs letter to the ERW Joint Committee and the response letter c) Updated Membership List
10.45am	5	Setting the scene for regional working in education (Betsan O'Connor) a) The National Model and the National Mission b) Key issues affecting education currently (ERW specific)
11.45am	6	Updates (Betsan O'Connor) a) Minutes of the ERW Joint Committee on 21 March 18 b) Improvement Programme Board update c) Measuring Impact Report update
12.30pm		Lunch and networking
1.15pm	7	Pupil Performance at Key Stage 4 across the ERW region (Ian Altman, ERW Strategic Lead for Secondary Support) a) Presentation of data from across region (incl. breakdown of boys/girls, LAC, eFSM/non eFSM) b) How work is progressing across the region to improve the outcomes for all pupils at Key Stage 4
2.15pm	8	Verbal Work Programme Update from each local authority
2.45pm	9	Discuss points for the letter to Chair of ERW Joint Committee arising from this meeting and agree items for next ERW Councillor Group meeting in March 2019
3.00pm		Close

Port Talbot Civic Centre location



Agenda Item 4a

ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group Notes – 9 March 2018

In attendance:

Cllr Darren Price, Carmarthenshire (*Chair*)
Cllr Edward Thomas, Carmarthenshire
Cllr David Jones, Powys
Cllr Susan McNicholas, Powys
Cllr Odwyn Davies, Ceredigion
Cllr Mary Jones, Swansea
Cllr Lyndon Jones, Swansea
Cllr John Davies, Pembrokeshire
Cllr Steve Yelland, Pembrokeshire
Cllr Alex Thomas, Neath Port Talbot
Kirsty Williams, Welsh Government Cabinet Minister
Steve Davies – Director of Education at Welsh Government
Helen Charles – Private Secretary to Kirsty Williams
Angela Proctor, ERW Review and Reform Programme Manager
Ian Altman, ERW Leaders of Learning Team
Non Walters, ERW Leaders of Learning Team
Betsan O'Connor (ERW Managing Director)
Elizabeth Patterson (Scrutiny Officer, Powys)
Michelle Roberts (Scrutiny Officer, Swansea)
Selma Abdullah (Scrutiny Research, Swansea)
Lisa Evans (Scrutiny Officer, Ceredigion)
Michelle Evans Thomas (Scrutiny Officer, Carmarthenshire)
Lynne Richards (Scrutiny Officer, Pembrokeshire)

Apologies:

Cllr Mathew Crowley (NPT), Cllr Endaff Edwards (Ceredigion)

Item		Action
1.	Arrival and welcome to Carmarthenshire The Chair for the meeting was the representative from the hosting Council Carmarthenshire Councillor Darren Price. He welcomed everyone to County Hall in Carmarthen.	
2.	Declarations of Interest - None	
3.	Rural Poverty in Wales Betsan O'Connor outlined the findings a recent paper on the impacts of rural poverty on educational attainment in rural parts of Wales. The following was noted: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• That there is very little research and evaluation of the impact of poverty in rural areas.• All the matters following affect pupil's performance and life chances and directly link to school improvement.• Many schools use their Pupil Deprivation Grants to help mitigate this deficit.• There are four main themes around rural poverty, these are<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ School organisation○ Rural poverty and isolation	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Socio economic infrastructure; and ○ Aspiration ● The challenges faced around rural poverty include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recruiting and retaining teachers and leaders ○ Policy development and strategies ○ Increasing parental involvement ○ Geographic isolation ○ School to school collaboration ○ Community/small population size ○ School organisation and learning environment ○ Small School size ○ Pupil aspiration ● What is being done/what are the actions moving forward? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Commissioning decent research to review facts, gather pupil views, review policy impact and funding formulas ○ Setting up a group of key people to investigate ○ Look for positives ○ Solutions must include technology. The infrastructure is weak in these very communities ○ Solutions must feed economy and social economic infrastructure. ● Time frame for research – first stage June 2018 and second stage Sep 2018 through to April 2019. ● Transport a key issue and should be considered as part of the research. ● Importance of raising aspirations in schools by using successful community members or businesses to inspire young people was highlighted. ● What happens at home equally as important, the Group felt that parental engagement although challenging, is key. Improving involvement and engagement in their children learning. ● The use of Free School Meals as a measure was felt to be a blunt tool for assessing need. 	
2.	<p>Letters, notes and other issues arising from the previous councillor group on 29 September 2017</p> <p>The Scrutiny Group received the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Blog published after last meeting b) Notes of the meeting on 29 September c) ERW Councillor Group letter to the Joint Committee and response minute d) Letter inviting the Cabinet Secretary for Education and her response e) Updated Terms of Reference and Membership List 	
3.	<p>ERW Review and Reform Programme Update</p> <p>Angela Proctor, the Project Manager for the ERW Review and Reform Programme outlined progress made with Programme (detailed presentation available)</p> <p>In brief, the Group heard about the 'case for change' including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reasoning behind the need to change ● Progress against the original Estyn Recommendations ● Estyn December 2017 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on the preparatory stage and the values • What is a school improvement service and the characteristics of the refined school improvement service for Mid and West Wales. • Governance including the design principles • Risks of not moving ahead promptly. <p>A discussion was had about the information received in which the following is noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group were extremely concerned that progress with the reform programme has stalled and that this has resulted in a lack of movement in terms of improvements that are necessary for ERW to progress effectively. The Group will, in their letter to the JC urge members of the Joint Committee to put aside their differences and work together to reach an agreement which will best serve all pupils across our region. • They heard that currently there is not consensus across all the local authorities within ERW and within the Joint Committee on the way forward. It is understood that one local authority has concerns about the moving of direct responsibility for the education improvement aspects to a central pool, which they feel will result in a reduction of accountability and responsiveness to local needs • The majority view of the ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group is supportive of the way forward, as set out in the Review and Reform Programme, including the centralisation of the education improvement services to ERW (which will be accountable to each local authority through the Managing Director of ERW and the Joint Committee). One Local Authority Scrutiny representative did not agree with this way forward at this time. • It was felt that the Reform Programme as outlined to the Group is the best way forward for ERW. This was agreed by the majority of the Scrutiny Group after hearing about the 'case for change' for ERW and the need to move forward and address current and future challenges. They believed that the evidence for progressing down this route was clear and much of this can be seen within how the other three Consortiums in Wales are working • The Group would like to see a decision made by the Joint Committee urgently and a way forward clearly established. They would also like you to know the time frame for making a decision and also the plan then moving forward, as soon as possible. They will ask the following questions of the Joint Committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Inform us as a matter of urgency about the timeframe for making the decision to move forward with the ERW Reform Programme b) Timescales for progression of the implementation of those changes 	Further information requested in letter to JC
4.	<p>Educational Outcomes across the ERW Region</p> <p>Ian Altman and Non Walters from the ERW Leaders of Learning Team attended the meeting to provide information on the educational outcomes over the past three years. This included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data and charts detailing the educational outcomes across the 	

	<p>region for 2015, 2016 and 2017.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengths and improvement areas • Provision of effective support including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Emphasis on support ○ HWB networks ○ Strategic planning and developing a common vision ○ Mentoring and support for middle managers ○ Capacity building for core departments ○ Monthly support and challenge meeting ○ Work with Leadership Team to introduce effective tracking system ○ Developing the skills of middle leaders in leadership, self-evaluation and improvement planning ○ Developing better understanding of how to analyse data to ensure it informs good interventions ○ Developing a better understanding of what good teaching looks like ○ Developing more effective strategies for marking and feedback ○ Network meetings, non-specialist support and training ○ Lesson studies/modelling good practice • Schools causing concern and progress being made • The issues of teacher training and the shortage of teachers of Mathematics and teaching Welsh across the curriculum were discussed. The Group heard that some work had been completed with Trinity St David's to increase uptake of these subjects but they felt that more work was needed in this area. They will ask the Joint Committee <i>'what work is planned over the coming year to increase the numbers of teaching applications in the areas of Mathematics and those who can teach in Welsh across the whole curriculum'</i>. 	<p>Further information requested in letter to JC</p>
5.	<p>Cabinet Secretary for Education in Wales Kirsty Williams</p> <p>The Cabinet Secretary Kirsty Williams attended the meeting and gave her views on regional working in education and the way forward in Wales. She outlined her vision for regional working in the future and then moved on to the ERW regions specifically.</p> <p>Her view was that ERW is not where it needs to be, and is in danger of letting down the children of the region unless improvements start to be made. The Group heard that it is possible for the consortium to improve quickly and she gave the example of the GwE Consortium, which has improved at a fast pace from an originally low threshold, once a clear plan to move forward was agreed. She stated that no one wants to see this region left behind. The Cabinet Secretary stated that she had discussed this matter with the Chair of the Joint Committee, including the results of the Estyn report and the ERW self-evaluation, and was given assurances by you that action will take place. She expressed her concern that she had not been informed of any action arising as yet.</p> <p>The Group asked about how we move ahead from here. She said that the region needed to put their collective shoulders to the wheel to</p>	

	<p>drive the whole system forward. That there is nothing to fear from this change and that with it the region will only get better.</p> <p>The Group asked if a local authority can opt out of a regional consortium. They heard that this would have to be tested legally. She believed that the resources available for one local authority on its own to carry out all that is required currently and delivering a service in the future would be extremely testing given that so much more is done through the regional model. In her view she would have to consider how the children in that local authority area would be affected and she would not allow that to be detrimentally.</p> <p>The Group also asked about the next phase of regional working for the four Consortia, she stated that a national model review group is currently looking at the next steps, some of these include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Accountability – Role and status of Managing Director – Relationship between individual local authorities – Foundation Phase moving forward – Other possible roles for the consortia including for example supporting governors and governor training and Human Resources specialists – How differently parts of the country have dealt with austerity. <p>The Cabinet Secretary was also asked about proposed way forward for Elective Home Education, she said:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking to use existing powers to require local authorities to establish a database and for health to populate it. Use this as a basis to ensuring a child is in receipt of a suitable education • Working towards and committed to taking this forward but this only relates to children of statutory school age. It is a step forward. • Also plan to put a package of support available for Home Educators including access to Hwb, to learn Welsh, to examination centres and to Labs for science. 	
6.	<p>Discussion of points for letter to the Chair of the Joint Committee and next steps for the scrutiny councillor group</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That a letter detailing outcomes of this meeting be sent to the Joint Committee. 2. Some information required for the next meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measuring Impact report • Progress with Programme Board • Work Programme updates 3. The next meeting will take place in September 2018. It will be hosted by Neath Port Talbot Council. 	<p>Scrutiny Support/ Councillor Group</p> <p>Scrutiny Support</p> <p>NPT</p>

Item 4b

ERW
Y Llwyfan
College Road
Carmarthen
SA31 3EQ

16 July, 2018

To: Councillor Darren Price
Chair ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group

Dear Councillor,

The Joint Committee and I thank you for your correspondence, as we all recognize the valuable work of the ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group in contributing to the democratic accountability of ERW. Before addressing the questions raised in your letter to the Joint Committee, I would firstly like to address the timing of this response. The unfortunate short turnaround between meetings of the Joint Committee and Scrutiny Councillor Group in March meant that papers could not be prepared in sufficient time for an official Joint Committee agenda item. We have however taken the earliest possible opportunity to table this item for discussion and to formulate a response.

1. ERW Review and Reform Programme Timeframe

At the point the ERW Joint Committee received correspondence from the Scrutiny Councillor Group, no formal papers regarding the ERW Review and Reform Programme had been presented at a Joint Committee meeting. The Programme Team, which includes the ERW Directors of Education had yet to reach an agreement on the content of their papers that required Joint Committee approval, therefore it was decided they could not submit a piece of work to the Joint Committee that was not wholly agreed upon.

2. ERW Review and Reform Progression and Timescales

This matter is inherently linked to the above point – the progression and timescales for implementation of any action/task will be set following sufficient agreement at officer level, and following the necessary approval by Elected Members. However, progression of the Review and Reform is heavily linked to the updating of the New National Model, and the Joint Committee is hesitant to commit to any large scale changes that risk non-conformity to the new model for regional working.

3. Recruitment

The ERW Central Team are working with the other three regions on the #DiscoverTeaching campaign which is designed to recruit and retain teachers. We have also undertaken a programme of promotional activity nationally, and there is a comprehensive programme plan for the project.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Ellen ap Gwynn
Chair of ERW



To: **Cllr. Ellen ap Gwynn**
Chair of the ERW Joint Committee

Please ask for: **Scrutiny**

Scrutiny Office Line: **01792 637256**

e-mail: scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk

Date: **16 March 2018**

Dear Councillor ap Gwynn,

ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group – 9 March 2018

The Chairs and Vice Chairs of all six local authorities' Education Scrutiny Committees came together in Carmarthen for their bi-annual Scrutiny Councillor Group. I am writing to you with their views, conclusions and recommendations from this meeting on the 9 March 2018.

Review and Reform Programme

We are extremely concerned that progress with the reform programme has stalled and that this has resulted in a lack of movement in terms of improvements that are necessary for ERW to progress effectively. We urge members of the Joint Committee to put aside their differences and work together to reach an agreement which will best serve all pupils across our region.

We heard that currently there is not consensus across all the local authorities within ERW and within the Joint Committee on the way forward. We understand that one local authority has concerns about the moving of direct responsibility for the education improvement aspects to a central pool, which they feel will result in a reduction of accountability and responsiveness to local needs.

The majority view of the ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group is supportive of the way forward, as set out in the Review and Reform Programme, including the centralisation of the education improvement services to ERW (which will be accountable to each local authority through the Managing Director of ERW and the Joint Committee). One Local Authority Scrutiny representative did not agree with this way forward at this time. This objection was based on concerns that the proposed centralisation would put at risk the relationship of trust and knowledge between advisors and schools, make the service less responsive to local needs, and divorce management responsibility from the bodies with statutory responsibility for school standards.

It was felt by the majority that the Reform Programme as outlined to the Group is the best way forward for ERW. This was agreed after hearing about the 'case for change' for ERW and the need to move forward and address current and future challenges. We

believe that the evidence for progressing down this route was clear and much of this can be seen within how the other three Consortiums in Wales are working. We also would like to reiterate the importance of ensuring that Challenge Advisors have the knowledge, experience and training to be able to give a consistent level of support across all schools in the region.

The Cabinet Secretary Kirsty Williams attended our meeting and gave her views on regional working in education and the way forward in Wales. Her view was that ERW is not where it needs to be, and is in danger of letting down the children of the region unless improvements start to be made. We heard that it is possible for the consortium to improve quickly and she gave the example of the GwE Consortium, which has improved at a fast pace from an originally low threshold, once a clear plan to move forward was agreed. She stated that no one wants to see this region left behind. The Cabinet Secretary stated that she had discussed this matter with you, including the results of the Estyn report and the ERW self-evaluation, and was given assurances by you that action will take place. She expressed her concern that she had not been informed of any action arising as yet.

What we would like to see happen now?

We would like to see a decision made by the Joint Committee urgently and a way forward clearly established. We would like you to let us know the time frame for making a decision and also the plan then moving forward, as soon as possible.

Although the Review and Reform Programme dominated the meeting we did also look at Poverty in Rural Wales and the most recent educational outcomes across the region. From these discussions the issues of recruitment and retention of teachers, in particular Mathematics and those who teach in Welsh across the whole curriculum were highlighted. We heard that some work had taken place over recent years with Trinity St David's to increase the numbers but felt that more work is needed with local colleges and schools to increase the numbers of people who are applying for these positions.

We would welcome your views on any aspect of this letter, but would particularly ask that you respond in writing to the following matters, responding to points 1 and 2 by as soon as possible.

1. Inform us as a matter of urgency about the timeframe for making the decision to move forward with the ERW Reform Programme?
2. Timescales for progression of the implementation of those changes?
3. What work is planned over the coming year to increase the numbers of teaching applications in the areas of Mathematics and those who can teach in Welsh across the whole curriculum?

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Darren Price
Chair ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group
DaPrice@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group Scrutiny Support provided by Swansea Council
Contact: Scrutiny Team, Gloucester Room, Guildhall, Swansea SA1 4PE
☎ 01792 637256
✉ michelle.roberts@swansea.gov.uk

Item 4c

ERW Scrutiny Councillor Membership List (2018/2019)

Local Authority	Councillor/member representatives	Member email addresses	Scrutiny Officers and other support
Swansea	Cllr Mo Sykes (Convener of Schools Performance Scrutiny Panel) Cllr Mary Jones (Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee) <i>Reserve: Cllr Lyndon Jones</i>	Cllr.mo.sykes@swansea.gov.uk Cllr.mary.jones@swansea.gov.uk Cllr.lyndon.jones@swansea.gov.uk	Michelle Roberts Michelle.roberts@swansea.gov.uk Brij Madahar Brij.madahar@swansea.gov.uk
Neath Port Talbot	Cllr. Alex Thomas Cllr. Matthew Crowley Chair and Vice Chair of Education, Skills and Culture Scrutiny Committee	Cllr.a.l.thomas@npt.gov.uk Cllr.m.crowley@npt.gov.uk	Jason Davies j.j.davies@npt.gov.uk Charlotte Davies c.l.davies2@npt.gov.uk
Ceredigion	Cllr Odwyn Davies Cllr Endaf Edwards Chair and Vice Chair of Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee	odwyn.davies@ceredigion.gov.uk endaf.edwards@ceredigion.gov.uk	Lis Williams Lis.Williams@ceredigion.gov.uk Lisa Evans Lisa.Evans3@ceredigion.gov.uk
Powys	Cllr David Jones (Lead Member Education Scrutiny Group) Cllr Susan McNicholas (Member of Education Scrutiny Group)	cllr.david.jones@powys.gov.uk cllr.susan.mcnicholas@powys.gov.uk	Elizabeth Patterson Elizabeth.patterson@powys.gov.uk
Pembrokeshire	Cllr John Davies (Chair of Schools and Learning Committee) Cllr Steve Yelland (Vice Chair of Schools and Learning Committee)	Cllr.johnt.davies@pembrokeshire.gov.uk Cllr.steve.yelland@pembrokeshire.gov.uk	Lynne Richards lynne.richards@pembrokeshire.gov.uk
Carmarthenshire	Cllr Darren Price (Chair of Education and Children Scrutiny Committee) Cllr Edward Thomas (Vice Chair of Education and Children Scrutiny Committee)	DaPrice@carmarthenshire.gov.uk EGThomas@carmarthenshire.gov.uk	Michelle Evans Thomas MEEvansThomas@carmarthenshire.gov.uk
Other	ERW	Osian.evans@erw.co.uk betsan.oconnor@erw.org.uk	Osian Evans Betsan O'Connor

Item 6a

ERW Joint Committee
Wednesday, 21st March, 2018
Y Llwyfan, College Road, Carmarthen
10.30 am - 1.20 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Ellen ap Gwynn [Chair]	Ceredigion County Council
Councillor Myfanwy Alexander	Powys County Council
Councillor Jennifer Raynor	City and County of Swansea
Councillor David Simpson	Pembrokeshire County Council
Councillor Rob Stewart	City and County of Swansea
Mr Phil Roberts	Lead Chief Executive – ERW & City and County of Swansea
Mr Gareth Morgans	Carmarthenshire County Council
Mr. Eifion Evans	Ceredigion County Council
Mr Ian Westley	Pembrokeshire County Council
Ms Betsan O'Connor	Managing Director - ERW
Mr Ian Budd	Powys County Council – Lead Director
Mr Jonathan Haswell	Pembrokeshire County Council (ERW - S151 Officer)
Ms Elin Prysor	Ceredigion County Council (Monitoring Officer)
Mr Chris Llewellyn	WLGA
Mr Steve Vincent	Welsh Government
Mr Kevin Thomas	Carmarthenshire County Council (Democratic Services)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor E. Dole (Carmarthenshire County Council), Councillor Rosemarie Harris (Powys County Council), Councillor Rob Jones (Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council), Mr M. James (Carmarthenshire County Council), and Mr Steven Phillips (Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council)

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS

There were no declarations of personal interests.



3. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 1ST DECEMBER 2017.

Reference was made to the correction recorded in minute 3 i.e. “establish clear plans to secure and maintain effective communication with and engagement of Directors” Views were expressed that the minute was incorrect, and the reference to the six Directors of Education should be retained.

It was also noted that whilst engagement with Head Teachers would form part of the review process, they were not nominated as members of the review panel.

AGREED that the minutes of the meeting of the meeting held on the 1st December, 2017 be signed as a correct record subject to the first part of the resolution to Minute 3 being amended to include reference to the six Directors of Education i.e:-

- **“establish clear plans to secure and maintain effective communication with and engagement of the six Directors of Education, Head Teachers, throughout the process and secure consistent implementation of the Business Plan”**

Matters Arising from the minutes:-

1. Minute 3 – Minutes – 21st September, 2017

Reference was made to the closing comment within Minute 3 on the G.C.S.E results and clarification sought on why that report had not been included on the agenda for the meeting that day, as agreed by the Joint Committee.

The Managing Director confirmed that a copy of the results could be forwarded direct to the Joint Committee Members and an item thereon placed on the Agenda for the next meeting.

Arising from the above, Mr Gareth Morgans suggested that it may be beneficial for a report to be submitted to a future meeting of the Joint Committee on the Welsh Government’s consultation on future directions and moving to new accountability standards/measures based on the best nine GCSE Results. The Chair, expressed the view that a report should be submitted to the next meeting on level 2 performance and trends in order to ensure clarity on ERW’s future direction

AGREED:

- 1. that members of the Joint Committee be provided with a copy of the G.C.S.E results and an item thereon be on agenda for consideration at the next meeting of the Joint Committee**
- 2. that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Joint Committee on the Welsh Government’s consultations on moving to new accountability standards/measures based on the best nine GCSE results**
- 3. that a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Joint**



Committee on level 2 performance and trends

2. Minute 5 – Letter from Scrutiny

Reference was made to the letter received from the Scrutiny Councillor Group and to the Group's meeting held on the 9th March, 2018 where it received a presentation from the Programme Manager. Clarification was sought on how that presentation had been made without having first been made to the Joint Committee.

The Managing Director advised that the presentation was made at the request of the Councillor Group.

AGREED that copies of the presentation to the Scrutiny Councillor Group be circulated to the Joint Committee and that the same presentation be made to the Committee at its next meeting.

3. Minute 6 – ERW Financial Update – Quarter 2 2017-18

Reference was made to resolution 6.4 and clarification sought on whether letters had been sent to Mr Mark Drakeford A.M. and Kirsty Williams A.M. The S151 Officer advised that whilst he was not aware if the letters had been sent, a meeting had subsequently been held with the Minister where it was confirmed previous difficulties encountered with the grant processes were being addressed and new measures would be in place for the 18/19 grant awards.

A suggestion was made that in order to ensure decisions made by the Joint Committee were implemented that they be allocated to set officers to action.

AGREED that the Lead Chief Executive be requested to introduce arrangements to ensure implementation of the Joint Committee's decisions.

4. Minute 11 – Office Space

The Managing Director was asked to explain why the initial draft report stated the lease would lapse in late May, 2018 when there is in fact no lease in place? In response to a query regarding ERW's lease of office space at Y Llwyfan, the Managing Director confirmed that whilst no evidence of a lease could be found in respect of ERW's accommodation on the ground floor of the premises, on which it was paying rent, a sub-lease existed in respect of its occupation of three rooms on the first floor. She advised that as the premises had been operational for ten years, the occupation by the existing tenants was due for review and discussions in that regard were on-going with the landlord. It was confirmed that ERW's occupation of the premises was secure whilst those discussions were taking place.

The Monitoring Officer suggested that as those discussions were on-going, a report on their progress be submitted to the next meeting and that she be involved with those discussions.



The Managing Director advised that as part of those discussions, ERW had expressed Health and Safety concerns in relation to desk and other space areas and had commissioned work to be undertaken in that regard, the outcome of which could be submitted to the next meeting of the Joint Committee.

AGREED:

- 1. That an update report be presented to the next meeting of the Joint Committee on the discussions being undertaken on ERW's future occupation of Y Llwyfan and that the Monitoring Officer be involved with those discussions**
- 2. That the report to be submitted to the next meeting also include the outcome of the Health and Safety Survey.**

4. 2017-18 Q3 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT.

The Joint Committee received, for consideration, the Section 151 Officer's report on the 2017/18 Q3 Budget Monitoring.

The Section 151 Officer in presenting the report highlighted to the Joint Committee a grant award of £250k received from the Welsh Government towards the cost of ERW's Review and Reform Programme. He also referred to the work to be undertaken under that review and suggested that until such time as ERW had determined its future direction, the following two recommendations within his report be withdrawn:-

- The Joint Committee agree for ERW to seek their own insurance cover for the future,
- The Joint Committee agree to the recruitment of a Finance Manager on a fixed term contract, to be funded from Welsh Government Review and Reform Funding

In response to a question on the abovementioned Welsh Government Grant, the Managing Director confirmed it was time bound and allocated over a 13 month period and would therefore roll over into the 18/19 financial year.

Further reference was made to the review team and the confirmation detailed in minute 3 above that it should include all six Directors of Education. It was suggested that the Section 151 Officer, Monitoring Officer and a HR representative should also be in attendance at those meetings.

In response to a question relating to the late receipt of grant funding, the Joint Committee was assured the Welsh Government was aware of the position and accepted it created planning difficulties. The Welsh Government was now looking at introducing early notification of grant awards which it was hoped would result in greater flexibility and an improvement on the current position.

Reference was made to the allocation of grant funding to the six authorities by ERW and an assurance sought they were being made in accordance with the Joint Committee's previously agreed funding formula (Minute 3 of the meeting held on the 11th March, 2015 regarding the distribution of the EIG refers). It was noted that



arrangements had been made for a meeting of the Education Directors to be held that week where discussions would be held on the funding formula. If appropriate, an additional meeting of the Joint Committee could be arranged to discuss any suggested changes to the formula for allocation of the 18/19 grants. Additionally, each director could examine the grant allocations to their authority to ensure they had been made in accordance with the formula.

The Section 151 Officer was asked to confirm that he had not been asked to include any exceptional reports relating to alternative funding distribution mechanisms used. The Section 151 Officer confirmed that to his knowledge no alternative distribution mechanisms had been used.

AGREED:

- 4.1 That the ERW Financial Update Quarter 3 for 2017/18 be noted;**
- 4.2 That the changes to the ERW Central Team Revenue Budget, Grant Allocations (subject to assurance the allocations have been made in accordance with the previously agreed funding formula) and ERW reserves for 2017-18 be approved;**
- 4.3 That the risks to the region given the amount of core funding it received and the effect on the region's reserves over the medium term, with anticipated changes to the ERW structure and operations, be noted;**
- 4.4 That, for the reason outlined above, the last two recommendations detailed within the report be withdrawn;**
- 4.5 That the Section 151 Officer, Monitoring Officer and a HR Representative attend meetings of the ERW Review Team.**

5. 2018-19 BUDGET REPORT.

The Joint Committee received, for consideration, the Section 151 Officer's report on the 2018/19 Budget.

The Section 151 Officer, in presenting the report, drew the Joint Committee's attention to a letter received from the Welsh Government (circulated at the meeting) detailing the allocation of the School Improvement Grant to ERW for the period 1st March 2018 – 31st March 2019 totalling £40,971,102 which had been allocated against the 5 National Mission Priorities and incorporated within the Business Plan accordingly. Whilst that award, coupled with the Pupil Deprivation Grant of £29m equated to a total allocation of nearly £64m, the actual allocation to be received from the Welsh Government totalled £63.1m and clarification was being sought on that discrepancy. The total grant allocation was therefore in the region of £63-£64m, representing a reduction on the £71m received for 2017/18.

With regard to the £250k Local Authority Contribution towards ERW's core costs, he advised that Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council had expressed a decision to not continue with its contribution thereto for 2018/19 due to budgetary constraints and clarification would be required on that decision.

The Section 151 Officer, in concluding, referred to the four recommendations detailed therein and requested the withdrawal of recommendation (d) for the



appointment of a finance manager pending the outcome of the review being undertaken on ERW.

Concern was expressed at Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council's decision to not make its contribution to ERW's core costs for 2018/19 in the sum of £69,650 and that clarification should be obtained on that decision and on whether that Authority wished to remain a partner within ERW, having regard to requirements of the Legal Agreement establishing ERW.

In response to a question on the increased cost of Service Level Agreements, the Section 151 Officer confirmed it was attributable to ERW's previous decision that they be based on a full cost recovery basis. A suggestion was made that a full report on the SLA's be submitted to the next meeting.

Reference was made to the discussion in minute 4 above on the funding formula for the allocation of Welsh Government grant to the six authorities. A suggestion was made that a report on the methodology of its allocation for 2018-19 be submitted to the next meeting.

AGREED:

- 5.1 That the 2017-18 projected budget outturn be noted and the 2018-19 draft budget be approved,**
- 5.2 That the Section 151 Officer be authorised to make amendments to the budget, as necessary, dependent upon the decisions made to review ERW's structure**
- 5.3 That the Local Authorities pay their contribution to ERW's Core costs,**
- 5.4 That recommendation (d) be withdrawn for the reason detailed in minute 4 above,**
- 5.5 That clarification be sought from Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council on payment of its contribution towards ERW's core costs for 2018/19 and its future intentions regarding its membership of ERW, having regard to the requirements of the Legal Agreement establishing ERW,**
- 5.6 That a report on ERW's Service Level Agreements be submitted to the next meeting of the Joint Committee,**
- 5.7 The Joint Committee determine how the methodology for distribution of grants for 2018-19 is considered and approved.**

6. CATEGORISATION.

The Joint Committee received a report on the categorisation of schools within the ERW region detailing training for Challenge Advisors, moderation and quality assurance processes and the outcomes of the national process of categorisation of schools undertaken during the autumn term.

The Managing Director advised that whereas the central team traditionally became involved at the end of the qualitative assurance process, the six education directors within ERW had agreed the involvement could commence at an earlier stage. The Draft categorisation process had been undertaken in July 2017 and



completed at the end of December, 2017. She advised that whilst ERW was working with the other three education consortia within Wales on achieving consistency with moderation, it was likely changes would be introduced in the future on categorisation and self-evaluation and discussions in that regard were being undertaken nationally. However, firm proposals with regard thereto were awaited.

Mr Vincent confirmed the Welsh Government was working with Estyn on the development of a national self-evaluation framework and the introduction of a new range of performance indicators, a draft of which was proposed to be produced by September 2018 with interim performance measures being introduced during 2019. He confirmed that he would be prepared to present a report to a future meeting of the Joint Committee on feedback received on those proposals.

Reference was made to the initial purpose of categorisation being to identify levels of assistance needed by schools to secure improvements and not as a tool to identify bad schools. It was therefore important the message was conveyed to parents that schools categorised as red or amber were not failing schools, but required additional support to secure continued improvement.

References were made to the categorisation process and to those schools identified within the region as requiring support. A view was expressed that a report be presented to the Joint Committee detailing the intervention process and levels of intervention available to both ERW and the Education Authorities.

AGREED:

- 6.1 That the categorisation report be received,**
- 6.2 That a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Joint Committee detailing the intervention process and levels of intervention available to ERW and the Education Authorities.**

7. RISK REGISTER.

The Joint Committee was provided with a copy of the Risk Register which highlighted the main risks within the Corporate, Financial and School Improvement areas which enabled ERW to mitigate potential risks wherever possible.

The Managing Director advised that whilst there no changes to the register from that previously reported to the Joint Committee, it should be mindful of the probability of risks arising from ERW's Review and Reform Programme which would need to be examined and incorporated within the Risk Register, if appropriate. She reported that whilst responsibility for the central Risks lay with ERW's central team, each local authority was responsible for managing their own risks. In that regard, new processes had been introduced to achieve consistency in the manner in which the risks were recorded across each Local Authority. Training was also being provided as part of that approach.

The Managing Director was asked to confirm that the six Directors had signed off the risks identified centrally. It was confirmed this had not happened.



Reference was made to the format of the report and a view expressed on the need for the register to identify officers responsible for managing risk and detail any action plan/ time scale to address and mitigate risk. The Lead Chief Executive confirmed that he would raise the issue with appropriate officers.

AGREED that the risk register be received and approved with the exception of the central element. This is to be reviewed by the six Directors and resubmitted at the next Joint Committee.

8. BUSINESS PLAN.

The Joint Committee received for consideration the draft ERW Business Plan for the period 2018-2021 incorporating all strategic priorities that would lead the work of the regional school improvement service, was aligned with the Welsh Government's National Mission for Wales and also incorporated priorities identified by each of the six local authorities.

The Managing Director advised that further work was needed to be undertaken on the document having regard to new funding arrangements, outcomes and delivery of both local and the Welsh Government's 5 National Mission Priorities.

In response to a question on co-construction of the National Model, it was confirmed responsibility lay with the Welsh Government, which was liaising with the Lead Chief Executives and Managing Directors of the four regional consortia together with the WLGA. It was anticipated a first draft would be completed within the near future to be followed by a consultation purposes which would broadly follow the same approach adopted for the current national model.

Reference was made to the lack of detail within the business plan relating to delivery and action plans and the need to ensure those areas were identified within any revised draft prior to submission to the Joint Committee.

AGREED that the draft ERW Business Plan 2018-2021 be re-written.

9. THE REVIEW AND REFORM PROGRAMME.

The Lead Chief Executive reminded the Joint Committee of its previous decision to establish a project team to undertake a review and reform of ERW. He reported that subsequent to that decision, whilst ERW was aware of the current review being undertaken on the National Model, which could impact on the review and reform programme, the recent publication of a green paper by the Welsh Government on the reduction of the number of Welsh Local Authorities to 10 would have additional implications on that reform. However, it was noted that within the announcement, the Minister had stated existing collaborative arrangements were expected to continue.

The Lead Chief Executive also referred to a letter circulated at the meeting from Kirsty Williams A.M., Cabinet Secretary for Education requesting a progress report on ERW's plans for improving future Governance Arrangements and ensuring suitable structures were in place to enable it to respond to the Estyn Recommendations and on the preparation of action plan. He advised that a



meeting would be held with the Cabinet Secretary on the 24th April, 2018 and the Joint Committee's views were being sought prior thereto on the issues to be raised.

The Joint Committee in considering the matter, had regard to the need to demonstrate to the Cabinet Secretary progress being made on ERW's future direction, including providing examples of best practice and evidence on how it intended to improve the skills and outcomes for learners.

The Lead Chief Executive reminded the Joint Committee that it had previously agreed on the need for a meeting to be held to discuss the methodology of grant distribution for 2018-19 and suggested that, if possible, a report be presented to that meeting outlining the proposed points to be raised with the Cabinet Secretary on the 24th April.

AGREED that the update be received.

CHAIR

DATE

