



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](mailto:scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk)  
Date 22 October 2019

Dear Councillor ap Gwynn

### **ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group – 23 September 2019**

The Scrutiny Councillor Group would like to thank Kate Evan-Hughes, Andi Morgan, Yan James, Cressy Morgan and Greg Morgan for attending the meeting, for presenting the information we requested and answering our questions. I am writing to you to reflect the views from that meeting.

We were pleased to hear that ERW have been successful in recruiting into a range of key posts and that they are confident that all these appointments have met expectations. We were told that communication links have improved and there is now a clear flow of information out to schools. We were also pleased to hear that all six Local Authorities are now working together to drive improvement.

We were informed that the Governance Structure is currently out for agreement with local authorities across the region and will be submitted to the next ERW Joint Committee. Also that the scheme of delegation is evolving. We would like to see these once they are available.

We heard that the governance arrangements will include aspects like monthly managers meetings, Strategic 3-2-1 groups, Headteacher's group/s, Scrutiny and the Advisory Board. The issue was raised of how ERW might include representatives from the local business community in these arrangements. We were keen that this be considered because we must ensure that the skills we are equipping our pupils with should make the best of the employment opportunities that are evident across the region. For example, the opportunities that will arise from the City Deal and Growth Deal. We understand that experts can be appointed to the Advisory Board by the ERW Joint Committee and we would be keen to see this considered.

We were pleased to hear that the new model will afford a much higher degree of transparency in the processes of ERW as well as transparency of financial matters.

We looked at progress with the New Curriculum for Wales, hearing that six development sessions had taken place in conjunction with Welsh Government, but these did not have the turnout that was hoped. As a result ERW plan to do more sessions based across the different local authority areas and to link them much more closely with schools, to encourage and improve attendance. We were encouraged to hear that some monies have been made available for schools to help them to release staff to be able to attend the sessions. We were also keen for Governors to be able to access these and were pleased to hear that they are able to attend any if the session being arranged. We felt that Governors may need to be made aware of this.

We were pleased to hear about the progress made across the region with the New Curriculum but did feel that we must move quickly on this. We felt it is vital to ensure all schools are prepared and ready with a culture of learning developed.

We received an informative presentation on Digital Learning and Systems by the ERW Lead. We were interested to hear about this very current issue and welcomed the good work that is happening in this area. We do have some concerns and feel that these must be addressed for this aspect of the New Curriculum to be successful. These concerns include:

1. Ensuring we have a workforce that can meet these requirements and that adequate training and development is available for those staff to meet and understand the needs of this strand of the new curriculum.
2. Ensuring that we have the right infrastructure which is reliable and that we have the appropriate ICT support to maintain these systems. This also included the issue of lack of broadband connectivity in parts of the region.

We also had a useful session with the ERW Lead for Health and Wellbeing. She outlined the national context including how it fits with, for example, the Well-being and Future Generations Act, the National Mission and the Curriculum for Wales. Hearing that it will be one of the key strands of the New Curriculum and will run through all the other strands, which we welcomed. We also welcomed the work taking place to build relationships with a wide variety of organisations across Wales that will help to deliver this aspect of the curriculum.

We understand work is taking place with Teacher Training colleagues to help to incorporate this aspect of the new curriculum more fully within initial teacher training courses. We recognise that it is a significant shift for them but agreed with the ERW Lead that it is about winning hearts and minds and teacher training will be key to this.

We welcome your thoughts on any of the issues raised in our letter but would ask for a written response to the following points:

1. We recommend that you investigate the possibility of including an expert from the business community on the ERW Advisory Board.
2. We would recommend that a scheme of delegation is written that supports the new governance structure.
3. We recommend that ERW ensure Governors are made aware that they are able to attend the planned sessions on the Curriculum for Wales.

4. ERW must work with local authorities to ensure that the workforce has the necessary skills, infrastructure, connectivity and support to enable digital learning across the region.

Yours sincerely,

**Cllr Endaf Edwards**  
**Chair ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group**  
[endaf.edwards@ceredigion.gov.uk](mailto:endaf.edwards@ceredigion.gov.uk)