

(NOTE: THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO CONFIRMATION BY THE JOINT COMMITTEE AT ITS NEXT MEETING)



ERW Joint Committee
Monday, 15th July, 2019
Y Cothi, - Canolfan Halliwell Centre, University of Wales Trinity St David,
Carmarthen. SA31 3EP.
10.45 am - 12.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Ellen ap Gwynn [Chair], Ceredigion County Council

Councillor Rob Stewart	Swansea City Council
Councillor Rosemarie Harris	Powys County Council
Councillor Glynog Davies	Carmarthenshire County Council
Councillor Guy Woodham	Pembrokeshire County Council
Mr Gareth Morgans	Carmarthenshire County Council
Mr Phil Roberts	Swansea City Council
Ms Caroline Turner	Powys County Council
Mr Aled Evans	Neath Port Talbot Council
Councillor Jennifer Raynor	Swansea City Council
Mr Geraint Rees	ERW Senior Leadership Team
Mr Jonathan Haswell	Pembrokeshire County Council (ERW - S151 Officer)
Ms Elin Prysor	Ceredigion County Council (ERW - Monitoring Officer)
Mr Ian Eynon	Pembrokeshire County Council (Deputy S151 Officer)
Ms Kate Evan-Hughes	Pembrokeshire County Council (Lead Director)
Mr Matthew Holder	Pembrokeshire County Council (ERW - Audit)
Mr Ceri Davies	Pembrokeshire County Council (ERW - HR)
Ms Helen Lewis	Pembrokeshire County Council (ERW - HR)
Ms Jo Hendy	Pembrokeshire County Council (ERW – Head of Internal Audit)
Ms Helen Morgan-Rees	Swansea City Council
Ms Mary Davies	Ceredigion County Council
Mr Jeremy Saunders	Wales Audit Office
Mr Jon Mather	Wales Audit Office



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Ms Ruth Conway	Welsh Government
Ms Katie Morgan	Senior Accountant, ERW
Mrs Jessica Laimann	Carmarthenshire County Council (Democratic Services)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Emlyn Dole (Carmarthenshire County Council), Councillor Rob Jones (Neath Port Talbot Council), Councillor Myfanwy Alexander (Powys County Council), Wendy Walters (Carmarthenshire County Council), Eifion Evans (Ceredigion County Council), Steven Phillips (Neath Port Talbot Council), Ian Westley (Pembrokeshire County Council) and Chris Llewelyn (WLGA).

2. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR. CONFIRMATION OF PERMANENT LEAD CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Nominations were received for Councillor Ellen ap Gwynn as Chair and Councillor Emlyn Dole as Vice-Chair for the Joint Committee.

The Monitoring Officer advised that the Joint Committee would have to formally reinstate Mr Phil Roberts as Lead Chief Executive following his return and that the legal agreement did not specify a period in office for this role.

The Chair thanked Mr Eifion Evans for his work during Mr Robert's absence.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that

- 2.1. Councillor Ellen ap Gwynn be appointed Chair of the Joint Committee for the forthcoming two years;**
- 2.2. Councillor Emlyn Dole be appointed Vice-Chair of the Joint Committee for the forthcoming two years;**
- 2.3. Mr Phil Roberts be confirmed as Lead Chief Executive.**

3. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS

There were no declarations of personal interests made at the meeting. The Joint Committee was advised that notification of personal interest forms had been circulated at the meeting for Members to complete and return.

4. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 30 MAY 2019

AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 30th May 2019 be signed as a correct record, subject to the following amendment:

1. Apologies for Absence – Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Rob Stewart.



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Councillor Rob Stewart had been present at the meeting.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (IF ANY)

Minute Item 5 – Update on ERW Recruitment

In response to a query, the Joint Committee was advised that a workshop in relation to recruitment and the Welsh language requirement had not been held yet. The Committee asked for the workshop to be organised shortly.

6. CORRESPONDENCE

ESTYN

The Joint Committee considered two letters received from ESTYN. The first letter, dated 12th June 2019, stated that following the update on ERW's position, representatives of ESTYN would like to visit ERW and meet several representatives from the Joint Committee, ERW, the Local Authorities, the Scrutiny Group and the Headteacher board. The Committee was advised that the meetings had taken place on 24th and 25th June 2019 and ESTYN had issued a second letter in response, which was dated 28th June 2019. The letter recognised achievements regarding the new staffing structure while acknowledging that further work was underway in relation to recruitment, governance and performance management arrangements.

The Chair thanked everybody involved in the work with ESTYN for their contribution. She also thanked Mr Geraint Rees for his leadership and work in relation to the ERW reform.

ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group

The Joint Committee considered a letter from the Chair of the ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group dated 24th June 2019. The Chair of the Joint Committee advised that a response letter would be sent after today's meeting.

RESOLVED that

- 6.1. The letters from ESTYN and the ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group be noted;**
- 6.2. Arrangements be made for a response letter to be sent to the ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group.**

7. FINANCE AND AUDIT PAPERS

7.1. ERW WALES AUDIT OFFICE AUDIT PLAN FOR 2018-19

The Joint Committee considered the ERW Wales Audit Office (WAO) Plan for 2018-19, which provided an update on the work undertaken by WAO in discharging its statutory duties.

RESOLVED that



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- 7.1.1. The WAO Audit Plan for 2018-19 be approved;**
- 7.1.2. The Audit fee of £13,000 be approved;**
- 7.1.3. The timetable be agreed as detailed in the report;**
- 7.1.4. Respective responsibilities be agreed as detailed in the report.**

7.2. ERW CONSORTIUM INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2018-19

The Joint Committee considered a report detailing the findings from the internal audit review of the ERW Consortium 2018-19. The Joint Committee was advised that the report provided assurance in relation to the effectiveness of governance, internal control, risk management and financial management in place for the ERW Consortium. The report acknowledged improvements made and identified areas for further work. An action plan detailing how these areas would be addressed had been appended to the report.

RESOLVED that the Internal Audit Report 2018-19 be noted.

7.3. ERW CONSORTIUM HEAD OF INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL ASSURANCE OPINION 2018-19

The Joint Committee received a report on the Head of Internal Audit Annual Assurance Opinion 2018-19 regarding the effectiveness of ERW's governance, internal control, risk management and financial management arrangements.

The Joint Committee was advised that the report had been prepared in accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

7.4. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2018-19

The Joint Committee received a report on the findings of the annual review of governance arrangements for the ERW Consortium 2018-19. The Joint Committee was advised that the review had identified two Significant Governance Issues in relation to the review and update of ERW's Legal Agreement and the revised funding model, and six priorities for improvement.

In response to a query, the Joint Committee was advised that it was acceptable for Members to send deputies. It was suggested that a review of the Legal Agreement could explore whether Local Authority representatives other than Leaders, such as portfolio holders, should be considered as Joint Committee Members, however this would require guidance from the Welsh Government. The Committee was advised that the Welsh Government had considered Joint Committee membership in a preliminary piece of work, however, it would be better to wait until the Welsh Government White Paper on future regional working and the constitution of statutory Joint Committees was published in the autumn.

RESOLVED that the Annual Governance Statement for 2018-19 be approved.



7.5. ERW STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR 2018-19

The Joint Committee considered the ERW Statement of Accounts for 2018-19 appended with the WAO Audit of Financial Statements ISA 260. The Committee was advised that the Statement of Accounts had been published as draft on the 30th May 2019. The outstanding contribution of one Local Authority had now been received but the Statement of Accounts had not been adjusted to reflect this as the sum was not considered material. The ERW Head of Internal Audit Annual Assurance Opinion had identified no significant internal control issues which would impact upon the Statement of Accounts.

With regard to the WAO report, the Joint Committee was advised that all recommendations at the end of the report had been accepted. Outstanding documents for the completion of the audit work were listed in Paragraph 7 and Members were asked to return declarations of interest forms shortly.

RESOLVED that

7.5.1. The ERW Statement of Accounts for 2018-19 be approved;

7.5.2. The ERW Statement of Accounts for 2018-19 be signed by the Chair of the ERW Joint Committee and the ERW Section 151 Officer.

7.6. ERW FINANCIAL UPDATE 2019-20

The Joint Committee received an update on ERW's financial position for 2019-20 as at 31st May 2019. The report provided an update on the following areas:

- 2019-20 Central Team Budget
- Service Level Agreements (SLAs)
- 2019-20 Grant Allocations
- 2019-20 Grants
- RCSIG
- ERW Business Plan 2019-20 Priorities:
 - o Curriculum and Assessment
 - o Developing the Profession
 - o Leadership
 - o School Improvement
 - o Strong and Inclusive Schools
- Risks
- Reserves

The Committee was advised that there was a minor error in the report relating to the date the 2019-20 budget had been approved. The budget had been approved in principle at the Joint Committee meeting held on the 3rd April 2019. With regard to reserves, the Committee was advised that while reserves had been used in previous years there was no plan to do so in 2019-20. Work on the future funding model was ongoing.



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Several queries and comments were raised in relation to the report, including the following:

- It was suggested that there was a need to revise SLAs due to inconsistencies.
- A query was raised in relation to the risks from possible reductions in the amount of future grant funding. The Committee was advised that work on the longer-term resilience of finance and staffing arrangements was ongoing and the subject would be addressed at a workshop later this week.

RESOLVED that

7.6.1. The amendments to the Central Team Budget as detailed in the report be approved;

7.6.2. The Joint Committee, Executive Board and Section 151 Officer continue to develop the future financial and funding model for 2020-21 and beyond.

7.7. ERW FINANCE FUNCTION

The Section 151 Officer extended best wishes to Mr Ian Eynon upon his retirement and to Ms Katie Morgan who would be leaving ERW for another job. The Joint Committee thanked both for their contributions.

The Joint Committee considered whether Pembrokeshire County Council should continue to provide the ERW finance function in future years. The Committee was advised that Pembrokeshire County Council was currently implementing a new financial ledger and would need to input the details of all schools in the ERW region into the new system. This would only be cost-effective if Pembrokeshire County Council would continue to provide ERW's finance function in the future.

RESOLVED that Pembrokeshire County Council continue to provide the ERW finance function.

8. INTERIM APPOINTMENT OF MANAGING DIRECTOR

The Joint Committee considered a report on the appointment of an Interim Managing Director for ERW. The Chair advised that Mr Geraint Rees would be leaving ERW and thanked him for his contribution. The Lead Director advised that Mr Morgan had previously worked as Challenge Advisor and Head of Education across Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire and the Headteacher Board was supportive of his appointment. The secondment salary would be within the agreed salary range for the substantive post holder in the revised structure.

RESOLVED that Mr Andi Morgan be ratified as Interim Managing Director of ERW until 31st December 2019.

9. STAFFING AND STRUCTURAL FUNDING UPDATE

The Joint Committee received a report on the progress made with regard to staffing and funding arrangements for the ERW structure. Mr Geraint Rees



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advised that twelve people had been appointed to work on the new curriculum across the whole region. Appointments had been made in relation to the subjects English, Maths, Science and Humanities while Technology, Modern Languages and Expressive Art were still outstanding. Mr Rees advised that the new appointments would provide a solid base for moving ERW forward.

Several comments were made welcoming progress on the new structure. It was suggested that the Joint Committee be provided with pen portraits including background and pictures of the newly appointed staff.

RESOLVED that the report be received.

10. RISK REGISTERS

The Joint Committee considered a report on the systemic risks facing the ERW Consortium and its constituent Local Authorities. The Committee was advised that the model for assessing risks had been changed in collaboration with officers from Pembrokeshire County Council. The Committee was further advised that previous risks in relation to lack of permanent staff and the accommodation for the central team had been addressed and Central Risk 2 (Failure to comply with ESTYN Action Plan) could be reduced following correspondence from ESTYN discussed under Item 6 (Correspondence).

In response to a query on risks related to funding, Mr Rees advised that the source of Local Authority funding was responsibility of each Local Authority and each partner had to ensure the fulfilment of their respective grant conditions. It was suggested that, in light of the delays of the Comprehensive Spending Review, constituent Local Authorities in the Consortium should take steps to highlight the difficulties associated with one-year grants.

RESOLVED that the report be received.

11. ANY OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT BY REASONS OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES THE CHAIR DECIDES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY PURSUANT TO SECTION 100(4)(B) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

The Chair noted that there were no other items of business that should be considered as a matter of urgency.

CHAIR

DATE

