

ERW Joint Committee
Friday 1st December 2017
Y Llwyfan, College Road, Carmarthen
2.00 pm - 3.15 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Ellen ap Gwynn [Chair] Ceredigion County Council	
Councillor Glynog Davies	Carmarthenshire County Council
Councillor Rosemarie Harris	Powys County Council
Councillor David Lloyd	Pembrokeshire County Council
Councillor Jennifer Raynor	City and County of Swansea
Mr Mark James	Lead Chief Executive – ERW
Mr. Eifion Evans	Ceredigion County Council
Mr Ian Westley	Pembrokeshire County Council
Mr Aled Evans	Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Ms Betsan O'Connor	Managing Director - ERW
Mr Ian Eynon	Pembrokeshire County Council (ERW Deputy S151 Officer)
Ms Jo Hendy	Pembrokeshire County Council (ERW Head of Internal Audit)
Mr Chris Llewellyn	WLGA
Ms. Ruth Conway	Welsh Government
Ms Chris Sivers	City and County of Swansea
Mr Martin S. Davies	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 County Borough Council), Councillor David Simpson (Pembrokeshire County Council), Councillor Rob Stewart (City and County of Swansea), Mr. David Powell (Powys County Council), Mr Phil Roberts (City and County of Swansea), Mr. Jonathan Haswell (Pembrokeshire County Council) and Ms. Elin Prysor (Ceredigion County Council).

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS

There were no declarations of personal interests.



3. MINUTES - 21ST SEPTEMBER 2017

AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 21ST September 2017 be signed as a correct record subject to the following amendment in resolution 7.1:

- “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.
- ~~bringing together the work of evolving the region with all grants by April 2018 and other resources, including staff from September 2018;~~

With regard to minute 8 –G.C.S.E. RESULTS the Chair requested that an item be included on the agenda for the next meeting to provide an update on this matter.

4. 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. It was noted that the risk register would be reformatted to make it clearer for future meetings.

The Managing Director of ERW advised that there had been no significant changes from the previous Risk Register report. Estyn had, however published its report on ERW and the recommendations, particularly relating to its concerns about progress, would be fed into the next Risk Register report.

AGREED that the risk register be received and approved.

5. LETTER FROM SCRUTINY

The Joint Committee was informed that the Chairs and Vice Chairs of all six Local Authorities had held their bi-annual Scrutiny Councillor Group in Brecon, on 29th September, 2017 and received their conclusions and recommendations arising from the topics discussed which had included Quota of Challenge Advisors, Business Plan 2017-2020, Performance Management, the campaign to recruit teachers, Estyn and Effective Home Education. It was recognised that some of these areas were outside of the scope of ERW, however, it was beneficial for the Group to work collaboratively in sharing experiences and good practice across the region.

Councillor Ellen ap Gwynn welcomed the concerns and issues raised in the letter which were shared by the Joint Committee and being addressed insofar as they fell within its remit. The Managing Director of ERW advised that much of the membership of the Scrutiny Councillor Group had changed following the recent elections and so the meeting on the 29th September 2017 had been an opportunity to inform new members of ERW’s role.

AGREED that the letter be received and the issues raised noted.

6. ERW FINANCIAL UPDATE – QUARTER 2 2017-18

The Joint Committee had been circulated with the Financial Update Quarter 2 2017-18 which were presented by the Deputy S151 Officer for ERW. In particular



the Risks for ERW were highlighted particularly arising from the high cost of secondments and the growing expectations on ERW.

In response to a comment regarding funding from the National Network for Excellence in Science and Technology [NNEST] the Managing Director of ERW advised that she had written to all six Directors to advise them of the work which was being undertaking with this grant which she agreed to circulate to the Joint Committee. She added that the increasing workload on ERW had implications for the capacity of the central team.

The Chair commented that whilst ERW's reserves appeared to be healthy Local Authorities were not in a position to increase the budget and the seconded staff structure should be considered as part of the proposed ERW review. Concern was also expressed over the significant delays by Welsh Government in paying grants which placed additional financial pressure on ERW at a time when the local authorities were already experiencing financial difficulties. The Chair suggested that a letter should be sent to Mark Drakeford AM, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government, asking him to look seriously at making quarterly payments to ERW to ease the financial pressure. It was considered that a letter should also be sent to Kirsty Williams AM, Cabinet Secretary for Education, highlighting the impact delayed payments had on ERW's work.

AGREED

6.1 that the ERW Financial Update Quarter 2 - 2017-18 be noted;

6.2 the changes to the ERW Central Team Revenue Budget, Grant Allocations and ERW Reserves for 2017-18 be approved;

6.3 the significant risk to the region given the amount of core funding it receives and the effect on the regions reserves over the medium term be noted;

6.4 Letters be sent to Mark Drakeford AM and Kirsty Williams AM along the lines indicated above.

7. ESTYN BRIEFING

The Joint Committee had been circulated with a report which detailed Estyn's draft judgements on ERW's progress in addressing the 4 recommendations arising from the inspection of June 2016.

Members generally expressed the view that the initial judgements were disappointing but agreed to await sight of the full Estyn report before commenting further. The Chair commented that in particular the Joint Committee should have regular updates on schools causing concern [SCC] an issue on which Estyn had judged there had been limited progress.

AGREED to receive and accept the interim report pending consideration of a more detailed report at the next meeting.

8. ERW CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Further to minute 6 of the last meeting the Joint Committee had been circulated with a redrafted ERW Code of Corporate Governance which would enable the central team to influence the performance management of School Improvement staff in the six local authorities. The Code of Corporate Governance for 4 of the 6



local authorities had also been circulated which would cover the work and performance management of all School Improvement staff.

It was commented that it might be premature to consider the redrafted Code until the proposed review of ERW [see minute 9 below] had been completed and whilst two of the local authorities had yet to submit their Code of Corporate Governance.

AGREED that consideration of the redrafted Code of Corporate Governance for ERW be deferred.

9. ERW REVIEW

Further to minute 7 of the last meeting the Managing Director of ERW stated that a facilitator had been appointed to work with the Programme Team on the review. Mark James commented that a productive meeting had been held earlier in the day and a report detailing specific proposals would be placed before the Joint Committee in the New Year. He reminded members that Welsh Government was interested in the review as part of its own review of the national model. He added that whilst ERW was well aware of the issues raised by Estyn the region was still performing better than other parts of Wales.

Cllr. Jen Raynor spoke of the importance of maintaining dialogue with schools, explaining to them why the review was taking place and how much their contributions were valued.

AGREED to note progress.

10. ERW CONSORTIUM INTERNAL AUDIT WORK PROGRAMME 2017-18

The Joint Committee had been circulated with the 2017-18 Internal Audit Work Programme, which had been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

AGREED that the 2017-18 Internal Audit work programme be approved.

11. OFFICE SPACE

AGREED to defer consideration of the report on office space pending the outcome of the ERW review.

12. ERW LEAD CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND ERW LEAD DIRECTOR

Following the resignation of the Lead Director of Education and the Lead Chief Executive since the last meeting the Joint Committee considered the nominations received to fill these posts.

AGREED that

12.1 Mr. Phil Roberts, City and County of Swansea, be appointed ERW Lead Chief Executive;

12.2 Mr. Ian Budd, Powys County Council, be appointed ERW Lead Director of Education.

CHAIR

DATE

