



## ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group Notes – 28 June 2021

### **In attendance:**

Cllr John Davies, Pembrokeshire  
 Cllr Paul Rapi, Pembrokeshire  
 Cllr Lyndon Jones, Swansea  
 Cllr Peter Black, Swansea  
 Cllr Darren Price, Carmarthenshire  
 Cllr Edward Thomas, Carmarthenshire

Michelle Roberts (Scrutiny Officer supporting the meeting, Swansea)  
 Rhian Lloyd (Scrutiny Officer, Carmarthenshire)

### **Invited to attend:**

Gareth Morgans, Lead Director  
 Greg Morgan, Chief Officer ERW  
 Ian Altman, Chief Officer ERW  
 Tracey Meredith, ERW Legal Monitoring Officer

### **Apologies received:**

No Councillor apologies received.

Item	
1.	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> None
2.	<b>Notes of, Letter to and response from the Chair of the ERW Joint Committee arising from the ERW Councillor Group on 27 January 2020.</b> The letters and notes were reviewed and accepted by the Scrutiny Councillor Group.
3.	<b>Updates from Lead Director</b> Gareth Morgans (Lead Director for ERW) attended the meeting and outlined the current position with regard to changes to ERW and future plans. A presentation was provided outlining the key points, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ERW will formally come to an end on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021.</li> <li>• Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Swansea have agreed to develop a school improvement partnership which will start on 1<sup>st</sup> Sept 2021.</li> <li>• Ceredigion and Powys will work together on some aspects of school improvement.</li> <li>• The new partnership will only need to support 264 schools and 80,364</li> </ul>

	<p>learners. (57% of ERW schools and 65% of learners)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pure school improvement activity will remain with each Local Authority.</li> <li>• We will have a regional network of school improvement leads to work collaboratively, to solve problems and share effective practice.</li> <li>• In the short term the new regional partnership will predominately focus on the continuous professional development of the education workforce.</li> <li>• Improved value for money in this model is evident: services offered centrally can better support staffing at a local level.</li> <li>• The vision will be: <i>The Partnership will be planned as a regional collaborative arrangement designed to promote excellence in all of our schools by means of an effective self-improving system based on honest self-evaluation and mutual support at all levels. It should inspire excellence in teaching and learning, and support and nurture leaders to enable them to grow schools that will encourage their staff and pupils to the achieve the best outcomes as they thrive as individuals, learners, citizens and contributors</i></li> <li>• The Partnership will- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide a secure central service which can encourage excellent people to commit to it, enabling funding to be delegated purposefully and provide higher levels of funding to reach schools as our key partners.</li> <li>- Be an acknowledged hub of excellence, led by securely employed, high level specialists, who are able to provide leadership and support for local or other sub-regional groupings.</li> <li>- Be a partnership enabling the best use of intelligence about schools and the resources available to support improvement.</li> <li>- Share learning across the region to better support schools using consistent school improvement methodologies.</li> <li>- Establish a consistent regional approach to reduce duplication, ensure fairness and equity for all schools and to demonstrate value for money.</li> <li>- Have a secure and effective model of governance to underpin a more responsive and innovative regional service which supports accountabilities that are shared regionally and locally.</li> <li>- Develop a formulated regionally and agreed School Improvement strategy to be delivered locally to ensure the best possible provision of school improvement to further improve learner outcomes.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The functions, draft governance structured and branding where also covered in the presentation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>Updates from Chief Officers of ERW – Ian Altman/Greg Morgan</b> Ian Altman/Greg Morgan (Chief Officers ERW) attended the meeting and outlined the key issues using a presentation. This included</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ERW Summer Term and proposed Autumn Term delivery of services (via Business Plan) including strategy groups</li> <li>• The ERW Business Plan Evaluation 2020-21 and monitoring cycle</li> <li>• Highlighting National Leadership Focus Week.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>Scrutiny in the New Regional Education Partnership</b> Tracey Meredith, ERW's current Monitoring Officer and Head of Legal in Swansea Council attended to discuss scrutiny. She provided a presentation</p>

	<p>outlining the regional scrutiny consortium arrangements. This included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Present arrangements for ERW</li><li>• Aims of Scrutiny</li><li>• Regulators views of scrutiny</li><li>• National model for regional working</li><li>• ERW inter authority agreement</li><li>• The Councillor Group were also asked to discuss how they would like to see scrutiny carried out in the new structure, what has work well and what could be improved from experience of scrutiny of ERW and what would be considered as local and regional scrutiny.</li></ul>
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>Discussion on what should be contained in the letter to the Chair of the ERW Joint Committee</b></p> <p>Following their discussion today the Scrutiny Councillor Group agreed that the following points should be contained in the letter to the Chair of the Joint Committee.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The Councillor Group felt strongly that the terms of the current legal agreement should be honored by all six original members of ERW, especially in so far as winding down and redundancy costs</li><li>2. That there must be a very clear and robust governance and legal structure to support and guide the new partnership. They could see that work has started on this but there is still a lot of work to be done. They felt it vital that all three constituent Councils know what the parameters and ground rules are from the outset.</li><li>3. There should be a clear Business Plan in situ ready for the start of the new partnership on 1<sup>st</sup> September.</li><li>4. The Councillor Group would like to see a scrutiny model similar to the current one, an informal model form part of the governance structure of the new partnership. They felt the current scrutiny model is effective, and efficient and cost effective. They would like to see a form of hybrid with informal regional scrutiny and strong local scrutiny. For this to work the functions of both will need to be clear. The Group suggest that local scrutiny bodies monitor the impact of the business plan locally but that the regional scrutiny body should look at: value for money and the financial aspects of running the partnership, strategic oversight, risk management and the business plan across the region.</li><li>5. They like to the Chair of the New Joint Committee to attend some of the regional scrutiny meetings to discuss performance of the body.</li><li>6. We would like to see the Chair of the new scrutiny body invited to attend Joint Committee meetings in at least an observer capacity. This would aid and assist in improving dialogue between the Joint Committee and Scrutiny.</li><li>7. They would like the new regional scrutiny body's involvement in decision making to be more timely, they would like to see scrutiny involvement at an earlier stage rather than when the decision is done and dusted</li><li>8. Given the short time left before the end of the current partnership and resumption of the new they would welcome a prompt response to our letter before our membership changes.</li></ol>

Minutes of the Regional ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group (28.06.2021)  
Cont'd



To:  
**Cllr. Emlyn Dole**  
Chair of the ERW Joint Committee

Please ask for: **Scrutiny**  
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Date: **20.07.2021**

Dear Councillor Dole

### **ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group – 28 June 2021**

The Scrutiny Councillor Group would like to thank Gareth Morgans, Ian Altman, Greg Morgan and Tracey Meredith for attending our meeting, for presenting the information we requested and answering our questions. I am writing to you to reflect on our views from the meeting.

We had a detailed discussion with about current work of ERW, the early outline of the new partnership and also how scrutiny might be modelled in new governance structure.

We have detailed our thoughts, recommendations and issues as follows:

1. We felt strongly that the terms of the current legal agreement should be honored by all six original members of ERW, especially in so far as winding down and redundancy costs.
2. There must be a very clear and robust governance and legal structure to support and guide the new partnership. We can see that work has started on this but there is still a lot of work to be done. We felt it vital that all three constituent Councils know what the parameters and ground rules are from the outset.
3. There should be a clear Business Plan in situ ready for the start of the new partnership on 1<sup>st</sup> September.
4. We would like to see a scrutiny model similar to the current one, an informal model form part of the governance structure of the new partnership. We feel the current scrutiny model is effective, and efficient and cost effective. We would like to see a form of hybrid with informal regional scrutiny and strong local scrutiny. For this to work the functions of both will need to be clear. We would suggest that local scrutiny bodies monitor the impact of the business plan locally but that the regional scrutiny body should look at: value for money and the financial aspects of

running the partnership, strategic oversight, risk management and the business plan across the region.

5. We like to the Chair of the New Joint Committee to attend some of the regional scrutiny meetings to discuss performance of the body.
6. We would like to see the Chair of the new scrutiny body invited to attend Joint Committee meetings in at least an observer capacity. This would aid and assist in improving dialogue between the Joint Committee and Scrutiny.
7. And finally, we would like the new regional scrutiny body's involvement in decision making to be more timely. We would like to see scrutiny involvement at an earlier stage rather than when the decision is done and dusted.

Given the short time left before the end of the current partnership and resumption of the new we would welcome a prompt response to our letter before our membership changes.

We look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,

**Cllr John Davies**  
**Chair of the ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group**

ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group Scrutiny Support provided by Swansea Council

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