



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

Please ask for: Scrutiny

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Date: 01 November 2017

Dear Councillor ap Gwynn,

ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group – 29 September 2017

The Chairs and Vice Chairs of all six local authorities' Education Scrutiny Committees came together in Brecon for their bi-annual Scrutiny Councillor Group. I am writing to you with their views, conclusions and recommendations from the meeting on the 29 September 2017.

Quota of Challenge Advisors

The Managing Director updated us on the issue highlighted in our previous letter with regards to *what is being done by local authorities to reach their full quota of Challenge Advisors*. The Group heard that currently there are 45 full time equivalents in post of a target of 58 across the region. This gap was not in ability of ERW to close but is a challenge for individual Local Authorities to address. We heard that the formula currently used as part of the ERW agreement and how we actually manage capacity and staff across the region, needs to be looked at. We welcomed the ERW Joint Committees decision to set up a Programme Board to review and monitor capacity. The group would like an update on progress on how this is progressing at our next meeting.

Business Plan 2017-2020

The Managing Director provided us with a presentation on the latest Business Plan 2017-2020. We were pleased to hear about the new section built in that will measure impact/success. The group would like to receive updates on this section, at all future meetings, as it will form a standing item on our future Agendas.

Performance Management

We heard that there is an ongoing programme of upskilling schools in performance management and in particular the upskilling of middle managers in schools so they are in a good position to deal with under performance.

The campaign to recruit teachers

We were pleased to hear that the outcomes of this campaign so far is proving positive with twice as many applicants for the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) than there has been in previous years.

The other topics we covered during the meeting include:

Estyn

Mark Campion from Estyn attended our meeting to discuss the ERW Estyn Inspection and to update us on the new framework for schools, local authority and regional inspections. In summary, we heard that Estyn:

- will be visiting ERW in November 17 for follow up (Welsh Government had asked Estyn to inspect the four Consortia and it has been agreed ahead of that each will be follow up on 1 year after inspection). There is no further work beyond this yet planned.
- will be starting the cycle of Local Authority inspection pilots over the coming months starting with 2 Local Authorities initially. In the new cycle each LA will be inspected on a five year cycle, so ERW will be involved each year as part of an individual LA inspection.
- there is now a cycle of individual school inspections in place, under the new inspection framework, following last year's pilot.
- post 16 and 6th form will have more prominence in inspections moving forward as there had not been much focus on this aspect previously.

Elective Home Education

This issue was raised following the response to our letter from the Welsh Government Cabinet Minister for Education. We still feel that there are huge gaps in this legislation and guidance and that there needs to be a political shift to address this. We did however, recognise that it is outside the remit of ERW and therefore would encourage each local authority to make their concerns known individually to Welsh Government.

We would welcome your views on any aspect of this letter, but on this occasion, do not require a formal written response.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr David Jones
Chair ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group

ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group Scrutiny Support provided by Swansea Council

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