

ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group. 23rd September 2019

On Monday 23rd September the Vice Chair of Learning and Skills Scrutiny Angela Davies, Cllr Sandra Davies and Scrutiny Officer Liz Patterson attended a meeting of the ERW scrutiny Councillor group in Aberaeron, Ceredigion representing Powys County Council.

Attendance:

Two representatives from each Member County Councils of ERW form the Councillor Scrutiny Group (Powys, Ceredigion, Carmarthen, Pembrokeshire, Swansea & Neath Port Talbot), a Scrutiny Officer attended from each constituent authority as an observer.

Andi Morgan – New Interim Managing Director of ERW
Yan James – Assistant Managing Director ERW (2 year fixed term)
Kate Evan Hughes –(Pembroke) – Director of Education ERW

Chair: Cllr Endaf Davies, Ceredigion (the host county)

Once again the bulk of the meeting was a briefing rather than a scrutiny session.

Kate Evan Hughes discussed the ERW structure;

1. ERW Directors Board - made up of the Directors of Education from the 6 LA
2. Strategic groups – 3,2,1, format
3. SLT group
4. Operations Group
5. Scrutiny
6. Advisory group – includes head teachers, higher education representation and on suggestion of a scrutiny member they will invite industry to input.

She stated that Directors make decisions and put their suggestions forward to the strategic groups – rather than the other way around. All actions must be in line with the ERW business plan. The scheme of work must be fully transparent – ‘what has been spent, where and why?’

NPT confirmed their position remains the same – their notice to quit is still on the table and they are awaiting evidence of improvement. but they also reiterated that NPT were not prepared to accept the proposal for a 400% increase in fee discussed at the last meeting.

Andi Morgan briefed on the work to date.

- Staffing structure – the good news is that most of the posts have been filled. However, given the key roles are temporary or “Interim” there is cause for concern about the long-term direction and stability of the organisation
- New curriculum: Latest information will be shared with schools at the Head conferences, core visits etc.

Assurance was given that by the second half of term ALL schools will have a clear direction and understanding of the requirements. Yan & Andi will have visited or met with all schools.

- A tool kit for schools is to be produced for sharing good practice – promoting school to school support
- there is to be a series of road shows for school to attend – they will be EXPECTED to attend and there is a £300 grant to cover the cost of releasing a member of staff. The road shows will be aimed at school officers, governors and Councillors.
- ERW are meeting with the Key lead for Governors Wales – to see what is happening in other areas.

Osain Evans –gave a presentation - the full costings had been added to the ERW Business plan.

As this information had been received in advance it was impossible to scrutinise. Scrutiny Members requested that all agenda items be circulated in advance to give members the opportunity to read, digest and provide appropriate scrutiny.

Greg Morgan – (lead for Digital learning Systems)

The New Curriculum for Wales 2022 is now available for schools in draft form.

The new curriculum gives cross curricular responsibilities for literacy, numeracy and digital competence.

He explained that some schools are ahead of others on their understanding and implementation of the new curriculum.

Information and examples of good practice will be on the PSBA network for schools.

Cressy Morgan – (lead for Health & Wellbeing).

Had spent time researching the Public Service Board Health and Well-Being plans across the ERW region produced as a result of each areas Well-Being Assessments to determine areas of focus.

Other items discussed:

- there are to be a number of ERW “drop in sessions” across the region – an opportunity for headteachers to meet ERW staff and discuss issues.
- currently working on a protocol for the package of support – to ensure the right amount / type of support is given according to need.
- senior challenge advisors across the region are to meet regularly to ensure consistency.
- a recognition that clear communication across the region is key.

Parent Governor Representative Angela Davies (Vice-Chair)

County Councillor Sandra Davies