

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

**CABINET EXECUTIVE
19th June 2018**

REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor M Alexander, Portfolio Holder for Learning and Welsh Language

SUBJECT: Estyn Improvement Conference

REPORT FOR: Decision

1. Summary

- 1.1 On 26 April 2018 Estyn undertook a second improvement conference focused on the local authority's Education Service for children and young people. The improvement conference was part of a pilot to try out a different way of working with local authorities to secure improvements in Education Services in Wales.
- 1.2 The purpose was to review progress on the issues discussed during the initial improvement conference with the local authority on 11 January 2017. The two issues discussed during this conference were:
- the authority's plans for addressing the underperformance of secondary aged pupils, including the response to the recommendations from the initial improvement conference
 - the effectiveness of central finance support in overseeing school budgets, including the response to the recommendations from the initial improvement conference.

2. Background

- 2.1 The purpose of an improvement conference is to support a local authority to improve its Education Service; it does not replace an inspection and should be seen in the context of the broader work that Estyn's local authority link inspectors carry out with a local authority to challenge, monitor and support it.
- 2.2 An inspection of a local authority considers the full range of Education Services for children and young people. An improvement conference considers one or more aspects of these services where there is room for improvement and where Estyn may have cause for concern.
- 2.3 During the improvement conference, inspectors consider the authority's improvement plans and seek assurance that the authority:
- has clearly identified and understands the current issues

- has coherent plans to address these issues
 - has sufficient resources to implement its plans
 - has rigorous processes in place to monitor the implementation of its plans and evaluate the impact
- 2.4 The conference considers any barriers to progress and explores resolutions to these barriers, as well as any risks associated with plans. Conference outcomes are intended to be:
- improved focus of the local authority’s plans, its success measures, and realistic timescales
 - improved or additional support, where relevant, from partners and external stakeholders
- 2.5 The conference is chaired by a lead inspector from Estyn, in its capacity as an independent body. The lead inspector is supported by two other inspectors.

3. Follow Up

- 3.1 As part of the performance management cycle the Powys self-evaluation of the Education Service and improvement planning frameworks have recently been renewed. Estyn does not necessarily expect the authority to create a separate action plan following the conference. The authority should update its existing plans to reflect decisions and actions agreed at the conference.
- 3.2 Estyn may hold further conferences if it is concerned with the progress of the authority or bring forward an inspection of the authority.
- 3.3 At the April 2018 improvement conference the regulator concluded: “Estyn does not require any specific action from the local authority following this conference, other than it delivers on its revised improvement plans. Estyn’s link inspectors will continue to monitor the local authority’s progress through their usual work. Estyn will not arrange a further conference next year. As a new cycle of local government Education Service inspections is scheduled to start in September 2018, the local authority will be inspected at some point during this cycle. This inspection will not happen until at least 12 months from the date of this latest improvement conference”
- 3.4 A copy of the outcome letter is attached at Appendix A.

4. Impact Assessment

- 4.1 Is an impact assessment required? No

5. Corporate Improvement Plan

6. Local Member(s)

7. Other Front Line Services

7.1 Does the recommendation impact on other services run by the Council or on behalf of the Council? No

8. Communications

8.1 Have Communications seen a copy of this report? No

A meeting has been arranged for 11 June with John Thomas, Communication Services.

8.2 Have they made a comment? If Yes insert here.

9. Support Services (Legal, Finance, Corporate Property, HR, ICT, Business Services)

9.1 Legal : Legal : The recommendations can be supported from a legal point of view.

9.2 Finance: The Schools Finance Manager notes the contents of this report. The corporate Finance Team will continue to support the delivering of the improvement plans.

9.3 Corporate Property (if appropriate) n/a

9.4 HR (if appropriate) n/a

9.5 ICT (if appropriate) n/a

10. Scrutiny

To be completed by the report author after Scrutiny Committee on 18th June 2018

10.1 Has this report been scrutinised? Yes / No?

10.2 If Yes, what version or date of report has been scrutinised?

10.3 Please insert the comments.

10.4 What changes have been made since the date of Scrutiny and explain why Scrutiny recommendations have been accepted or rejected?

11. Statutory Officers

11.1 The Head of Financial Services (Deputy Section 151 Officer) is pleased to note the progress to date.

The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) commented as follows : “ I note the legal comments and have nothing to add to the report.”

12. Members' Interests

The Monitoring Officer is not aware of any specific interests that may arise in relation to this report. If Members have an interest they should declare it at the start of the meeting and complete the relevant notification form.

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| Recommendation: | Reason for Recommendation: |
| That Cabinet notes the content of the outcome of the Estyn Improvement Conference as set in Appendix A to the report and requires the Director of Education to update the existing improvements plans to reflect decisions and actions agreed at the conference. | As part of ongoing scrutiny and assurance. |

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| Relevant Policy (ies): | n/a | | |
| Within Policy: | n/a | Within Budget: | n/a |

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| Relevant Local Member(s): | All |
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| Person(s) To Implement Decision: | Schools Service |
| Date By When Decision To Be Implemented: | |

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| Is a review of the impact of the decision required? | N |
| If yes, date of review | |
| Person responsible for the review | |
| Date review to be presented to Portfolio Holder/ Cabinet for information or further action | |

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