

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **CABINET**

DATE: **TUESDAY, 19 MARCH 2013**

REPORT BY: **DIRECTOR OF LIFELONG LEARNING**

SUBJECT: **ESTYN MONITORING OF FLINTSHIRE COUNTY
COUNCIL**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To provide Cabinet with details of the outcome of the recent Estyn Monitoring visit on Local Authority Education Services for Children and Young People.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 Following Estyn's core inspection of education services for children and young people in October 2011, the authority was identified as requiring follow-up through Estyn monitoring. A monitoring visit took place from the 4-8 February 2013 and the full letter recording the outcomes is attached at Appendix 1.

2.02 Mererid Stone HMI led a team of five inspectors to review the progress made by the authority against the six recommendations arising from the core inspection in October 2011, consider the current performance of the authority and identify any further areas for improvement. The action plans for the recommendations have been reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis.

2.03 As part of the preparation for the monitoring visit, the Council produced an updated Self Evaluation report which was reported to Cabinet and Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee in December 2012 for input. It was also compiled with partners involved in the provision of support to children, young people and schools.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 In the letter, Estyn Assistant Director Clive Phillips wrote that the Council's administration had prioritised the need for change and improvement. He wrote that elected members and senior officers are "committed to taking difficult decisions to improve provision and make effective use of resources" and that members "understand well the priorities for improvement in the Council and support officers in addressing the recommendations from the previous inspection."

- 3.02 The monitoring visit also found that the Council “has improved its arrangements to support and challenge schools.” Estyn noted that the authority had worked well to develop and adopt projects aimed at reducing surplus places and to reduce school balances and deficits.
- 3.03 Estyn also commended the Council for its progress on developing a revised funding formula for schools, reducing school exclusions, improving school attendance and developing work with young people with additional learning needs who were at risk of needing “Out of County” school placements.
- 3.04 Estyn concluded that the local authority has made good progress towards addressing the recommendations in the inspection report since publication. They therefore conclude that the Authority should be removed from Estyn monitoring.
- 3.05 The Directorate Plan and Corporate Planning for 2013-14 will be the key focus for:
- simplification of performance planning arrangements; and
 - continuing to support school improvement.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.01 Cabinet receives the Estyn monitoring visit letter and considers the conclusions about the Local Authority’s progress against the recommendations.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.01 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

- 5.02 There are no anti-poverty implications arising directly from this report. Anti-poverty strategies are incorporated in the Council’s School Improvement Strategy and the Children and Young People’s Plan.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 7.01 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.01 The Monitoring Visit letter should comply with the Council’s equalities requirements.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 There are no personnel implications arising directly from this report.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 Strategies for continuing school improvement will be incorporated into the Directorate Plan. There will be no separate action planning following the monitoring visit.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 Not applicable.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 1. Monitoring Letter from Estyn

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

1. Quarterly Monitoring Report on Progress of Implementation of the Estyn Action Plan – Cabinet February 2013 Report
2. FCC Response to Estyn Letter

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