

EDUCATION & YOUTH OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday, 7 November 2019
Report Subject	Estyn Post Inspection Action Plan
Cabinet Member	Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for Education
Report Author	Chief Officer (Education & Youth)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The education services of Flintshire County Council have recently been subject to a full inspection by Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales under the national framework for the inspection of local government education services.

As expected, the report outlines areas of improvement and these are noted as recommendations for the Council to address.

The recommendations have now been collated into a specific Post Inspection Action Plan which will sit as part of the Education and Youth Business Plan. Progress on these recommendations will be reported regularly to Cabinet and to the Education and Youth Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To receive the draft post inspection action plan and provide any further commentary to officers prior to finalisation and agreement by Cabinet.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	INSPECTION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION SERVICES
1.01	<p>The recommendations advised by Estyn were not a surprise to the Education Portfolio as they had mostly been identified as areas for improvement through its own self-evaluation processes and already included as actions in the Portfolio Business Plan.</p> <p>The recommendations are:</p> <p>R1 Improve outcomes for learners in key stage 4.</p> <p>R2 Reduce exclusions and increase attendance in both primary and secondary schools.</p> <p>R3 Improve the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the few front line education services identified in the report in order to provide more accurate information about the impact of the local authority's work.</p> <p>R4 Manage the reduction in school budget deficits more effectively.</p>
1.02	<p>Recommendation 1 will be addressed through the detailed individual school support plans that are jointly constructed with GwE, the regional school improvement service. These support plans are regularly monitored by the Senior Manager for School Improvement who will lead on this aspect of the Post Inspection Action Plan.</p>
1.03	<p>Recommendation 2 will be led by the Senior Manager for Inclusion and Progression. The focus will be on enhancing the work of the Inclusion Welfare Service and the Youth Justice Service to provide expert support for schools who have the direct responsibility for managing the attendance and inclusion/exclusion of pupils and so headteachers will be engaged in directly supporting this recommendation.</p> <p>The capacity of the Inclusion Service has been increased with the appointment of a Senior Learning Adviser who will provide stronger strategic management of attendance and exclusions within the portfolio team.</p>
1.04	<p>Recommendation 3 relates to further refinement of the portfolio's self-evaluation processes to achieve more detailed evaluation of the work of specific teams and their impact/effectiveness. This will be led by the Chief Officer, Education & Youth. The main outcome anticipated from this recommendation is more strategic analysis of performance and more focused reports to Scrutiny to keep members well informed and be able to continue to hold the portfolio effectively to account.</p>
1.05	<p>Recommendation 4 has been addressed through the development of a specific task group including the Chief Executive, Section 151 Officer, Chief Officer for Education & Youth and the Portfolio Finance Manager. Its focus is on strengthening processes around the management of school deficit budgets and strategically reviewing education funding.</p>

1.06	The format of the post inspection action plan mirrors the portfolio's business plan with clearly defined success criteria and key actions. The plan will be monitored by the Education & Youth Portfolio's senior management team and RAG rated for actions taken and subsequent impact in the longer term. Update reports will be presented to the Scrutiny committee and through the Council's performance management processes.
1.07	The post inspection action plan will also be shared in draft with headteacher colleagues for their feedback as the actions for most of the recommendations are directly related to their delegated responsibilities as school leaders.
1.08	The draft post inspection action plan will also be discussed with Estyn's Local Area Inspectors when they make their next regular visit to the authority on 14 th November 2019. Any further advice from them in relation to the report will then be incorporated.
1.09	The plan does not have specific timescales attached to the actions but will be delivered over the next twelve to eighteen month period, which is the usual focus for addressing recommendations following an inspection. The quarterly monitoring and reporting cycle of the Council will provide regular opportunities for progress to be reviewed and evaluated.
1.10	Once the consultation on the draft plan has been completed and the commentary revised, the plan will be formally presented to Cabinet in December 2019 for final approval.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>The implementation of the action plan will be resourced mostly through the existing resources of the Education and Youth Portfolio but in the current economic climate the ongoing resilience of these core education services and of school budgets is increasingly threatened and could undermine its success.</p> <p>The addressing of the recommendation in relation to school deficit budgets has been escalated to a corporate level as it is beyond the resource of the Education Portfolio alone and is now the subject of a specific task group including the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council.</p>

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Consultation with headteachers, governors and key partners was integral to the full inspection process undertaken in June 2019.

4.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	The risks associated with the implementation of the post inspection action plan will be incorporated into the risk register for the Education and Youth Portfolio.
4.02	Integrated impact assessments will be undertaken if needed due to change of service policy.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Post Inspection Action Plan

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>Guidance Handbook for the Inspection of Local Government Education Services 2018.</p> <p>Contact Officer: Claire Homard Telephone: 01352 704190 E-mail: claire.homard@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	Estyn – Her Majesty’s Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales