

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

January 2020

PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Cllr Phyl Davies

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SUBJECT: Local Authority Estyn Improvement conference

REPORT FOR: Information

1. Foreword

Powys Local Authority Education Service was inspected in July 2019. The report was published on September 10th 2019. The Estyn report was considered by Full Council on 10th September 2019.

The inspection team concluded that “...*there are many areas of the authority’s work causing significant concern, such as those relating to school organisation, financial management, school governance, lack of action regarding schools causing concern and the co-ordination of provision for pupils with special educational needs or who may require extra support. These issues affect school leadership, staffing structures, curriculum planning and staff morale.*”

Therefore, the Local Authority required follow up activity which included an improvement conference in the first instance.

On 28th November 2019, Tony Bate HMI chaired an improvement conference focused on the Local Authority’s education services for children and young people. The conference was carried out in accordance with the Estyn guidance handbook.

The purpose of a post-inspection improvement conference was to ensure that the authority had understood the reasons for the inspection judgements, and had developed appropriate plans to address shortcomings.

The conference focussed on the recommendations in the recent inspection report

2. Conference process

During the conference, inspectors considered the authority’s improvement plans and sought assurance that the Authority:

- has identified and understood 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.

3. What has happened after the conference?

Following the conference, officers have presented a Post Inspection Action Plan outlining the improvement journey and actions required, mindful of the matters raised during the day. This included putting the detailed actions from the PIAP into lower level team plans thus ensuring the strategic priorities in the PIAP remain the main focus for monitoring progress. The Education Service has already commenced the work on the improvements at pace. The Education Service, along with the Corporate Transformation team, are already working in collaboration with headteachers, teachers and governors to develop a case for change and a vision for the future of education provision in Powys. This will form an integral part of the improvement journey. Papers are being taken to Cabinet on 21st January for approval followed by engagement with the wider public in February 2020.

A letter dated 14th January 2020 was received by the Chief Executive of the Authority to confirm the outcome of the conference and a copy is attached as Appendix 1. A copy of the letter has been sent to the Council's Leader, the Welsh Government, the Wales Audit Office, and WLGA.

The letter stated that the Local Authority has “... *demonstrated that it has identified and understood the current issues appropriately and has a clear commitment to addressing the issues that were raised during the inspection. It is developing coherent plans and is building leadership capacity which have the potential to secure sustainable improvements. Overall, the authority has identified sufficient resources to implement its plans has begun to consider any barriers to progress and associated risks.*”

A copy of the PIAP approved by Estyn is attached as Appendix 2.

Recommendation:

That the Council notes the Estyn letter dated 14th January 2020 and the Post Inspection Action Plan.