

ESTYN Significant Improvement visit letter

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to enable the Committee to be presented with a copy of the Estyn letter, copy to follow, as a result of the Estyn Significant Improvement Monitoring Visit undertaken between the 5 and 9 October 2015.

Background

2. Estyn inspected Cardiff Local Authority in 2011 and, whilst judging provision to be 'adequate', placed the authority in Estyn monitoring. Two monitoring visits were carried out, in June 2012 and February 2014, the latter judging that Cardiff Local Authority required 'significant improvement'. Estyn left the authority with six updated recommendations and agreed a monitoring programme outlining the scope of three further visits in Spring 2015, Autumn 2015 and Spring 2016. The 6 recommendations from the February 2014 visit were:

- R1 Raise standards, particularly at Key Stage 4;
- R2 Reduce exclusions and reduce the proportion of young people who are not in education, employment or training post – 16;
- R3 Make sure that the arrangements for delivering school improvement services challenge and support all schools effectively, in order to improve standards for learners at all levels;
- R4 Improve the effectiveness of joint planning across the range of partnership working;
- R5 Improve performance management processes to ensure a consistent approach to delivering objectives;
- R6 Improve the scrutiny of local authority education services and partnership working.

Monitoring Programme

3. The Autumn 2015 monitoring visit focused upon recommendations 2 and 4. The inspection team will return in the spring of 2016, the team will inspect progress against recommendation 1 and all recommendations, by which time two years of verified data across all key stages will be available.

Spring 2015 Monitoring Visit

4. Huw Davies HMI led a team of four inspectors on the second monitoring visit during the period 5th to 9th October 2015. The inspection team held discussions with the leader of the Council, elected members, the Chief Executive, senior officers, Head Teachers, Partnership representatives and an external consultant commissioned by the Council. The team also scrutinised documentation including evidence on the progress made against each of the recommendations, and liaised closely with the Wales Audit Office. At the end of the visit the team verbally reported their findings to the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Member for Education, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, the Chief Executive and the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning and a representative from the Welsh Government. The final letter from Estyn reporting the outcomes of the monitoring visit, attached at **Appendix A, copy to follow**.

Scope of the Scrutiny

5. Members will receive a presentation of the monitoring visit findings and subsequent letter, delivered by representatives of the Estyn inspection team. Members will then have the opportunity to seek clarification of any issues raised from the monitoring visit and to identify what further actions are needed to secure improvement.

Way Forward

6. This report will enable Members to receive a copy of the Estyn monitoring visit letter, copy to follow. Clive Phillips, Assistant Director Estyn, will make a presentation on the outcomes of the significant improvement visit and will be available to answer any questions Members may have.

Legal Implications

7. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

8. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is recommended to receive and consider the Estyn Significant Improvement visit letter and provide any comments or recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education and the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning.

MARIE ROSENTHAL
County Clerk and Monitoring Officer
2nd December 2015