



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL  
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020**

**UPDATE OF THE COUNCIL'S LATEST POSITION IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19  
FROM AN EDUCATION PERSPECTIVE.**

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES &  
COMMUNICATIONS**

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To provide members of the Children and Young People's Committee with the opportunity to scrutinise, review and challenge the Council's current position in response to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic by considering verbal update from the Director of Education & Inclusion along with Service Director, Public Protection.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:-

- 2.1 Consider the verbal update from the Director of Education & Inclusion Services & Service Director, Public Protection in relation to the Council's response to COVID-19, from an education perspective.
- 2.2 Subject to 2.1 above, request the Service Director Democratic Services and Communications to report any relevant and further information to the next Committee.

**3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 To provide Members with an update on the critical actions taken by the Council over the Summer period and inform Members of the current COVID 19 processes and practices in RCT Schools

- 3.2 To support the committee's considerations of the Council's response, from an education perspective, and the current plans being undertaken for the Autumn Term.

#### 4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 With the introduction of [the Local Authorities \(Coronavirus\) \(Meetings\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2020 in May](#) all local authorities in Wales have been provided with the opportunity to resume their committee processes.
- 4.2 The Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee met for the first time under these arrangements on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2020 where the Members were provided with a verbal update from the Director of Education in respect of actions taken by the Council since the COVID 19 restriction were imposed and also provided Members with an overview of future steps the Council considered in respect of service planning and the recovery phase.

#### 5. SCRUTINISING THE OF THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19

- 5.1 This Committee is being held to provide the opportunity for the Children & Young People's Scrutiny Committee, to once again consider the service response of the Council to date. Importantly it provides the opportunity for members to receive information in respect of these issues relating to the remit of the Children & Young People's Scrutiny Committee. **Members are asked to consider the information and determine whether there are any issues on which they would like to receive further information or review in greater detail at a future meeting.**
- 5.2 Given the fast moving nature of these matters, it is important to acknowledge that information may need to be provided to Scrutiny in different formats, with a focus on a smaller range of issues relating predominantly to the Council's activity around COVID-19.
- 5.3 There will be further reports to Cabinet in the coming months which will outline how the Council continues to respond and prepare for the future. The Cabinet considered the Service Recovery Plans of the Council, at its meeting on the [28<sup>th</sup> July 2020](#). The Council has also received position statements on a regular basis through September from the Council Leader, Chief Executive and members of the Senior Leadership Team.
- 5.4 **It is important to acknowledge, in the current circumstances, that facilitating the opportunity for Senior Officers to provide up-to-date information directly at the committee meeting provides the most effective way for Scrutiny to be engaged in these matters.** In doing so, the opportunity will continue to be afforded for Scrutiny to be updated with the

latest developments as they unfold, providing greater scope to engage in these matters and request information and additional reporting as deemed appropriate by Committee Members.

- 5.7 This Scrutiny committee will receive the latest information and evidence from Director of Education & Inclusion in respect of the Recovery Planning and the Contingency Phase at this meeting at its first meeting of the Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2020/2021.
- 5.8 As part of the review of these matters, it is proposed to receive information and evidence from the Cabinet Members where appropriate.
- 5.9 To support the smooth conduct of this virtual scrutiny meeting, members are encouraged to seek clarification on specific matters, particularly of a ward nature, outside of the meeting, if these questions do not relate to recommendations set out for Member’s considerations.

## 6. SUPPORTING PAPERS & INFORMATION

- 6.1 As general information for the committee, the following table reflects the key guidance documents sent to stakeholders with attached links to the Council website where appropriate:

Document	Date of issue / circulation
<b>1. Childcare Settings Guidance: Issued to assist early years childcare providers with measures to be taken at their settings in relation to the pandemic</b>	
Protective Measures in Childcare Settings v4	15/09/20
<b>2. Distance Learning Guidance for Schools</b>	
Safeguarding Considerations for Distance Learning v4 - 17.09.20	17/09/20
<b>3. Frequently Asked Questions – for parents / carers: Covering a number of issues including – school safety measures; cleaning; transport; catering and free school meals; uniform; confirmed cases of COVID-19. These FAQs are published on the Council’s website – <a href="http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/schoolreturnfags">www.rctcbc.gov.uk/schoolreturnfags</a></b>	
FAQs for parents – v5 (September return to school)	25/09/20
<b>4. Parents/carers - messaging</b>	
Text message to parents – September 2020 – link to FAQs for return to school and examinations, plus breakfast club application form	03/09/20

Messaging for Parents - Getting back to School and the School Run	09/09/20
Director's Letter to parents – breakfast clubs	10/09/20
Director's Letter to parents – self-isolation (accompanied by: COVID-19 Related Pupil Absence: A Quick Reference Guide for Parents; Process map – confirmed cases)	20/09/20
Director's Letter to parents – letter seeking parent/carer support for preventative measures for reducing the risk of transmission outside of schools, safe parking outside of schools and when managing suspected or confirmed cases. To include a helpful flow chart for parents when managing symptoms and risks.	To be sent by 20/10/20 at the latest.
<b>5. Parents – videos and social media – Autumn term. The below videos / captions have been published many times via the Council's social media channels</b>	
Autumn term FAQs: <a href="https://twitter.com/RCTCouncil/status/1296734390823813120">https://twitter.com/RCTCouncil/status/1296734390823813120</a> Video – autumn term: <a href="https://twitter.com/RCTCouncil/status/1301192237179637760">https://twitter.com/RCTCouncil/status/1301192237179637760</a> Walking to school: <a href="https://twitter.com/RCTCouncil/status/1300842380908728321">https://twitter.com/RCTCouncil/status/1300842380908728321</a> Avoid gatherings: <a href="https://twitter.com/RCTCouncil/status/1301781043167531008">https://twitter.com/RCTCouncil/status/1301781043167531008</a> ALN travel placements: <a href="https://twitter.com/RCTCouncil/status/1301173363927404545">https://twitter.com/RCTCouncil/status/1301173363927404545</a> Face coverings on buses: <a href="https://twitter.com/RCTCouncil/status/1301543241158930433">https://twitter.com/RCTCouncil/status/1301543241158930433</a>	
<b>6. Reopening Schools - Guidance document issued to headteachers: Regularly updated to reflect changes in the local and national position and to reflect updated guidance from the Welsh Government</b>	
Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance for the safe re-opening of schools VERSION 6 – October 2020	15/10/20
<b>7. Template letters and flowchart provided by the Director of Education and Inclusion Services for schools to share with parents / carers advising of actions to be taken in relation to suspected and confirmed cases</b>	
Confirmed Case Flow Chart (Primary) Confirmed Case Flow Chart (Secondary) Template - Letter to Parents 1 – Potential Close Contact Template - Letter to Parents 2 – Confirmed Case	17/09/20

Template - Letter to Parents 3 – Confirmed Close Contact	
Template - Letter to Parents 4 – Return to School Notification	

- 6.2 The Director of Education & Inclusion Services will provide the most update information and a synopsis of the Council's response, from an education perspective, to date.

## **7. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT**

- 7.1 Engagement has been undertaken with Director for Education & Inclusion in respect of the contents of this report.

## **8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not currently required - the contents of the report are for information purposes only.

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

## **10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

- 10.1 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

## **11. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES.**

- 11.1 This is an information report presenting the Cabinet report which outlines how the Council is responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **12. CONCLUSION**

- 12.1 Whilst it is proposed that Scrutiny is presented with a regular package of information identifying the Council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic (pressure points on Council services relating to COVID-19, along with the business of reinstating some services and the recovery and service planning process), Members are asked to acknowledge the fast-moving nature of this situation, which has necessitated the need to provide up-to-date information as part of the meeting, to effectively allow Scrutiny to consider these matters.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT  
1985**

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