

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2023-24

EDUCATION & INCLUSION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

19th JULY 2023

**REPORT ON A TASK AND FINISH GROUP IN RELATION TO THE REPORT ON
SCHOOL MODERNISATION – UPDATE ON BAND B SUSTAINABLE
COMMUNITIES FOR LEARNING PROGRAMME**

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND
COMMUNICATION**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. The purpose of the report is to update Members on the establishment of a task and finish group following the Committees previous consideration of:
- [The School Modernisation – Update on Band B Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme](#), presented to the Committee on 2nd February 2023, and
 - [Estyn’s Report on Education Services in Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council](#), presented to the Committee on 20th June 2023.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1. Acknowledge the content of the report & consider the suggested proposed way forward and next steps at 4.1; and
- 2.3. Subject to 2.1 above, request that the Service Director Democratic Services & Communication make the necessary arrangements.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. At their meeting on the [2nd February 2023](#), Members received a report on the School Modernisation – Update on Band B Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme.
- 3.2. Following consideration, and having scrutinised the contents of that report, Members wished to establish a task and finish group as the most effective way to examine the matter in further detail.

- 3.3. At their meeting on the [20th June 2023](#), Members received a report on Estyn's Report on Education Services in Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council.
- 3.4. It is acknowledged within the Estyn report that one of the local inspection questions was specifically on approaches to school reorganisation proposals and it is noted in the response from Estyn that '*Leaders in the local authority make their decisions carefully, based on how best to serve their different communities and to meet individual needs. For example, the council makes effective use of a wide range of data and information when considering school reorganisation and planning. This means that school organisation proposals take good account of the needs of the school's community and promote equity of provision for pupils*'. No recommendations were identified, specific to this area of concern.

4. PROPOSED WAY FORWARD & NEXT STEPS

- 4.1. That through the Service Director, Democratic Services & Communication, the necessary arrangements will be made for Members to visit appropriate schools, to receive first-hand evidence from stakeholders including Head Teachers, governing bodies and pupils, that have experienced the development and implementation of school modernisation investment, to secure a broader view and understand the challenges presented and opportunities for improvement.
- 4.2. It is suggested that these arrangements are taken forward during the new school term.
- 4.3. As part of any Task & Finish Group arrangement, Members may wish to consider arriving at a set of findings and recommendations to report to the Council's Cabinet for consideration.

TASK & FINISH GROUP

- 4.4. Task and finish groups are informal, usually small, time-limited groups established by the scrutiny committee to undertake a specific piece of work, and report back to that committee with their findings and recommendations.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS/SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 5.1. Equality and diversity implications will be considered as part of the Scrutiny Committee's recommendations and any subsequent implementation arrangements.

6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. There are no Welsh language implications arising from this report.

7. CONSULTATION/INVOLVEMENT

- 7.1. The process of engagement with key partners and local Members will steer the scrutiny consideration and methodology going forward and enable it to formulate well balanced and objective recommendations.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. Financial and resource implications will be considered as part of the scrutiny's recommendations as will any subsequent implementation arrangements going forward.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1. There are no legal implications arising, from this report.

10. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN/OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/ WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 10.1. The Well-being of Future Generations Act asks public bodies to work better with people, communities, and each other to meet the Sustainable Development principle. The Council's approach to the implementation of the Act agreed by Cabinet is to make sure that its requirements are embedded into the everyday business.
- 10.2. Engagement with Stakeholders at this stage of the Scrutiny review will support the Task & Finish Group apply the Sustainable Development principle of the Act through the five ways of working, namely, Integration, Collaboration, Long term thinking, Involvement and Prevention and maximise the contribution to the 7 national Well-being goals.
- 10.3. Not forgetting the 'Future Generations Framework for Scrutiny' which poses a set of questions that Scrutiny Members can use as a prompt. It can be used to see if the decisions they conclude have applied the Sustainable Development principle and to ensure that the work and recommendations of Scrutiny are progressed through the lens of the Act.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1. It is for members of the Education & Inclusion Scrutiny Committee to decide whether they wish to consider the suggested proposed way forward and next steps and for them to request that the appropriate arrangements are duly arranged through the Service Director, Democratic Services & Communication.