



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2023-24

EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

16TH OCTOBER 2023

BI-ANNUAL CABINET MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND COMMUNICATION

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. To scrutinise any arising matters with the portfolio holder responsible for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language and to ensure that the appropriate mechanisms are in place to effectively scrutinise the Executive.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee

- 2.1 Scrutinise the Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language in respect of matters considered and agreed by Cabinet, and any key decisions taken, during the period 11 May – 16 October 2023.
- 2.2 Identify any areas arising from those matters determined within this period which Committee wish to further scrutinise, as part of revisions to the committees published work programme, in relation to Education and Inclusion

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To provide the Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee the opportunity to scrutinise and challenge the Cabinet in respect of the decisions taken in the defined decision-making period.
- 3.2 The recommendations seek to provide a structure to these sessions, to enable discussion and challenge to be focused upon a defined period and those individual decisions taken

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 As part of this Council's ongoing commitment to improve the function of Scrutiny as a critical friend of the Council, this item is being brought before the Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee as part of Cabinet and Scrutiny engagement.
- 4.2 Such an approach will provide Scrutiny Members with the opportunity to further challenge the Executive, as the Cabinet Member can provide details relating to the investments being taken forward within the portfolio and the challenges faced by the Council.

5. SCRUTINY OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER

- 5.1 The role that the Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee can play in holding the Council's decision-makers to account makes it fundamentally important to the successful functioning of local democracy. Scrutinising the Executive serves an important purpose in ensuring that decision makers of the Council are held accountable for their actions and decisions.
- 5.2 By Scrutinising the Cabinet Member, the public can gain a better understanding of their decision-making process and hold them accountable, which will promote openness and transparency within the Council. It will also ensure that those in Leadership positions are acting in the best interests of their constituents.
- 5.3 Scrutiny can also identify areas for improvement and drive positive changes, strengthening our governance arrangements. Effective scrutiny helps secure the efficient delivery of public services and drives improvements within the authority itself. Conversely, poor scrutiny can be indicative of wider governance, leadership and service failure.
- 5.4 Under the [Terms of Reference](#) of the Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee, Members have the opportunity to scrutinise and challenge areas that fall under the remit of the Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language. The main responsibility areas of the Cabinet Member for Education cover the following areas:
- Secondary, Primary, Nursery, Welsh Medium, dual language and Special Needs Education
 - Liaison with further and higher education
 - Schools and Community
 - Learning Access, Engagement, and Inclusion
 - Governor Support
 - Education other than at school
 - Childcare

- Welsh Language
- Early Years Education including Flying Start
- Youth Engagement and Participation Service

5.5 Scrutiny in various forms is essential to ensuring accountability, transparency and fairness and ensures that political decisions are taken in the best interests of our residents.

5.6 **Decisions taken forward by the Portfolio holder during the period 11 May - 16 October 2023**

The decisions can be found by clicking on the following links below:-

- 15 May 2023 [21st Century Schools Programme: Naming of the New Schools](#)
- 15 May 2023 [Consultation on the Proposals to realign Additional Learning Needs Mainstream Learning Support Class Provision within Rhondda Cynon Taf](#)
- 28 June 2023 [Proposals to develop a New Special School In Rhondda Cynon Taf](#)
- 17 July 2023 [Pre-Scrutiny: Estyn's Report on Education Services in Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council](#)
- 17 July 2023 [Standard Advisory Council on Religious Education \(SACRE\)](#)
- 18 Sept 2023 [Statutory School Organisation - Proposal to close Rhigos Primary School with pupils transferring to Hirwaun Primary School](#)
- 18 Sept 2023 [Consultation on the Proposals to Realign Additional Learning Needs Mainstream Learning Support Class Provision within Rhondda Cynon Taf](#)

6. **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO ECONOMIC DUTY**

6.1 None arising as a direct result of this report.

7. **CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT**

7.1 There are no consultation requirements emanating from the recommendations set out in this report.

8. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

8.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 The report has been prepared in accordance with paragraph Part 4 of the Constitution (Overview & Scrutiny Procedure Rules).

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1 To provide the Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee the opportunity to scrutinise, challenge and make recommendations for policy improvement under the remit of the Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language's portfolio.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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16TH OCTOBER 2023

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COMMUNICATIONS**