

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2017 /18

COUNCIL

20TH SEPTEMBER 2017

AGENDA ITEM 11
INTERIM REPORT OF SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP DEALING WITH FREE SANITARY PROVISIONS IN SCHOOLS

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To provide Members with the interim report of the Scrutiny Working Group established to deal with 'Free Sanitary Provisions in schools' following the Notice of Motion (as amended) that was adopted by full Council on the 19th July 2017.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To receive the interim report of the Scrutiny Working Group; and,
- 2.2 To receive a further report outlining the findings and recommendations of the Scrutiny Working Group to a future meeting of the Council.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Members will recall at the meeting of the full Council held on the 19th July, 2017, the following Notice of Motion, as amended in accordance with paragraph 10.4.1 of Part 4 of the Council's Constitution, was adopted:-

"That this Council will research the availability of free sanitary products, such as tampons and towels, in all Secondary Schools in the County as an acknowledgement that they are as essential as toilet paper for the personal hygiene of female pupils.

- 3.2 It was resolved at the Council Meeting that the matter be referred to the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee to consider the availability of hygiene products in RCT schools and, if appropriate, bring forward recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet in respect of this matter relating to dignity, equality, health and wellbeing and its effect on education in a County that has such a high number of pupils living in poverty.

- 3.3 On the 26th July 2017 the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee resolved to establish a Working Group to consider the Notice of Motion. The Working Group Members comprised of County Borough Councillors S. Rees-Owen, (Chair), W. Lewis (Vice Chair), A. Calvert, H. Fychan and J. Brencher.
- 3.4 The Working Group was also privileged to have both County Borough Councillors E. Stephens and G. R. Davies, initial mover and seconder to the Council's Notice of Motion, as key observers to assist the Working Group's review together with County Borough Councillor S.Evans, mover to the amended Notice of Motion.
- 3.5 At its inaugural meeting held on the 31st August 2017 the Working Group agreed its Terms of Reference and received information from the Head of Youth Engagement and Participation and the Head of Attendance and Wellbeing on similar work which has been carried out by the Scottish Government recently and published in their 2017/18 Programme for Government which has a commitment to provide access to free sanitary products in Scottish educational establishments.
- 3.6 At that meeting Members also agreed that a snap survey would be the best way to gather the views of Year Six children and Secondary School children (girls and boys) in respect of accessing sanitary products. Likewise, in order to gain an understanding of the current provision within schools across RCT the Working Group also agreed that a separate survey should be circulated to Head Teachers, school nurses and reception staff.

4. NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 As a commitment to reviewing the availability of free sanitary products, such as tampons , towels and sustainable products in all Secondary Schools in the County, the Working Group has arranged to meet with staff and pupils from a variety of schools across Rhondda Cynon Taf to share their views on the matter in person. This will take place at the next meeting of the Working Group on the 22nd September 2017 when Members will also consider the outcome of the aforementioned surveys.
- 4.2 Further consideration will also be given to the recent Scottish Government programme and to a pilot scheme which is being launched in Aberdeen's regeneration area, which is looking at providing access to sanitary products to all those who need them, so that the Working Group may learn from their experiences and recommendations.

5. CONCLUSION

The Working Group is working towards producing its findings and recommendations which will be reported to Cabinet and/or Council, if felt appropriate, in October of this year.