

Date: 12 July 2018

Councillor Sarah Merry,
Cabinet Member Education, Employment & Skills,
Cardiff Council,
County Hall,
Cardiff
CF10 4UW



County Hall
Cardiff,
CF10 4UW
Tel: (029) 2087 2087

Neuadd y Sir
Caerdydd,
CF10 4UW
Ffôn: (029) 2087 2088

Dear Councillor Merry,

Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee: 11 July 2018

On behalf of the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee thank you for attending Committee to facilitate scrutiny of the Twenty First Century Schools Band B Programme. Members were delighted to welcome the Director of Education, Nick Batchelor, and would be grateful if you would pass on our appreciation. We offer the following comments and observations for you to draw to the Cabinets attention.

Cabinet and Directorate Responsibilities

The Committee considers it essential that Cabinet establishes clarity around the relationship between the Economic Development and Education Directorates, and the proposed roles of Programme Director –Schools Organisation Programme and Head of Property within the Corporate Landlord Model. The Committee is of the view that there should be clarity of responsibility for Band B Programme delivery between the two Directorates and the respective Cabinet Portfolios. We note the Director of Education’s view that, of the four phases in the ARUP Education Delivery Process Review cycle, the ‘Need’ and ‘Scheme’ Phases should be led by the Education Directorate, whilst the ‘Delivery’ and ‘Operational’ phases require strong client side procurement, and therefore requires property expertise. We therefore consider the relationship with the Corporate Landlord role is key and wish to stress the importance of the Council’s property function harnessing knowledge of schools requirements from education colleagues, but having overall responsibility for schools project management.

Resourcing

In respect of the proposed new Programme Director's role, Members consider it will be difficult to recruit two experts in one – property project management and schools policy expertise. The Committee is keen to establish how the additional posts required to ensure the Programme is delivered will be funded.

Capital Financing versus MIM

It is our view that questions remain around the Welsh Government MIM funding model, versus Capital Financing, to deliver the Band B Programme. We note that though the Cabinet have previously decided on Capital Financing to deliver the programme, discussions with Welsh Government are in fact very much ongoing, in light of market sensitivities as to the viability of some Band B projects. We note that in arriving at the decision to take the Capital Financing route, the Council has undertaken financial modelling for all projects, and that the two that remain viable are Cathays and Willows High Schools. We would therefore like an opportunity to consider the modelling for the two schools that remain an option for MIM funding, and request that you keep this Committee informed of discussions going forward.

Once again, on behalf of the Committee, my sincere thanks for attending the PRAP Scrutiny Committee for consideration of the Band B Programme in respect of capacity and governance arrangements. I would be grateful if you would relay our views to the Cabinet to inform discussion today, and I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,



COUNCILLOR DAVID WALKER
CHAIR, POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

cc Members of the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee
Nick Batchelor, Director of Education
Joanne Watkins, Cabinet Office Manager
Melanie Jackson, Cabinet Support.