



Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref

Ian Budd
Director of Education
Powys County Council
County Hall
Spa Road East
Llandrindod Wells
Powys LD1 5LG

4 August 2017

Dear Ian Budd,

I have now considered your draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. As you will know from discussions between our respective officials, I suggest that the issues outlined below need to be addressed in the plan. I'm sure you agree that it's important that the authority takes appropriate ownership over its own plan. Therefore, I invite you to address these issues and submit an amended plan. I will then make the decision whether or not to approve that plan.

Can I thank you for the time and effort you have put into this phase of Welsh education planning. With the launch of our *Cymraeg 2050* Strategy, this is a new and exciting time for us all. To fulfil our vision for a million Welsh speakers by 2050, we need to make some radical and far reaching changes to the way we work as a government and how we plan Welsh medium education. We are on the cusp of significant change and Welsh Government can not do this on its own.

You will know by now that I want changes to the way we plan for Welsh medium education and I want to do this with you so we can work together to provide Welsh medium education with a strong framework for growth. Working in partnership is mutually beneficial and is the only way that we will achieve the million Welsh speakers by 2050.

Issues to be addressed

Below are the issues we think need addressing within your plan. We realise that in some cases, you will need to go through your own approval process, but we would ask if you could present your amended plan to us as soon as possible or no later than **29 September 2017**. This of course will be dependent on your consultation processes.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

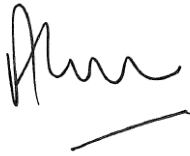
We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

It is for you to decide what constitutes fair and open consultation in terms of timescales. It is important that all those with an interest in Welsh medium education have an opportunity to contribute their views.

This feedback includes Aled Roberts' views and these are attached in full as annex 1.

- Ensure commitment to the establishment of a Category 2A school in north Powys
- Need details about the intention to establish Welsh-medium education in the Gwernyfed catchment area, review primary provision in the Llanidloes and mid Powys areas and address the increasing demand at Ysgol Gymraeg Dyffryn y Glowyr
- Develop an action plan to improve progression rates in the Welsh-medium sector from primary to secondary provision across Powys
- Need commitment to establish a centre for latecomers to include a timetable and information on the likely model
- Need clearer objectives for workforce planning and development

You may have my assurance that my officials will provide any support, advice or guidance necessary.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alun', with a horizontal line underneath.

Alun Davies AC/AM

Gweinidog y Gymraeg a Dysgu Gydol Oes
Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language

POWYS

VISION

The vision is clear and the authority acknowledges that "there is a need for fundamental change in Powys to ensure that all learners can access robust, provision of high quality from their early years onwards."

OUTCOME 1

A fundamental change is needed as the numbers that are being assessed age 7 in Welsh under **Outcome 1** have decreased since the last plan. It is likely that what we have here are projections for the children already within the system. It would be beneficial to see the numbers and percentages included here. By now action is needed, rather than conducting numerous reviews.

As a starting point, targets should be agreed with Mudiad Meithrin in order to improve the percentages that are currently transferring from pre-school settings to the Foundation Phase. It will be necessary to understand parents' reasons for not transferring to a Welsh medium primary and accepting responsibility as an authority to take action. . A definite policy at county level is also needed to get to grips with the trend of classes within dual-stream schools merging and the Welsh language being weakened as a result.

There is reference within plan to a report about measuring demand in the north of the County - are there any specific messages from that work and actions that can be included within the WESP? The plan is weak in terms of concrete steps that can be taken in terms of training, marketing and promotion and immersion work.

The decision to establish a Welsh primary school in Welshpool is welcome but the possibility of accelerating the timetable to review the areas listed within the Plan between 2017 and 2019. There is a need to specify the intention to establish a Welsh stream in the Gwernyfed area and understand what the authority is doing in the meantime about pressures regarding numbers within Ysgol y Glowyr in Ystradgynlais if the review does not take place until 2019.

Why is it necessary to wait until the end of the 2018/19 academic year before agreeing a venue for a centre for latecomers and why wait until 2019/20 for any plans regarding immersion?

OUTCOME 2

The fact that the county acknowledges that the targets within **Outcome 2** are not ambitious enough is a concern and there is no increase in the percentage of pupils who are being assessed in Welsh within the next three years.

If the authority accepts that they intended to "offer equitable provision for learners in the Welsh medium secondary sector that will lead to a reduction in the proportion of pupils who will continue to take advantage of Welsh medium provision when they transfer to secondary school in the short term," there is a need to understand what strategies are in place to deal with this in the long term. The Authority also recognises that there are problems of continuity in some areas namely Welshpool and Llandrindod Wells but it appears that there are similar problems in areas such as the Banwy Valley, Llanerfyl, Carno, Llanbryn-mair and Cem-maes Road. Perhaps the numbers are small but SMART targets are needed here.

More importantly there is a need for a clear statement on the timescale for the submission of a business case in terms of opening one or more category 2A schools in north Powys during 2017.

OUTCOME 3 AND 4

Objectives within **Outcome 2** will influence **Outcome 3 and 4** targets in due course. However, when considering the relatively small numbers currently following Welsh-medium education at KS4 and KS5 it must be accepted that these are realistic targets rather than aspirational targets. The lack of any post-16 Welsh medium provision however within NPTC Group is a matter of concern and the Council should plan discussion with the college as soon as possible.

OUTCOME 5

The authority should introduce a Language Charter policy within schools as soon as possible in accordance with the vast majority of other counties. There is no reference either to the framework or the mapping work within **Outcome 5**.

OUTCOME 6

There is a need to include the results of the most recent audit of ALN services under **Outcome 6** along with any operational steps to be taken in terms of dealing with any gaps.

OUTCOME 7

In recognising that the authority will face challenges in trying to recruit staff within Welsh schools in some areas **Outcome 7** should detail any strategies to support and train staff in terms of improving their language skills that are currently available to the workforce.

The plan needs to include more detail, targets and even more importantly to demonstrate real commitment to strengthening the Welsh language provision within the County