



Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny Observations to Cabinet on: 21-09-2021

The Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee met on 15-09-2021 and considered the following documents:

- Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)

The Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee thank officers for attending scrutiny.

Scrutiny made the following observations:

Outcome 1.

The Committee:

- accepted that the document was an initial draft and would form the basis of the consultation document, following which the Strategy could be developed. It was further accepted that whilst some of the data was available and would be included in the draft document, some was not currently available.
- expressed concern regarding inconsistencies in some of the tables for Outcome 1 which need to be clarified for the Cabinet.
- although understanding that the target of increasing the number of pupils being taught through the medium of the Welsh Language by 14% over ten years had been established as a result of guidance from Welsh Government as to what would be a significant step increase for Powys, questioned whether this was a sufficiently ambitious target.
- asked that the Cabinet when consulting on the draft Strategy to:
 - ensure that all socio-economic groups were included in the consultation process
 - seek to encourage more governors to respond to the consultation

Outcome 2

- The Committee suggested that:
 - in the table of Total Welsh Medium pupils (PLASC) – it would be helpful to have the data for English Medium provision as well as where the new Welsh speakers will come from.
 - the document needs to include more narrative around the benefits of a bilingual education as well as the inclusion of evidence to support this.
 - that the targets in this section were realistic but not 'stretch' targets.
- The Committee recognised that this is a step forward in terms of ambition, but that there is a need for greater clarity as to how and where these increases will be achieved.

Outcome 3

The Committee:

- expressed concern regarding the reduction in pupils continuing their studies through the medium of the Welsh Language from primary school to secondary school, but noted the need to improve the transition between years five and eight.

- commented that some narrative about why pupils were not continuing their education through the medium of the Welsh Language in the document would be welcomed, and noted that this could possibly be collected as part of the consultation.

Outcome 4

The Committee:

- welcomed the suggestion that this section be revised to identify what the Council can resolve and also be clear as to how it will be achieved, to include post sixteen education.
- accepted that there was further work to be undertaken around Secondary Welsh Medium provision.
- expressed concern regarding the lack of narrative and evidence in the document supporting the change of location on the proposed Welsh Medium Secondary School in North Powys, particularly in view of the numbers of pupils from Ysgol Dafydd Llwyd who were not choosing not to continue their secondary education through the medium of Welsh.

Outcome 5

- The Committee commented that more detail could be included in this section regarding informal and vocational activities as this was too focussed on courses and formal activities.

Outcomes 6 and 7

- The Committee suggested that cross references to the ALN Strategy should be included in this section

There were no recommendations to the Cabinet.

In accordance with Rule 7.27.2 the Cabinet is asked to provide a written response to the scrutiny report, including an action plan where appropriate, as soon as possible or at the latest within 2 months of the date of the Cabinet meeting i.e. by 21-11-2021

Membership of the Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee on 15-09-2021:

County Councillors: P Roberts, E Roderick, M Williams, D Meredith, C Mills, J Berriman, B Davies, A Jenner, L Roberts, S Davies, G Thomas.

Co-Opted Members: S Davies and M Evitts.