

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

CABINET EXECUTIVE

25th January 2021

REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Phyl Davies
Portfolio Holder for Education and Property

REPORT TITLE: Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2022-2032

REPORT FOR: Decision

1. Purpose

- 1.1 A decision was made by Cabinet on the 21st September 2021 to carry out consultation on the authority's draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) for 2022-2032.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet members of the outcome of the consultation and comments received, and to request Cabinet approval to submit the revised WESP to Welsh Government for consideration.
- 1.3 The report is supported by the following appendices:
- **Appendix A** – Updated Welsh in Education Strategic Plan for 2022-2032
 - **Appendix B** – Consultation Report
 - **Appendix C** -
 - **Appendix C** – Updated Impact Assessment

2. Background

Statutory Background

- 2.1 The *School Standards and Organisation Wales Act 2013* requires local authorities to prepare a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) to set out how it will improve the planning of Welsh-medium education. Initially, the requirement was for local authorities to prepare three yearly WESPs. The Council has previously prepared two three-year WESPs, for 2014-17 and 2017-2020. These two WESPs were prepared in accordance with the *Welsh in Education Strategic Plans and Assessing the Demand (Wales) Regulations 2013*.
- 2.2 In 2019, the *Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) Regulations 2019* were made, which replace the 2013 Regulations. The 2019 Regulations require local authorities to prepare a ten-year Welsh in Education Strategic Plan instead of the previous three-year plans. In

response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the 2019 Regulations were amended by the *Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020*, which make changes to the start date of the next WESP – in accordance with the amended Regulations, all local authorities are required to prepare a new ten-year WESP which will be operational from 1 September 2022.

Preparation of the new ten-year WESP

- 2.3 In December 2020, the Council's Cabinet approved a new Strategy for Developing Welsh-medium Education in Powys. This Strategy, along with the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys, have provided the basis for the Council's new ten-year WESP.
- 2.4 Discussions have also taken place with stakeholders when developing the new WESP, including a workshop with headteachers and discussions with members of the Council's Welsh-medium Education Forum.
- 2.5 The *Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) Regulations 2019* requires local authorities to set a ten year target outlining the expected increase in Year 1 children taught through the medium of Welsh in the local authority's area during the lifespan of the Plan. Welsh Government have set out an expectation that Powys achieve an increase of 10-14+% in the percentage of Year 1 children taught through the medium of Welsh by 2030/31. This would require an increase from 22.2% of Year 1 pupils taught through the medium of Welsh in 2019/20 to between 32% and 36% pupils taught through the medium of Welsh in 2030/31. The content of the WESP has been developed in order to contribute towards achieving this target.
- 2.6 The Plan is arranged based on 7 Outcomes which reflect a learner's education journey, and which are consistent with the policy areas of Cymraeg 2050 and Education in Wales: Our National Mission. These are as follows:

Outcome 1: More nursery children / three year olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh

Outcome 2: More reception class children / five year olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh

Outcome 3: More children continue to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another

Outcome 4: More learners study for assessed qualifications in Welsh (as a subject) and subjects through the medium of Welsh

Outcome 5: More opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school

Outcome 6: An increase in the provision of Welsh-medium education for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) in accordance with the duties imposed by the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018

Outcome 7: Increase the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and teach through the medium of Welsh

Consultation

2.7 The Regulations include a requirement for local authorities to consult for no less than 8 weeks with the following:

- Neighbouring local authorities
- Heads of all schools maintained by the authority
- The governing bodies of all schools maintained by the authority
- All further education sector institutions within the area
- In respect of any foundation school or voluntary school in the area:
 - a. The person responsible for appointing governors
 - b. If the school has a religious character, the relevant religious body
- The Welsh Language Commissioner
- The Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership
- Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales
- Providers of initial school teacher training
- Such organisations providing services to children and young people as the local authority considers appropriate
- Such other persons or bodies as appear to the local authority appropriate.

2.8 Further to the decision made by the Cabinet on the 21st September 2021, consultation on the authority's draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) for 2022-2032 was carried out between the 24th September and the 18th November 2021.

11 respondents completed the Welsh language version of the consultation response form, and 82 respondents completed the English language version of the consultation response form which was available online.

In addition, a number of written consultation responses were received. 2 written responses were received in Welsh, and 11 written responses were received in English.

A summary of consultation responses and copies of the detailed responses received from stakeholders are provided in the consultation report in Appendix B.

Detailed responses were received from the following organisations and individuals:-

- The Welsh Language Commissioner
- RhAG (Rhieni dros Addysg Gymraeg / Parents for Welsh-medium education
- Mudiad Meithrin
- Estyn
- UCAC
- Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol
- Governing Body of Ysgol Dyffryn Trannon
- Llanidloes Schools Governing Body
- Cyngor Cymuned Llandysillio Community Council
- Cyngor Cymuned Llandrinio & Arddleen Community Council
- Cyngor Cymuned Glantwymyn Community Council
- Ysgol Calon Cymru – Headteacher
- Mr Rh. Ap. Rhys

The responses received have been considered and the WESP has been reviewed and updated.

The responses received have been considered and the WESP has been reviewed and updated. The main amendments are

- a strengthened 'introduction' section, linking more clearly with the Strategy for Transforming Education and the Vision for Developing Bilingual Learners – both documents approved by Cabinet in 2020. Additional reference has been made to other strategies/policy areas, including the Powys Local Development Plan
- more detail added to Outcome 1 about Welsh-medium providers per locality, to identify gaps
- transition rates between Year 6 and Year 7 have been included for each school rather than one county wide percentage.
- updated information about secondary school developments.

The main themes of the consultation are:

- General support for the ambition of the WESP
- More detailed information required about some of the key actions, including timescales
- Concern about lack of Welsh-speaking staff in schools to enable the delivery of the WESP and the importance of successful delivery of Outcome 7
- Concern about pupil transition rates between Welsh-medium primary and Welsh-medium secondary provision
- Specific local issues:
 - Llanidloes area – opportunities for development of Welsh-medium education in this area
 - Brecon area – concern about Welsh-medium provision at Brecon High School

- Concern about lack of designated Welsh-medium secondary provision in North East Powys
- Machynlleth area – concern about changing Ysgol Bro Hyddgen’s language category from dual-stream to Welsh-medium, in particular removal of choice of languages in the area
- North Welshpool/Llanfyllin catchment area – opposition to the possible development of Welsh-medium primary provision in this area.

Next steps

- 2.9 If approved by the Cabinet, the Council’s WESP for 2022-2032 will be submitted to Welsh Government, by no later than 31 January 2022.
- 2.10 Following submission of the plan to Welsh Government, the School Standards and Organisation Act (Wales) 2013 states that Ministers may:
- Approve the plan as submitted;
 - Approve the plan with modifications;
 - Reject the Plan and prepare another one.

Should the Welsh Ministers require the authority to do further work on the Plan, any revised versions will be presented back to Cabinet for approval.

Below is a summary of the steps expected to be undertaken before the WESP becomes operational:

February 2022 – May 2022	WESP consideration stage by Welsh Government, to include further discussions with local authorities as required
June 2022 – August 2022	Welsh Ministers to approve the WESP
1 September 2022	New WESP comes into force.

- 2.12 After the new WESP comes into force, local authorities will be required to submit a review report to the Welsh Government by no later than 31 July each year. Detailed implementation plans will be developed for each Outcome and monitored by both the Welsh-medium Education Forum and the Council’s internal Welsh-medium Education Workstream.

3. Advice

- 3.1 It is advised that Cabinet approve the Council's updated Welsh in Education Strategic Plan for 2022-2032.

4. Resource Implications

- 4.1 There are additional costs associated with implementation of the WESP, in particular start-up costs for new Welsh-medium provision, mostly related to staffing, rolling out the 'Trochi' programme, and capital expenditure for new Welsh-medium schools. Recent start up costs for new Welsh-medium Reception class in an English-medium primary school is approximately £60,000 p.a. The 'Trochi' Programme costs approximately £90,000, for staffing. These are being funded from a variety of sources including the Corporate Transformation budget and 21st Century Schools Grant. Once new provision is embedded, the costs would need to be included within the Schools Service's core budget.

Any new capital developments would need to be costed on a case-for-case basis, and subject to business case approval.

- 4.2 The Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer) notes the content of the report. The recommendation is to adopt the updated WESP. The implementation of the WESP will incur costs and this will need to be considered as the Council develops its financial plans for future years.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 Legal: the recommendations can be accepted from a legal point of view
- 5.2 The Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) has commented as follows: " I note the legal comment and have nothing to add to the report".

6. Comment from local member(s)

- 6.1 N/A

7. Integrated Impact Assessment

- 7.1 An initial impact assessment was considered by Cabinet along with the draft WESP in September 2021. The impact assessment has been updated to reflect comments received during the consultation and the updated WESP document.
- 7.2 The updated impact assessment indicates that the impact is positive overall. The aim of the Council's WESP is to increase the number of pupils accessing Welsh-medium education, leading to an increase in the number of pupils that are fully bilingual in Welsh and English, and contributing to the Welsh Government's aim to achieve a million Welsh

speakers by 2050. Implementation of the WESP would also provide enhanced opportunities to use Welsh across Powys and would ensure that more pupils have bilingual skills to take into the workplace.

8. **Recommendation**

- To approve the updated Welsh in Education Strategic Plan for 2022-2032 as contained in Appendix A for submission to Welsh Government.

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