



Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny Observations to Cabinet on: 25-01-2022

The Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee met on 24-01-2022 and considered the following documents:

- Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)

The Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee thank the Portfolio Holder for Education and Property and officers for attending scrutiny.

Scrutiny made the following observations:

- The Committee suggested that the following additional information should be included in the strategy:
 - Outcome 1 Early Years – addition of pupil numbers for September 2021 and January 2022 (if available)
 - That although the BTEC courses had been offered that no pupils had taken up the offer in September 2021.
 - Baselines for current Welsh medium provision in catchments and measurable targets so that progress in developing provision can be assessed. Generally, this is an issue in the strategy as without sufficient data assurances about the progress of the plan cannot be provided.
 - Outcome 2 (Reception Classes) – the data included is only for one year. Additional historical data should be included to show trends.
 - Additional measurable targets in the strategy such as for ALN.
- The Committee also suggested that the Council should offer bursaries / apprenticeships to pupils seeking to follow teaching careers through the medium of Welsh conditional on their remaining employed by the Council for a specified period once their training had been completed.
- That the Council seeks to support new Early Years Groups with generic information to promote the establishment of any new venues.
- The Committee supported:
 - that the promotion / marketing of the benefits of bilingual education was a key factor to ensuring the development of Welsh Medium education in Powys.
 - That workforce development was another key factor to delivering the strategy.
- The Committee questioned whether the proposal for Welsh language linked to Ysgol Calon Cymru should be included at this stage of the WESP as the proposal was at an early stage of consultation and thus not evidenced.
- The Committee accepted the suggestion that the details for the locations of proposed Welsh Medium secondary provision be replaced in the strategy with the aim to establish three all through Welsh Medium schools in the county.
- The Committee expressed concern:
 - That few Welsh Medium courses were on offer through E-Ysgol at Key Stage 4.

- Regarding the few numbers of pupils studying Welsh medium A level courses which could impact on numbers wishing to pursue their future careers through the medium of Welsh including teaching.

| Scrutiny's Recommendation | Accept (plus Action and timescale) | Partially Accept (plus Rationale and Action and timescale) | Reject (plus Rationale) |
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| 1 that the additional data suggested together with baselines and measurable targets be included in the strategy | Accept – relevant data will be added to the final WESP that is submitted to Welsh Government by the 31 st January 2022 | | |
| 2 that the Council should offer conditional bursaries / apprenticeships to pupils wishing to teach through the medium of Welsh | | Partially accept – further investigation would be required to understand financial implications. | |
| 3 that the Council seeks to support new Early Years groups by the provision of generic information to promote the establishment of new venues | Accept – officers will discuss further with Mudiad Meithrin who are responsible for the Ti a Fi Groups and Cylch Meithrin provision. This will be carried out in February 2022. | | |
| 4 that the details for the locations of proposed Welsh Medium secondary provision be replaced in the strategy with the aim to establish three all through Welsh Medium schools in the county | | <p>Partially accept – however, an additional sentence has been added at the end of the introductory section of the WESP as follows:</p> <p><i>Note: Any changes to schools that require a statutory school reorganisation process are included in this WESP without prejudice to any decisions that the Cabinet may make in relation to that process.</i></p> <p>Rationale:</p> | |

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| | | <p>Within Outcome 4 of the WESP, reference is made the Council's aspiration to develop three all-age Welsh-medium schools. A decision has already been made to change the language category of Ysgol Bro Hyddgen. However, references to the new all-age school in Llanfair Caereinion and potentially in Builth Wells clearly state that a statutory school reorganisation process, including Cabinet decisions, would be required to achieve these plans.</p> <p>The Council's aspirations for all three schools are already in the public domain, and the latter is currently part of an informal engagement exercise.</p> | |
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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 25-03-2022

Membership of the Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee on 24-01-2022:

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

Co-Opted Members: A Davies, M Evitts, S Davies.