

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

**CABINET EXECUTIVE
26th July 2022**

**REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Pete Roberts
Portfolio Holder for a Learning Powys**

REPORT TITLE: Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032

REPORT FOR: Decision

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to share with Cabinet the final version of the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) for 2022-2032, which has been submitted to Welsh Government.
- 1.2 The report is supported by the following appendices:
- **Appendix A** – Final Welsh in Education Strategic Plan for 2022-2032
 - **Appendix B** – Feedback received from the Welsh Government on the post-consultation version of the WESP
 - **Appendix C** – Strategy for Developing Welsh-medium Education in Powys

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, provided the basis for the Council's new ten-year WESP. The Strategy for Developing Welsh-medium Education in Powys is attached as Appendix C.
- 2.4 Discussions took 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

- 2.7 The first version of the Council's new 10 year Welsh in Education Strategic Plan was considered by the Cabinet on the 21st September 2021, when approval was given to carry out consultation in accordance with the Regulations.

Consultation

- 2.8 The Regulations include a requirement for local authorities to carry out consultation on its WESP for no less than 8 weeks with key stakeholders which are listed in the Regulations.
- 2.9 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.
- 2.10 106 responses were received to the consultation exercise.
- 2.11 The WESP was updated to reflect the feedback received during the consultation exercise, and a post-consultation version was approved by Cabinet on the 25th January 2022.

Welsh Government consideration of post-consultation WESP

- 2.12 Following Cabinet approval, the post-consultation WESP was submitted to the Welsh Government before the end of January 2022, as is required by the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) Regulations 2019.
- 2.13 As outlined in the paper considered by Cabinet in January 2022, the next step was for the Welsh Government to consider the WESP, with further discussions to take place with local authorities as required.
- 2.14 Feedback was received from the Welsh Government in May 2022. This is attached as Appendix B.
- 2.15 The feedback received included a request that an updated version of the document was submitted to Welsh Government in June 2022.
- 2.16 The WESP has been updated to reflect the feedback received, and the updated document has been submitted to Welsh Government as required. However, the timescales for submitting the updated version to

Welsh Government did not allow for the WESP to be brought to Cabinet before being submitted to Welsh Government.

- 2.17 The following is an overview of the main changes made to the document in response to the feedback received from the Welsh Government:
- Additional data provided in respect of transition from Cylchoedd Meithrin to Welsh-medium primary provision;
 - Information added in respect of Flying Start provision;
 - Information about Trochi provision updated to reflect developments since the previous version of the WESP was approved, and future plans;
 - Information added in respect of the new Welsh language categories that are currently being introduced including:
 - o which of the new categories Powys schools are expected to transfer to
 - o the expectations for schools transferring into transitional categories
 - Information added about the steps the Council will undertake to improve its monitoring of Welsh-medium provision in the secondary sector, to ensure the provision does not deteriorate in the future;
 - Information added about Welsh language activities being offered by partners such as Mentrau Iaith and the Urdd;
 - Targets added in respect of how the Council will increase Welsh-medium ALN provision;
 - Information added about the current Welsh language skills of school staff, as provided by the School Workforce Annual Census (SWAC);
 - Further information about 'Where do we expect to be at the end of our ten year plan?' added for each Outcome.

Next steps

- 2.18 Welsh Government will further consider the WESP over the summer, with the expectation that it is approved by the Welsh Ministers over the summer, and comes into force on the 1st September 2022.
- 2.19 The feedback received from the Welsh Government (Appendix B) also indicates that once the WESP has been approved, local authorities will be expected to prepare an action plan for the first 5 years by the end of the autumn term 2022.
- 2.20 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.

3. Advice

- 3.1 It is advised that Cabinet approves the updated Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) for 2022-32 which has been submitted to Welsh

Government to comply with the requirements of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) Regulations 2019.

- 3.2 It is noted, however, that the current WESP was prepared and approved by the Council's previous administration and may not reflect the ambition of the new administration in respect of developing Welsh-medium provision in Powys. The new administration is committed to achieving and exceeding the ambition shown in the current WESP.

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 p.a. for staffing. These are currently being funded from a variety of sources including the Corporate Transformation budget and 21st Century Schools Grant. In addition, a bid for a specific grant to support the costs of the Trochi provision in 2021-22 was successful and a further bid is being submitted for 2022-23.
- 4.2 Once new Welsh medium provision in an English medium school is embedded, there would need to be a process, involving consultation, to change the category of the school from English medium to dual stream and the resources implications associated with this and their funding would need to be considered in detail at this stage.
- 4.3 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. Data Protection

- 6.1 N/A

7. Comment from local member(s)

7.1 N/A

8. Impact Assessment

8.1 Impact assessments were considered by Cabinet when developing the WESP.

8.2 An initial impact assessment was considered along with the draft WESP in September 2021. This was updated to reflect comments received during the consultation and the updated WESP document, and an updated version was considered by Cabinet in January 2022.

9. Recommendation

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

Contact Officer:	Sarah Astley
Tel:	01597 826265
Email:	sarah.astley@powys.gov.uk

Head of Service:	Georgie Bevan
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Corporate Director:	Lynette Lovell
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