

CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMITTEE SUMMONS

C.Hanagan
Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
The Pavilions
Cambrian Park
Clydach Vale CF40 2XX

Meeting Contact: Sarah Daniel - Senior Democratic Services Officer (07385 086 169)

YOU ARE SUMMONED to a meeting of CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE to be held Virtually on WEDNESDAY, 13TH OCTOBER, 2021 at 5.00 PM.

Non Committee Members and Members of the public may request the facility to address the Committee at their meetings on the business listed although facilitation of this request is at the discretion of the Chair. It is kindly asked that such notification is made to Democratic Services by Monday, 11 October 2021 on the contact details listed above, including stipulating whether the address will be in Welsh or English.

AGENDA Page No's

1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

To receive disclosures of personal interest from Members in accordance with the Code of Conduct

Note:

- Members are requested to identify the item number and subject matter that their interest relates to and signify the nature of the personal interest: and
- 2. Where Members withdraw from a meeting as a consequence of the disclosure of a prejudicial interest they must notify the Chairman when they leave.

2. MINUTES

To receive the minutes of the previous meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held on 22.09.2021

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3. CONSULTATION LINKS

Information is provided in respect of relevant <u>consultations</u> for consideration by the Committee.

4. SCRUTINY RESEARCH

A scrutiny research facility is available within the Council Business Unit to support Members' scrutiny responsibilities and their roles as Elected Members. Such research strengthens scrutiny Committees work programmes to ensure outcome-based topics are identified. For any scrutiny research requirements please contact: Scrutiny@rhonddacynon-taff.gov.uk

5. CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM - NEW DRAFT FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATION, IMPROVEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

6. CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE (CAMHS)

15 - 22

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

7. WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN (WESP) CONSULTATION

23 - 154

8. UPDATE ON THE EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES
SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS AND PRUS IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

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9. CONSULTATION - EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2021 - 2024

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10. CHAIR'S REVIEW AND CLOSE

To reflect on the meeting and actions to be taken forward.

11. URGENT BUSINESS

To consider any items, which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, is of the opinion should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency

Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication

Circulation:-

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee (County Borough Councillor S. Rees-Owen and County Borough Councillor J Edwards respectively)

County Borough Councillors:

Councillor J Brencher, Councillor A Calvert, Councillor S Evans, Councillor A Fox, Councillor E Griffiths, Councillor S Morgans, Councillor S Powell, Councillor M Powell, Councillor G Stacey, Councillor S Trask, Councillor D Williams and Councillor J Barton

Co-Opted Members:-

Mr J Fish, Voting Elected Parent / Governor Representative
Mrs R Nicholls, Voting Elected Parent / Governor Representative
Mr L Patterson, Voting Elected Parent / Governor Representative
Mr M Cleverley
Ms A Jones, Representing UNITE
Mr C Jones, Representing GMB
Mrs C Jones, Representing the National Union of Teachers and Teachers' Panel
Mr D Price, Representing UNISON
Mr A Rickett, Voting Diocesan Authorities' Representative



Agenda Item 2



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE Minutes of the meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee meeting held virtually on Wednesday, 22 September 2021 at 5.00 pm

County Borough Councillors - Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Members in attendance:-

Councillor S. Rees-Owen (Chair)

Councillor J Edwards Councillor J Brencher Councillor S Evans Councillor A Fox

Councillor E Griffiths Councillor D Owen-Jones

Councillor S Morgans
Councillor S Powell
Councillor M Powell
Councillor S Trask
Councillor D Williams

Co-Opted Members in attendance:-

Mr L Patterson

Officers in attendance:-

Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication Mr P Nicholls, Service Director, Legal Services
 Mr P Mee, Group Director Community & Children's Services
 Ms A Lloyd, Service Director, Children's Services
 Ms G Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
 Ms A Richards, Service Director 21st Century Schools and Transformation
 Ms C Williams, Service Manager Disabled Children
 Mr A Cope, Regional Development Manager
 Ms L Peake, Chief Executive Kinship
 Ms K Owen, Gatsby Project Manager
 Ms S Woolson, Employment, Education and Training Team Manager
 Mrs S Daniel, Senior Scrutiny Services Officer

11 Declaration of Interest

Cllr S Trask declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 7 (Kinship Care Notice of Motion) and withdrew from the meeting during the discussion of this item

Cllr S Evans declared a personal interest in Agenda item 5 (Gatsby Project report) due to her work at the University of South Wales.

Cllr M Powell declared a personal interest in Agenda item 7 as his wife works in children's services

12 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 21st July 2021 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

13 Consultation Links

Members were provided with information to consultations which may be of interest to them

14 Scrutiny Research

The Senior Scrutiny Officer reminded members of the Scrutiny research facility that was available to them and advised that members should email the scrutiny mailbox with any requests.

15 Gatsby Project Report

The Chairperson welcomed the officers to the meeting and invited them to present the report.

The Gatsby Project Manager supported her report with a presentation to members, which gave an overview of the Gatsby Benchmark Good Career Pilot. She explained that the pilot gives a commitment to each and every child within the RCTCBC area between the ages of 11-18, to receive the highest quality career experiences to provide them with the opportunity and confidence to achieve success and fulfilment in their working lives.

The Gatsby Project Manager advised members that the benchmarks had been devised, arising from research from the Gatsby Foundation and they were:

- A stable careers programme
- Learning from career and labour market information
- Addressing the needs of each pupil
- Linking curriculum learning to careers
- · Encounters with employers and employees
- Experiences of workplaces
- Encounters with further and higher education
- Personal guidance

Upon conclusion of the presentation, the Chairperson invited members of the Committee to ask questions of the Gatsby Project Manager.

A member applauded the efforts of the Project Manager for her work on the pilot. He added that the Committee should also recognise the accolade of Hayley Jacobs, Career Leader at Bryn Celynnog Comprehensive who had been shortlisted twice for the prestigious UK wide Career Development Institute Career Leader of the Year award and winning the title in 2021. He recommended that a personal letter of congratulations from the Committee be sent to Hayley Jacobs and also Bryn Celynnog Comprehensive School who had featured in the BBC Teach programme.

Another member congratulated the Gatsby Project Manager on the work in the pilot and felt it captured many of the concerns and challenges that young people faced. She asked for more information on the availability of good quality work placements for young people to support them in their aspirations. She asked also if school staff were still able to provide a mentoring process to students due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Gatsby Project Manager responded that the role of the career leader can be

described as the career conductor of the school. They work alongside herself to create a career plan that is individual and bespoke to each school and considering individuals that need to look outside of their own community for opportunities. She added that the Gatsby Benchmark plan ensured that the governing body and the senior leadership team at each of the schools involved were updated on the progress of the Gatsby profile on a termly basis. She further added that the Employment, Education and Training team were also involved and had developed some bespoke mentoring for individuals.

In terms of work experience placements, she informed members that they worked very closely with schools to offer and identify high-level placements for the young people in RCT, particularly throughout the pandemic where a number of virtual work experience placements were successfully delivered. She added that whilst the country were going through the global pandemic, they didn't feel it was fair that the class of 2020 were to miss out on what they consider vital placements and opportunities.

A Member asked what the intention was on reporting the outcomes of the pilot and the impact for learners and how success was measured. The member also asked for more information on the engagement and involvement with universities and other higher education settings.

The Gatsby Project Manager responded that they had undertaken three full audits on the programme to measure outcomes and impacts. They have now put in place a tracking model to look at the interactions of schools, career interventions and other key markers that had been identified, to look at attainment markers that can measure the impacts in the schools. She added she felt the pandemic had delayed the process somewhat. In response to the interactions with universities and higher education she advised that further work was needed to develop this area and would be happy to work with the member and also update at a later meeting with more information on the outcomes and impacts of the Gatsby Project.

A Member referred to the Gatsby+ trial that has provided bespoke and intensive career planning and work experience support aimed at pupils who are not reaching their academic potential that has initially supported five students. She asked how this ties in to the strapline every one, every person and what were the interventions used for these students.

The Officer responded that one of the key focus areas in benchmark two focussed on the needs of the individual child. She added that they were working on making the benchmarks as effective as possible for the schools in RCT. A small group of pupils were selected with high attainment, that move further away from their potential through years 9-11 and through to KS5 and she felt focussing the Gatsby Project on those pupils from an early age could positively affect their attainment. She concluded that this was in the early pilot stages and was happy to report back on the Gatsby+ progress at a later meeting. This was welcomed by the member

In response to a query from a member, the Gatsby Project Manager responded that the Curriculum Benchmark 4 was a focus at the moment and that careers being taught through the curriculum and not being a separate entity were an integral part of curriculum. She added that over the Summer term four working parties (Science, English, Humanities and PE) met on a weekly basis for four weeks to plan how those faculties can plan career interventions in those curriculum areas. She added that the working groups were an ongoing piece of work.

The Director of Education added that going forward she was hopeful of being able to share some meaningful data which would demonstrate the impact of learner outcomes and destinations but there were current restrictions on reporting on key performance indicators.

A Member asked if officers felt the Authority had the partnerships in place for careers training with schools and businesses.

The Gatsby Project Manager advised that relations with businesses could be stronger and more work needs to be undertaken in that area. She added that there was a career leader within the Employment and Education team who was helping to develop work in that area.

A Member asked if the Authority uses data from business intelligence around growth sectors to ensure the future proofing of the objectives. The Officer responded that they are continually updating schools on labour market information to ensure their offer to schools is clear and follows the market trend. She added in her opinion it is an area that they can improve on.

A Member referred to the emergency measure for Covid-19 Benchmarks that were set out in the report and asked if these were still being used and when they would be reviewed.

In response, the Project Manager advised that Covid-19 Benchmarks were put in place to support schools. She stated that they are led by the leadership of the Local Authority on how to progress in the future and this would not be a decision she would make without their advice.

A member asked when officers expected to see face-to-face work experience return.

The Gatsby Project Manager responded that they have been flexible and adapted depending on the Covid-19 restrictions and circumstances. Schools had been given the options of virtual or face-to-face placements. She acknowledged that face-to-face placements were certainly more powerful and whilst they were keen to return to face-to-face work experience the Health and Safety guidance had to be followed.

A Member asked how the five pupils and schools were selected to take part in the Gatsby+ programme.

The Gatsby Project Manager replied that the Gatsby+ is a pilot to understand if the additional support has an impact. She stated that it was very resource heavy as support was delivered on a 1-2-1 basis. The schools were chosen due to the strong working relationships established with them, which, when undertaking a pilot is vital that they will deliver results so the results can be shared with other schools. The Schools selected also have a strong career leader so were in a good position to try something new. She added that the schools selected the pupils, with specific criteria set for those who were not achieving their academic potential.

A Member thanked the officers for the report and asked if this could be revisited in the spring when the two years had been completed and outcomes from the project could be demonstrated to the Committee. He asked if the schools receive extra funding to carry out their duties or if this carried out using the existing schools budget, and is the school curriculum fit for purpose to achieve the benchmarks set out in the report. He also asked, when considering Brexit and labour market information should we be teaching modern foreign languages

in primary and secondary schools as they may not have an opportunity to utilise these skills in the future.

The Gatsby Project Manager responded that schools don't receive additional funding and we need to ensure a sustainable model ensure success of the Gatsby benchmarks. She advised the schools that were having the greatest success with the benchmark profiles were the schools that already had many of the priorities that feature in the self-evaluation plans for developing their curriculum. In terms of the curriculum, she added that we were in a great position in developing the new curriculum and we were ensuring that benchmark four (linking curriculum learning to careers) is interwoven and interlinked and works in partnership with schools in RCT, colleges and careers wales to ensure pupils have a clear transition.

The Director of Education advised that it is important that children are prepared for the best pathway that reflects their skills – whether this is training, employment, apprenticeships or further education it was important it is right for them and they feel supported to make the right choices in the future. She added that learners need to be prepared for the world of work and for jobs that don't exist yet . Schools are supported to offer more bespoke pathways for learners who don't engage with the more traditional curriculum offer.

A Member asked if the outcomes were broken down into gender demographics. Will these be presented to members.

The Gatsby Project Manager responded that they are measured and when this item is reported back we can include this in the report.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Item to be reported back to Committee in the Autumn of 2022 to include detailed information on outcomes, included gender demographics.
- A letter of congratulations to be sent to Hayley Jacobs and Bryn Celynnog

16 Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Report

The Service Director Children's Services presented the report to members to update them in relation to progress with action plans associated with Inspection of the Disabled Children's Service and Focused Activity in the 16+ Service.

The Service Director also referred members to the appendices in the report which provided members with a "RAG" Status against the action plan that detailed areas that were doing well and areas that needed development, which the service area were committed to seeing through

A Member referred to the ALN programme and asked what the integration provision for disabled children and what schools provide looks like, particularly for those children that are disabled that may attend a mainstream school.

The Service Manager Disabled Children responded that social workers within the disabled children's service worked closely alongside education colleagues in both special and mainstream schools. Moving forward with new act, the same officers are undertaking training and working alongside colleagues to take up the implementation of the IDPs and have already been part of some pilot programmes.

The Service Manager Disabled Children added that some pilot programmes had

also been undertaken in a special school in Ysgol Hen Felin to look how officers and social workers were also involved in the implementation. She advised members that the Authority are not taking the disabled children's service up to age 25, this was based on research from IPC and was also in line with the Additional Learning Needs act. She added however, that they were working much more closely with 18-25 year olds who are looked after, in partnership with adult services to build on the transition protocol.

A Member referred to the improvement plan where the RAG status for managers was indicating a red status in relation to considering reviewing capacity allocation and team development that had been halted due to vacancies. She asked if members could be provided an update on that.

The Service Director Children's Services replied that recruitment had taken place and the service continued to manage throughout the very difficult pandemic period. Now that staff had been inducted and settled into their roles the development workshop will take place in November 2021 as they considered it important that new staff had the opportunity to take part.

A Member asked what provisional care/ support is given in the Borough for young people up to the age of 25 who develop a disability in later childhood, and in particular from blindness. He asked if there was any specific support in RCT for them. He asked this as there was a child in his ward who could not access braille books from their local library but instead got them from the RNIB

The Service Manager Disabled Services advised that a family member or a professional can make a referral to the Disabled Children's Service team at any point and through that process a comprehensive assessment is undertaken to ascertain any additional needs and what specific support can be offered by the disabled children's service. She added that there is also a sensory team that operates that can support with specific issues. She advised the member that she would clarify about the specific availability of braille and would send him the information requested including detailed information of the sensory team.

A Member referred to the areas that had been identified in the report, specifically "increased focus on family strength and the identification of personal outcomes" and asked what improvement methods had been identified. And also she asked how the service ensures that the voice of the child is heard and acted upon.

The Service Manager Disabled Children replied that the voice of the child can never be complete as an action as this would continually be developed by improving the communication skills of their staff. She added that they also picked up that advocacy wasn't routinely offered but this has now been addressed and the service can demonstrate that this is now offered to all children and young people that are referred to their service.

In addition Members were informed that an extensive Makaton programme had been rolled out and pictorial software had been invested in to translate any information into a visual language for young people. She added that the enablement team now started in a position with visuals, such as plans, assessments and practices for their families, which empowers and enables our children and young people to be more independent.

A Member referred to housing associations and recent discussions whereby housing would be built with disabled families and their specific needs in mind and asked if this was an area where the disabled children's service could work with the housing associations to provide them with advice on what considerations should be made when building these properties.

The Service Manager Disabled Children stated that there is a paediatric occupational therapy team that work closely with housing colleagues and Trivallis that advise on specific needs of their families. She added that early discussions were also undertaken when there was an opportunity for any new build properties as there were a number of families on the waiting list for specialist housing with specific needs. She confirmed that any specialist advice that was required, the occupational therapists could advise.

A Member asked if it was usual practice that new staff receive training on children's rights and disability rights.

The Service Manager Children's Services replied that training on children's rights are in the training calendar for all children services staff. She added that they have also held training on disability rights and safeguarding disabled children though these were not in the rolling annual calendar.

A Member referred to Post 16 on the Improvement Plan and asked what support they are provided as some children will move from a mainstream school into a special school setting. She added she would be interested to hear what support was also in place for children with hidden disabilities such as poor mental health, anxiety and autism.

The Service Director Children's Services advised that they had recently reviewed and updated the transition policy. She advised that they had increased their work around housing to increase the availability of support in supported accommodation and they were also working closely with colleagues in the Health Board around Mental Health and Wellbeing. She added that other areas of development around Looked After Young People was now in place and they have commissioned an emotional wellbeing and therapeutic services team to support them through their journey.

The Service Manager Disabled Children added that children are ideally brought into transition process from the age of 14 to give plenty of time to work with the family and partners to ensure a long and smooth transition period. She further added that children with complex needs were supported with additional planning to support them at their own pace.

The Director of Education added that for learners with transitional period is an integral part of preparing them for their next phase in education. In some of the Special Schools, there is provision on college sites to enable the young people to become acclimatised in a new environment. She reassured members that even if learners do not meet the requirements to access the services in the disabled children's team, there are still requirements on the schools to work in partnership with the Authority to mitigate all risks and still ensure there is a robust transition plan in place for that learner.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Members noted the contents of the report and recommended that all members receive further information from the sensory team on their availability of services.

17 Kinship Care (Notice of Motion)

The Chairperson welcomed Lucy Peake, the Chief Executive of Kinship to the meeting who accepted the invitation to attend to support officers and contribute to the item.

The Service Director Children's Services presented the report to Members which was in response to a Notice of Motion from Council on the 13th January 2021. The report detailed information received from a consultation exercise with connected person (kinship) foster carers to find out their thoughts and feelings in relation to the assessment and support provide by the service and to identify where improvements could be made.

The report also detailed the work of the Authority in collaboration with Kinship, formally called Grandparents Plus.

The Chairperson asked for more information on the working relationship with Kinship colleagues and asked if this was being developed.

The Director for Children's Services advised that after the Committee previously considered this item, she asked her teams to develop those pathways with Kinship colleagues to ensure carers can access support that is available to them. She added that she was really pleased that a number of carers had praised the support that was available to them.

The Regional Development Manager advised that the response from the survey was positive with nearly 60% of Kinship carers responding to the survey. The survey respondents gave some good, honest feedback which will be used to develop the service, he added that most of the responses were positive.

The Chief Executive of Kinship commented that the Development Manager at Kinship for South Wales has advised of positive working relationships with various teams in RCT such as therapeutic family services, Looked After Children's Service, schools and Educational Psychologists which, in turn gives Kinship carers trust in Kinship as a charity. She added that as an organisation they could see the commitment from RCT in supporting Kinship carers. She concluded that the outcomes for children were improved for children due to the continuity of carers and being able to stay within their family network, than they would be if they stayed within the foster care system, she hoped that they can continue to work together to build on the positive outcomes.

The Chairperson thanked the officers for their contributions and for Lucy Peake, Chief Executive of Kinship for attending the meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Committee then considered their formal response to the Notice of Motion and recommended to Cabinet the following:

To endorse the three steps set out in the report to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee in February 2021 which were:

- To continue to develop and improve the support services available to Kinship foster carers
- To continue to implement the Code of Practice for special guardians and improve the support available
- To continue to collaborate with organisations to improve support to friends and family carers across RCTCBC

Members also recommended to Cabinet the following areas for development which were set out in the report to members which were:

- A 'rushed' Assessment process
- Staff turnover and absence

- Timely information sharing
- A potentially 'intimidating' Panel experience
- Peer Support
- Specific Support Groups

18 Information Reports

Members were advised of the reports that were for reported for information and were reminded if they had any queries in relation to them that they should contact the Scrutiny mailbox.

19 Chair's Review and Close

The Chairperson thanked all for attending the meeting and looked forward to the Committee being able to meet on a hybrid basis in the future.

20 Urgent Business

None

CLLR S REES-OWEN CHAIR.





RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2021/22

CHILDREN AND YOU PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY AND CHILDRENS SERVICES

CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

13 OCTOBER 2021

Author: Annabel Lloyd, Director, Children's Services.

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Scrutiny Members with information in relation to Children's Services interaction with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) in the context of two prior presentations by CAMHS at Scrutiny Meeting in March and Council in June 2021.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Acknowledge the information contained within the report.
- 2.2 Scrutinise and comment on the information provided.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In March 2020, Scrutiny Committee received a presentation in relation to the progress with improvements and new developments at CAMHS. It was well received with Scrutiny Committee, and later in June Council also received and welcomed the presentation, looking forward to the impact of new developments for RCT families.
- 3.2 This report highlights some of the areas where children's services continue to experience barriers or challenges in accessing the right services for young people.

4. CAMHS

- 4.1 New initiatives are welcomed and University Health Board officers involved in leading those inspire confidence. These include the;
 - Single Point of Access
 - Publication of CAMHS duties and services (see Appendix 1)
 - Framework on embedding a whole-school approach to emotional and mental well-being.
- 4.2 Also since June, the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) has commenced its implementation of Nyth/Nest. This has been co-produced by the Together for Children and Young People (T4CYP2) network and a wide range of stakeholders. More information can be found at: https://collaborative.nhs.wales/networks/wales-mental-health-network/together-for-children-and-young-people-2/the-nest-framework/. It is early days with this development which has the ambition to change services. The Bird's eye view document accompanying the initiative says that has been established because:

'Lots of children, young people, parents and carers and the people who work with them, felt that services needed to improve. The important thing was to make sure early help and the right help was available at the right time'

- 4.3 It is founded upon the following principles of:
 - Nurture taken care of and cherished.
 - Empowering feeling strong and listened to.
 - Safety- feeling protected and able to be yourself.
 - Trust, reliable and there for you.
- 4.4 Nyth / Nest is a future development that Children's Services will contribute to and look forward to seeing the benefit for RCT families. The RPB has until 31.3.22 to develop its plan under Nyth / Nest.
- 4.5 Scrutiny Committee Members will be aware that as a matter of good practice, and to ensure that families, young people and staff can access the right services at the right time, the following services and pathways have been developed. These are children's services funded provisions with preventative intention and results:
 - Service delivery pathways between Resilient Families Service and the Neurodevelopmental Team and similar with CAMHS is underway
 - Access to therapeutic professionals within Resilient Families Service
 - YEPS re-structure included Mental Health and Wellbeing Officers

- Development of Disabled Children's Service to include the provision of specialist Enablement Team support that can be accessed by families whilst waiting for neuro-development assessments
- Therapeutic Families' Service a multidisciplinary team, which offers consultation, therapeutic assessments and interventions to children and families
- Implemented trauma informed practice in the children's homes including access to psychology for enhance case management
- CAMHS and Psychologist provision currently being negotiated between Health and YOS to assist development of Enhanced Case Management (ECM) and trauma informed practice
- Commission of therapeutic service for looked after and adopted young people (MAPPS)
- Commission of specialist therapeutic intervention for young people involved in sexually harmful behaviour
- 4.6 The subsequent content of this report focuses upon the remaining challenge, and our plans to address that.
- 4.7 It is recognised that pandemic impact, staffing challenges and increasing demand in both children's services and CAMHS are taking their toll. However, despite the developing services in both Children's Services, and CAMHS, there are continuing challenges for families and young people in accessing the right services at the right time at the highest spectrum of need. This is experienced in the following ways.
 - Long –standing (pre-pendemic) waiting lists for neuro developmental assessment that extend long beyond the expected standard of 26 weeks leaving families and children in an intensely difficult period of waiting and uncertainty. This includes some examples of looked after young people who are waiting
 - In developing RCT Children's Services' Next Steps Strategy for the safe reduction of looked after numbers, the UHB was encouraged to contribute by representation on the steering group. Unfortunately, this did not come to fruition as the CAMHS colleague wasn't able to join the steering group meetings or identify a colleague who could assist.
 - We continue to experience challenges in accessing CAMHS consultation, treatment and therapies for children on the edge of care and who are looked after. Often these children's needs are viewed by CAMHS professionals as associated with trauma, or a need for stability alongside better placement arrangements, and therefore not suitable for CAMHS service provision
 - Challenges in accessing in-patient treatment. We very much want to avoid hospital admission and wrongly medicalising Children's problems. However, from time to time it becomes necessary for a child to be admitted to hospital due to mental illness. These occasions are few and far between, and have seen challenge between professionals where young people and families most need us to work jointly. On one such occasion, this involved an expectation that the Authority make a child looked after whose family felt he should have in patient treatment, the young person was later sectioned once he became an adult. In

- another case a young person waited 5 months for a decision about a hospital place, his situation deteriorating meanwhile
- CAMHS consultation time agreed for YOS has been sporadic since 2018. This
 is being monitored by Cwm Taf Offender Management Board

Continuing Care

4.8 In all our work, children's services invite a partnership approach to developing services and working alongside families. The Welsh Government Guidance in the area introduces its document in the following way:

This guidance assists Local Health Boards (LHBs), Local Authorities (LAs) and their partners (for example Children's Hospice, Action for Children, Barnardo's, specialist educational provision) to plan and support children and young people's continuing care needs. (https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-03/the-children-and-young-peoples-continuing-care-guidance.pdf)

- 4.9 A joint approach was very much in mind when the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) developed its review of the collaborative arrangements between local authorities and the local health board in Cwm Taf Morgannwg for meeting the needs of children and young people with complex needs. The aim was to develop new arrangements which partners were confident are fair, transparent, streamlined, timely, robust and effective in promoting better outcomes. However some months after the RPB work had commenced, the Local Health Board presented its own policy and framework for assessing and meeting the needs of children with complex needs which falls short of the aspirations of the RPB work. RCT Children's Services will continue to work with UHB officers on a proposed multi-agency approach to delivering the work under the UHB policy.
- 4.10 The above challenges highlight the need for a more integrated approach to planning and service development and delivery for children with complex needs between the Council and the UHB, based on a shared responsibility and the desire to act in the best interests of the child irrespective of organisational differences or statutory responsibilities. The Council has and will continue to make representation directly to the UHB and through strategic partnership arrangements such as the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) to achieve this.

5. **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 This is an information report.
- 5.2 An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of the implementation process.

6. **CONSULTATION**

6.1 This is an information report.

6.2 Further consultation will however be undertaken as part of the implementation process.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

7.1 There are no new direct financial implications aligned to this report.

8. <u>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED</u>

8.1 The legal requirements for children and young people are set down within the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

9. <u>LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/ SIP</u>

- 9.1 This consultation links to the corporate priority of promoting independence and positive lives for everyone by ensuring that the Council listens to the people it provides for.
- 9.2 It also contributes to the following well-being goals:
 - A prosperous Wales
 - A resilient Wales.
 - A healthier Wales.
 - A more equal Wales
 - A Wales of cohesive communities
 - A globally responsible Wales

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1 All of the new developments aimed at preventing young people from needing to access specialist metal health services are welcomed. Children's Services have, over time, developed a number of its own therapeutic provisions aimed at preventing escalation of need.
- 10.2 However, there remains a desire for a more joined up and shared approach to assessing and meeting need for those with the most complex needs, and some distance to go in achieving an integrated approach that is solely focused on good outcomes from children. A shift in culture is required from one that is characterised by differences such as differing legislative duties, to a position that singularly puts children first is required.

Single Point of Access Team (SPOA):

- All referrals into the service go to a team of 2 x Band 7 experienced staff
 members. Staff will triage referrals for appropriateness on a daily basis. The
 referrals will be delegated to the relevant team with as much information as
 needed to make a decision on assessment.
- The single point of access team will address all duty calls entering the service providing advice, consultation and information.
- Single Point of Access staff will seek out further information and liaise with referrers to collate and collaborate in order to provide timely appropriate care and assessment.
- Adhere to the referral criteria in accepting referrals from health care and local authority providers.
- Provide information to the referrer on best course of action in dealing with the referral content and signposting of referrals not suitable for CAMHS.

Community Intensive Therapy Team:

The Core functions of the CAMHS Community Intensive Therapy Team include:

- Offering specialist mental health assessments to children and young people who suffer with severe mental illness, complex needs and associated high risk behaviours
- offering bespoke intensive therapeutic input in the community to deliver evidence based interventions following a bio-psycho-social model
- providing liaison, consultation and specialist training in the care of children and young people with mental health problems to health colleagues and partner agencies.

Crisis Liaison Team:

The Core functions of the CAMHS Crisis Liaison Team include:

- A rapid response in offering specialist mental health assessments within 48 hours ,to children and young people who are in crisis ,who present with an imminent risk of harm to self or others; severe mood disorder; acute psychotic disorder; severe eating disorder.
- Offering follow up appointments, when appropriate, to provide a brief therapeutic intervention.
- Providing liaison, consultation and specialist training in the care of children and young people with mental health problems, to health colleagues and partner agencies.

Generic Core CAMHS Team:

The teams sit within Tier 2 CAMHS covering the Cwm Taf Morgannwg locality. The Core functions of the Secondary CAMHS teams in normal circumstance include:

- Employing a Choice and Partnership Approach model and providing mental health assessments to children and young people who are experiencing moderate to severe mental health issues within a clinic setting.
- Offering assessments and follow up appointments, when appropriate, to deliver medication monitoring and therapeutic intervention.
- Providing liaison, consultation and specialist training in the care of children and young people with mental health problems, to health colleagues and partner agencies.

Tier 3 Child and Adolescent Learning Disabilities Team:

Core functions of the Tertiary Tier 3 CAMHS LD Team:

CAIDS focuses on providing advice, support, assessment and treatment for children and young people with a moderate to severe intellectual disability AND complex mental health issues, including challenging behaviour. However, specific Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) assessment for children and young people with intellectual disability is not commissioned and will not be undertaken by CAIDS.

Whilst a diagnosis of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and prescribing initiated, ongoing support including prescribing and reviewing will remain the responsibility of the local lead for the case.

Prior to referral to this service the child or young person must have had an assessment by local secondary mental health or paediatric services. For those who do not meet the eligibility criteria, further team consultation and signposting may be offered to the referrer.

Young Persons' Drug and Alcohol Service:

This service offers Tier 3 specialist Intervention to young people who present with complex drug or alcohol use and associated high risk behaviour that may or may not be in conjunction with mental health needs.

This includes Young People who present with;

- Intra-venous drug use
- Dependent drug or alcohol use
- Poly-drug use
- Chaotic drug use
- Safeguarding concerns linked to drug use
- Concerns regarding dual diagnosis (drug use and mental health needs)
- Recreational drug overdose
- Pregnant drug users.

The young people we work with may be using one or several substances at a harmful or dependent level.

CAMHS offer treatment for a variety of conditions such as: ADHD, Anxiety, Depression, Psychosis, Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia, Bipolar Disorder, Borderline Personality Disorder, Schizophrenia, Tourettes, Drug and Alcohol Addiction, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Phobias, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Suicide and Self Harm, Stress, Trauma, Trichotillomania, Mutism.

What is Ordinarily Available with CAMHS:

Assessment, Advice, Consultation, Medication Monitoring, Physical Observation Monitoring (height, weight, BP), Family Therapy, Anxiety Management, Depression Management, Dietetic Input, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Crisis Intervention, Habit Reversal Therapy, Psychodynamic Therapy, Drug and Alcohol Counselling, Psychotherapy and Psychoeducation.



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 13TH OCTOBER 2021

CONSULTATION - DRAFT WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES

Report author: Grace Zecca-Hanagan, 21st Century Schools

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee with an overview of the Council's draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) which was presented to the Cabinet meeting on the 20th July 2021.
- 1.2 To give Members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee the opportunity to contribute to the consultation process in respect of the draft WESP.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that members:

- 2.1 Scrutinise the information provided in respect of the Council's draft WESP.
- 2.2 Contribute to Council's draft WESP statutory consultation process.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 To provide Members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee with an update on the draft WESP and to reflect Members comments as part of the statutory consultation process.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 Members are aware that the Council has set an ambitious target to increase the percentage of year one learners in Welsh medium education. The draft WESP, attached as Appendix 1 sets out the actions

- the Council will take over the forthcoming ten years, up to and including 2032, to make progress towards the achievement of this target.
- 4.2 In order to meet this target by 2032, the Council, along with officers from a number of external groups and organisations who form the WESP Strategic Group need to work collectively. The Council, therefore, welcomes the opportunity to consult and engage with a wide range of stakeholders to seek their views on the achievement of this ambitious target.
- 4.3 The draft WESP statutory consultation process provides opportunities for the Council's stakeholders to give their feedback. In addition, Members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, is considered as consultee as part of the Council's overall consultation arrangements.
- 4.4 Members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee can access the statutory consultation via the following <u>link</u> and a hard copy of the statutory consultation is also provided as <u>Appendix 2</u> to this report.
- 4.5 The feedback provided via the statutory consultation process will be incorporated into a Cabinet Report and be considered by Cabinet as part of its consideration of the Council's draft WESP.
- 4.6 It is proposed that prior to formal consideration by the Cabinet (as outlined in 4.5 above), the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee undertakes pre-scrutiny on the draft WESP. These comments and observations will be presented to Cabinet when it considers this matter.

5. <u>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY</u>

5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (with Social-Economic Duty) for the draft WESP is attached as Appendix 3 to the Cabinet Report.

6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 A Welsh Language Impact Assessment for the draft WESP is attached as Appendix 4 to the Cabinet Report

7. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

7.1 The draft WESP is subject to a comprehensive public statutory consultation with a range of stakeholders for no less than an eight week period. In addition, it has been presented to the Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group for consideration.

7.2 Current circumstances will inevitably limit the opportunity for face to face engagement, however, the Council will make best use of the variety of social media, remote meetings and digital tools to engage with stakeholders.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

8.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 The following legislation / regulations are aligned to this report:
 - 1. Section 84 of The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.
 - 2. The WESP (Wales) Regulations 2019.
 - 3. The WESP (Wales) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020.

10. <u>LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.</u>

- 10.1 The draft WESP links to the Council's Corporate Plan for the period between 2020 to 2024, specifically the priority:
 - Prosperity Creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative, entrepreneurial and fulfil their potential and prosper:
 - Ensuring we have good schools, so all children have access to a great education.
- 10.3 The delivery of the WESP will contribute to all seven well-being goals within the Future Generation (Wales) Act. In addition, due regard has been made to the Five Ways of Working, as contained within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

11. CONCLUSION

11.1 The Council remains committed to ensuring the availability of Welsh medium education, from the initial early years through to primary and secondary education before progressing through to higher and further education, so that all learners whatever their learning needs are able to access Welsh medium provision. This is in line with Welsh Government's vision for one million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050 as set out in Cymraeg 2050.

11.2	Members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee are asked to provide feedback as part of the Council's overall statutory consultation process.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13TH OCTOBER 2021

DRAFT WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES

Contact Officer: Grace Zecca-Hanagan.

Background Papers

- 1. Draft WESP.
- 2. Statutory Consultation.
- 3. Equality Impact Assessment (with Social-Economic Duty).
- 4. Welsh Language Impact Assessment.

Officer to Contact:

Grace Zecca-Hanagan



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022 to 2032



DRAFT
July 2021



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN - 2022 TO 2032

This Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) is made under Section 84 of The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013¹ and complies with The WESP (Wales) Regulations 2019² and The WESP (Wales) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020³. When setting targets, due regard has been given to the statutory guidance issued by Welsh Ministers.

Gaynor Davies

(Director of Education and Inclusion Services)

¹ School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013

² The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (Wales) Regulations 2019

The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (Wales) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020

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OUR VISION

As the Council looks to the future, it wants to build on what it has achieved to date and make sure that every town and community in the County Borough is a great place to live, work and play. The Council's ambition is for everyone to be as healthy, independent and prosperous as possible throughout their lives. Enabling access to a good education, developing skills and decent employment opportunities are all key priority areas.

Integral to achieving this ambition is the vision that:

There are good schools, so all children and young people, whatever their learning need is, have equitable access to good English and Welsh medium education.

The Council will deliver this vision by supporting children to have the best start in life and be ready for learning through an improved early years' system, supporting families through the childcare offer and by investing in new and significantly improved school and community facilities through the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme.

The Council will show clear leadership and commitment in its vision for Welsh medium and Welsh language education and, as such, our target is to:

Increase the percentage of year one learners in Welsh medium education by between 8.0% to 12.0% during the ten year lifespan of this WESP. This equates to an increase from 506 year one learners in Welsh medium education to between 720 and 825 year one learners in Welsh medium education.

This target has been set in accordance with The WESP (Wales) Regulations 2019 (the 2019 Regulations) and The WESP (Wales) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020 (the 2020 Regulations). In setting this target, due regard has been given to The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (the 2013 Act). This target is based on contributing to the overall long term target of one million people in Wales being Welsh speakers by 2050, as set out in Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh Speakers⁴ (Cymraeg 2050). For a more detailed explanation of the methodology implemented for setting this target, see Annex One – Methodology for Target Setting.

Set against the challenge of decreasing birth rates, the achievement of this target will require a multifaceted approach and the Council will make every effort to build and maintain constructive working relationships with all relevant groups and organisations who can contribute towards it. Ensuring the availability of Welsh medium education in the right location from the initial early years, through to primary and secondary education, then progressing through to higher and further education for all learners, whatever their learning need, is fundamental to contributing towards the vision of one million people in Wales being Welsh speakers by 2050.

In recent years, the Council has committed to increasing the quality and availability of early years Welsh medium settings, co-located on Welsh medium primary school sites. This has been achieved through significant investment in a number of extensions to

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⁴ Cymraeg 2050 – A Million Welsh Speakers

existing childcare and early years settings and the establishment of new childcare and early years settings for both Flying Start Programme (FSP) and fee paying childcare settings.

Most Welsh medium primary and secondary schools currently have surplus capacity, however, there are a few primary and secondary schools where demand is high and growth in capacity is needed. In these primary and secondary schools, action has or is currently being taken to address these issues. In addition, the Council's ambitious Band B 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme comprises a range of projects totalling £160 million, with the inclusion of a number of projects that propose to increase and significantly improve Welsh medium primary and secondary school capacity and community facilities.

The Council continues to deliver and support its long term strategic investment programme of modernisation, to create school environments that meet the needs of communities and provide the best learning provision and outcomes for children and young people and the wider community. Several Welsh medium primary and secondary school projects have been included in the Council's Capital Programme for the previous three years up to and including the years 2019 / 2020. In addition to this, over the same timeframe, the Council has spent approximately £4.7 million on planned programme capital works in Welsh medium primary and secondary schools.

PLASC data demonstrates stability in the ratio split of primary and secondary school aged learners attending English and Welsh medium primary and secondary schools for the previous three academic years, up to and including 2019 / 2020. Alongside this, data indicates that the transition of learners between key stages does not appear to be a significant problem. Neither does the retention of learners between key stages.

Currently, Welsh medium learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN), who experience difficulties within mainstream primary and secondary schools and require more specialist support, are supported by a specialist peripatetic team – the Welsh Complex Needs Team (WCNT). The WCNT provide support through an inclusive delivery model, whereby learners are provided with specialist support within their mainstream primary and secondary schools. During the academic year 2019 / 2020, the WCNT supported a number of learners. Analysis suggests that learners accessing support from the WCNT made progress that was comparable to that of their peers in equivalent English medium primary and secondary school settings. Further analysis suggests that this inclusive model adopted in Welsh medium primary and secondary schools has been very positive.

In order to create more Welsh speakers, our education system is dependent on its workforce and we must work nationally with the Welsh Government (WG) and regionally with the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service (CSCJES) to ensure we contribute towards creating a workforce with robust linguistic skills, able to inspire and motivate learners in Welsh medium and Welsh language education. The Council is committed to Welsh medium and Welsh language education workforce planning for primary and secondary schools and has and will continue to work in collaboration with other Local Authorities (LAs), the CSCJES and the WG in order to facilitate the creation of more Welsh speakers.

Alongside this, we must work to ensure the benefits of Welsh medium and Welsh language education are promoted to parents / carers and demonstrate that it is never too late be educated through the medium of Welsh with the use of Welsh language immersion classes to support learners who are late comers.

Recognising the importance of Cymraeg 2050, and how essential the education system is to achieve its vision, this WESP sets out the Council's ten year plan for increasing and improving the planning of the provision of Welsh medium and Welsh language education. It builds on the work of the previous WESP⁵ and sets out a workplan which demonstrates how the Council intends to achieve its ten year vision.

In developing this WESP, all current and relevant local, regional and national legislation, strategies, policies and action plans have been taken into consideration in order to encourage and facilitate long term growth in Welsh medium and Welsh language education. The Council has and will continue to ensure there is a clear alignment with all current and relevant local, regional and national legislation, strategies, policies and action plans that impact upon Welsh medium and Welsh language education.

OUTCOME 1: MORE NURSERY / THREE YEAR OLD LEARNERS RECEIVE THEIR EDUCATION THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF WELSH

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Early immersion in the Welsh language and support for parents / carers to seamlessly continue their child's statutory education journey into Welsh medium education, ensuring a continuum of linguistic progression can be established as early as the antenatal period. Cymraeg for Kids, working alongside Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board's (CTMUHB) Midwifery and Health Visiting Team ensure that parents / carers receive key early messages regarding the Welsh language during the antenatal period. During the post-natal period, between the ages of 0 to 2, parents / carers can attend Cylch Ti a Fi and Cymraeg i Blant parent and toddler sessions, followed by Cylch Meithrin nursery groups, organised by Mudiad Meithrin, for children between the ages of 2 to 4 and then onto Welsh medium primary school from the age of 3. These groups and schools are supplemented and supported by a range of programmes including the WGs FSP and the WGs Childcare Offer for Wales. All children who attend these groups and schools will converse through the medium of Welsh. In addition, parents / carers are encouraged to enrol on a Clwb Cwtsh course which is a free eight week taster course in the Welsh language for parents / carers, so they are able to use the Welsh language with their children.

In order to provide parents / carers with information about the advantages of raising children using the Welsh language from an early age, the Council has recently updated its Being Bilingual booklet. The Being Bilingual booklet is designed to give information on the benefits of being bilingual, outline the path to Welsh medium education and answer frequently asked questions on choosing Welsh medium education. It is distributed via CTMUHBs Midwifery and Health Visiting Team, FSP childcare and early years settings and through the community.

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⁵ Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council – Welsh in Education Strategic Plan – 2017 to 2020

In addition, a new Health Visiting model has been introduced as a pilot. The Wellbeing and Resilience Health Programme (RHP) was launched in October 2020 to provide enhanced health visiting services. Underpinning the delivery of the RHP is the Resilient Families Service (RFS) as the single integrated delivery model for family support. The RHP will replace the former FSP Health Visiting model which was only available to eligible families. The RHP is universal and includes two additional Health Visitor visits to the standard Healthy Child Wales Health Visiting pattern, an antenatal visit and an additional visit at 20 months to undertake a Schedule of Growing Skills (SOGs) assessment. Promotion of the Welsh medium and Welsh language education does not form part of the RHP, but it could be included.

Information on choosing Welsh medium childcare and early years setting is shared via the Council's Family Information Service (FIS). This is via the Council's website and social media platforms and through verbal conversations. Likewise, the Council's Childcare Team also shares information with parents / carers and supports childcare and early years settings to offer services through the medium of Welsh. Part of the Council's Childcare Team role is to promote and raise awareness of the Welsh medium childcare and early years settings available to parents / carers.

The Council's Starting School booklet also provides parents / carers with a range of information including advice on choosing a school, a directory of schools and the provision of home to school transport. In addition, the new Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) Families website is due to be launched. It will be a valuable resource to promote the sharing of information between all relevant groups and organisations could be used to promote the Welsh language and Welsh medium education. Parents / carers are also signposted to information provided by relevant groups and organisation including Welsh4Parents, which is a directory containing links to a wide range of Welsh language resources available on a variety of digital platforms.

To ensure that childcare and early years settings are supported and promoted to parents / carers, the Council also works in partnership with Mudiad Meithrin and other Welsh medium childcare and early years providers and organisations. To facilitate this, the Early Years, Childcare and Play Partnership Group that brings together officers from the Council and other Welsh medium childcare and early years providers and organisations has recently been re-established.

There are eighteen Cylch Ti a Fi's and twenty Cylchoedd Meithrin located throughout the County Borough. Data outlines the number of Cylchoedd Meithrin has decreased over the previous five academic years up to and including 2019 / 2020. This, in turn, has had a negative impact on the number of children attending Cylchoedd Meithrin between these years with the number of children between the ages of 2 to 4 attending Cylchoedd Meithrin also decreasing.

There are seventeen Welsh medium primary schools located throughout the County Borough. Data demonstrates stability in the ratio split of primary school aged learners attending English and Welsh medium primary schools for the previous three academic years up to and including 2019 / 2020. Over the same timeframe, the number of nursery / three year old learners who receive their education through the medium of Welsh has remained stable.

The Childcare Act 2006⁶ (the 2006 Act), places a duty on all LAs to have a responsibility to secure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that there are sufficient childcare and early years settings in place to meet the requirements of parents / carers who require childcare in order to work, undertake training or education or to prepare for work. LAs have the lead role in facilitating the childcare market to ensure it meets the needs of parents / carers, particularly those on low incomes, those with children with ALN or those who wish their children to attend Welsh medium childcare and early years settings.

The 2006 Act requires LAs to prepare Childcare Sufficiency Assessments (CSAs) in order to have a clear understanding of the childcare and early years settings in their area, the needs of parents / carers and to develop an action plan to address any gaps identified. This was updated in April 2016 with the introduction of The Childcare Act 2006 (LA Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2016⁷ (the 2016 Regulations).

The Council's CSA for the period between 2017 and 2022⁸ scrutinised a range of data and information in order to have a clear understanding of the childcare and early years settings available alongside the needs of parents / carers. The data demonstrated that there were 195 registered English and Welsh medium childcare and early years settings, offering 775 places and 15 unregistered English and Welsh medium childcare and early years settings offering 16 places. More specifically, the data demonstrated that there were 26 registered Welsh medium childcare and early years settings offering 771 places and 5 unregistered Welsh medium childcare and early years settings offering 80 places.

Using this data and information, an action plan was prepared to identify where, when and what type of childcare and early years settings should be developed or supported. In total, the action plan identified twenty four priorities, of which the following related to Welsh medium childcare and early years settings:

- Aim to recruit additional Welsh medium childminders in the initial WG Childcare Offer for Wales pilot areas.
- Aim to recruit additional Welsh medium childminders in the South Taf area.
- Explore demand for additional Welsh medium childcare and early years settings in the Rhondda Fawr and Upper Cynon areas.
- Upskill school based staff to have the relevant qualifications to work in childcare and early years settings, particularly Welsh medium school staff.

The first annual update of the Council's CSA Action Plan was published in March 2019⁹. This annual update outlined a number of strengths and weaknesses, along with priorities and progress made. A further annual update was published in March 2020¹⁰. This annual update outlined the achievement of significant progress. In 2021, the

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⁶ The Childcare Act 2006 – Section 22

⁷ The Childcare Act 2006 (Local Authority Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2016

⁸ Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's Childcare Sufficiency Assessment – 2017 – 2022

Annual Update of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's Childcare Sufficiency Assessment
 2017 – 2022 Action Plan – March 2019

¹⁰ Rhondda Cynon Taf Count Borough Council – Record if Urgent Decision of the Cabinet – Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Update – 24th March 2020

annual update published in March 2021¹¹ demonstrated that despite the challenges faced during the Covid-19 pandemic the was well placed with its existing childcare provision to meet the current needs of most working parents / carers with development work continuing to be undertaken in response to parent / carer demand and in areas where there is an identified need.

A further analysis of this data and information resulted in the successful submission of capital funding bids to the WG to support the development of Welsh medium childcare and early years settings via the Childcare Offer Capital Grant Scheme and Welsh Medium Capital Grant Scheme¹². As such, the Council successfully received funding for a number of projects. All the projects support capital works that facilitate growth in Welsh medium education, with funding specifically aimed at developing or expanding Welsh medium childcare and early years settings co-located on Welsh medium primary school sites.

The Council is committed to providing childcare to families eligible for the WGs FSP¹³. As one of the four pillars of the WGs FSP, childcare is a key component, giving eligible families with children between the ages of two to three free childcare for two and a half hours a day, five days a week for thirty nine weeks of the year. An element of FSP childcare is provided by Council run FSP childcare and early years settings, with the vast majority being provided by commissioned childcare and early years settings. At present, approximately 25.0% of FSP childcare commissioned is through the medium of Welsh.

A total of 686 FSP childcare places are commissioned from 32 childcare and early years settings. In total, 77.3% (530) of FSP childcare English medium places are commissioned via 23 childcare and early years settings, whilst 22.7% (156) of FSP childcare Welsh medium places are commissioned via 9 childcare and early years settings. Since the last FSP tender exercise, which took place in 2018, as at November 2020, an additional 34 Welsh medium FSP childcare places have been purchased via approved childcare and early years settings, whilst an additional 12 English medium FSP childcare places have been purchased via approved childcare and early years settings taking the total number of childcare places purchased to 732. This is due to parent / carer choice or insufficient space available in local childcare and early years settings.

Of the total 732 childcare places commissioned, only 90.0% (659) were filled. Of the total 156 Welsh medium childcare places originally commissioned only 58.9% (92) were filled. This suggests that the Welsh medium childcare places commissioned were not in the correct localities, hence, the requirement to purchase an additional 34 Welsh medium FSP childcare places (taking the total number of Welsh medium childcare places commissioned to 190). In total, 19.1% (126) of children attending a FSP childcare are attending a Welsh medium childcare and early years settings.

¹¹ Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Update 2021 – 25th March 2021

¹² Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council – Cabinet – Childcare Offer Capital Grant Funding Bid – 8th May 2019

¹³ Welsh Government – FSP Programme

The Council was proud to have been selected as one of the early implementers of the WG Childcare Offer for Wales¹⁴ when it was launched in in 2017. Now available throughout Wales, the WG's Childcare Offer for Wales offers up to thirty hours per week of combined Foundation Phase Nursery (FPN) education and additional funded childcare for eligible children between the ages of three to four. This flagship policy aims to support parents / carers into employment and reduce the negative effects of poverty on them and their children.

In order to support Welsh medium childcare and early years settings and school staff to use techniques that enable children to use the Welsh language more easily, the Council has recently taken advantage of the Croesi'r Bont programme, via Mudiad Meithrin. The Croesi'r Bont programme is currently established in 50.0% of Welsh medium REP childcare and early years settings and will be established to the remaining Welsh medium REP childcare and early years settings as soon as possible. In addition, the Council runs the Clebran programme to support the use of the Welsh language in English medium REP childcare and early years settings. The Clebran programme, supports English medium REP childcare and early years settings to incorporate the Welsh language using workshops and online resources. The Council's Childcare Team also promote Welsh language training courses to childcare and early years settings and work in partnership with them to develop Welsh medium training where possible.

The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008¹⁵ (the Measure) places a statutory duty on all LA's to provide learners with free transport to their nearest suitable school if they reside beyond safe walking distance to that school. The term suitable school applies to the catchment area for English and Welsh medium, dual language or voluntary aided (faith) mainstream primary, secondary, special school / class or Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) as appropriate. The law relating to safe walking distance is defined as two miles for learners of compulsory school age receiving primary education and three miles for learners of compulsory school age receiving secondary education.

The Council has exercised the discretionary powers afforded to it under the Measure to make a more generous provision to learners as set out below:

- The eligibility criterion for walking distance for learners receiving compulsory primary education at their nearest suitable school has been set at 1½ miles, instead of 2 miles.
- Free transport to the nearest suitable school, where places are available, is provided to learners who meet the 1½ mile eligibility criterion from the start of the Foundation Phase (the start of the school term after their third birthday), rather than from the start of compulsory education (the start of the school term after their fifth birthday).
- The eligibility criterion for walking distance for learners receiving compulsory secondary education at their nearest suitable school has been set at 2 miles instead of 3 miles.
- Free transport is provided to post 16 learners who meet the 2 mile eligibility criterion for two years after the end of compulsory education, rather than until the end of compulsory education (the last Friday in June of the school year in

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¹⁴ Welsh Government – Childcare Offer for Wales

¹⁵ The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008

which a learner reaches the age of 16). This provision applies to full time attendance at the nearest school or college to the learner's home at which the approved course of study that they wish to pursue is offered.

• Free transport to their nearest suitable school is provided to learners (as set out above) in accordance with their preferred religious denomination.

The Council's Learner Travel Policy, Information and Arrangements¹⁶ contains information and advice to parents / carers and learners on how the policy is practically implemented and ensures that it is applied consistently and equitably.

The Council's current policy is that learners attending the nearest Welsh medium or dual language school receive free transport in accordance with its agreed policy on walking distance and safe routes.

The discretionary elements of the Council's policy are not currently subject to review, however, there is an appreciation that if they were to be reviewed in the future, any changes to discretionary provision could have an adverse effect on Welsh medium education. Any proposed changes would be subject to a consultation with parents / carers and learners and, if agreed, would usually apply from the start of a school year and would have regard to the Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance – June 2014¹⁷.

WHERE DO WE AIM TO BE WITHIN THE FIRST FIVE YEARS OF THIS WESP AND HOW DO WE PROPOSE TO GET THERE?

- It is not possible to obtain projection data on the number of children attending Cylchoedd Meithrins. However, data for the previous four academic years demonstrates that the number children attending Cylchoedd Meithrin has decreased.
- Data demonstrates stability in the ratio split of learners who could attend English and Welsh medium primary schools during the forthcoming five academic years.
- Based on November 2020 provisional forecasts, the number of nursery / three
 year old learners who will receive their education through the medium of Welsh
 during the first five academic years of this WESP is projected to increase.

In order to meet our target of 720 year one learners in Welsh medium education by 2032, the Council, along with officers from a number of external groups and organisations who form the WESP Strategic Group need to work collectively to further increase this projection.

The Council will continue to work with external groups and organisations to support parents / carers to immerse their child in the Welsh language from an early age outlining the continuum of linguistic progression available, working in partnership with Mudiad Meithrin to ensure that Welsh medium childcare and early years settings are both available and easily accessible. In addition to this, Mudiad Meithrin will continue to encourage parents / carers to enrol on and increase uptake of the Clwb Cwtsh course.

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¹⁶ Learner Travel Policy, Information and Arrangements

¹⁷ Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance – June 2014

Information about the advantages of raising children using the Welsh language from an early age will continue to be provided to parents / carers through numerous strategies including the use of the Being Bilingual booklet and the Council's Childcare Team continuing to promote and raise awareness of the Welsh medium childcare and early years settings available to parents / carers.

The Council will continue to progress and deliver the remaining projects funded via the WG Childcare Offer Capital Grant Scheme and Welsh Medium Capital Grant Scheme. These projects support capital works that facilitate growth in Welsh medium education, with funding specifically aimed at developing or expanding Welsh medium childcare and early years settings co-located on Welsh medium primary school sites. The projects recently completed or due for complete during the first five academic years of this WESP comprise:

- Dolau Primary School (including Welsh unit).
- Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Aberdar.
- Ysgol Llanhari.
- Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Evan James.
- Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Ynyswen.
- Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Abercynon.
- Ysgol Gynradd Gymunedol Gymraeg Llantrisant.

When complete, it is anticipated that these projects will increase places for nursery / three year old learners to receive their education through the medium of Welsh by an additional 65.0%.

In order to gain a detailed understanding of all Welsh medium childcare and early years settings available, a mapping exercise of all Welsh medium childcare and early years settings will be undertaken. These findings will be analysed, and a gap analysis produced along with areas for improvement identified with proposed strategies for achieving improvements.

Currently, every parent / carer who requests a Welsh medium FSP childcare place is offered one — either in a Council run FSP childcare and early years setting or via a commissioned childcare setting. Despite this offer, parents / carers often decline the childcare place due to there being an English medium childcare place in closer proximity to their home, hence, locality is favouring their original language preference. The Council's Programme Flexibility Team aims to re-commission Welsh medium FSP childcare places to ensure there is enough opportunity for parents / carers to access Welsh medium FSP childcare and early years settings in their locality. This will be achieved by commissioning small numbers of placements, across a greater number of childcare and early years settings to ensure adequate geographical spread across the County Borough. The Council aims to provide at least 25.0% of all FSP childcare places through the medium of Welsh.

In addition, enhanced marketing of Welsh medium FSP childcare and early years settings will be used to actively encourage parents / carers to consider them as an option for their child.

The Council will continue to ensure that the WG Childcare Offer for Wales is marketed and administered effectively and continues to meet local demand, allowing parents / carers to conveniently access FPN education and additional funded childcare in one location.

Welsh medium childcare and early years settings and school staff will be encouraged to use techniques that enable children to use the Welsh language more easily through the Croesi'r Bont programme, via Mudiad Meithrin, in Welsh medium REP childcare and early years settings and the Clebran programme to support the use of the Welsh language in English medium REP childcare and early years settings. In addition, where possible, the Council's Childcare Team will continue to promote Welsh language training courses to childcare and early years settings and work in partnership with them to develop Welsh medium training.

WHERE DO WE EXPECT TO BE AT THE END OF OUR WESP?

In order to meet the target of 720 year one learners in Welsh medium education by 2032, an emphasis could be placed on encouraging parents / carers to choose Welsh medium childcare and early years settings for their children. This could work to ensure that children are immersed in the Welsh language from an early age. Cymraeg 2050 outlines that Welsh medium education is the principal method for ensuring that children develop their Welsh language and for creating new Welsh speakers and highlights the importance of Welsh medium childcare and early years settings to increase the demand for Welsh medium education.

Investment made across a number of Welsh medium childcare and early years settings via the WG Childcare Offer Capital Grant Scheme and Welsh Medium Capital Grant Scheme have provided additional places for nursery / three year old learners to receive their education through the medium of Welsh. At the end of the lifespan of this WESP, the WG Childcare Offer Capital Grant Scheme and Welsh Medium Capital Grant Scheme will have been completed, delivering capital works that facilitate growth in Welsh medium education, with funding specifically aimed at developing or expanding Welsh medium childcare and early years settings co-located on Welsh medium primary school sites. These projects will have increased places for nursery / three year old learners to receive their education through the medium of Welsh by an additional 65.0%.

During the lifespan of this WESP, it is anticipated that additional funding will be available to further invest in Welsh medium childcare and early years settings. When additional funding is made available, the Council will be ambitious with its proposals to invest in Welsh medium childcare and early years settings in order to meet the target of 720 year one learners in Welsh medium education by 2032.

Alongside this, the Council will have gained a detailed understanding of all Welsh medium childcare and early years settings, through the completion of a mapping exercise of all Welsh medium childcare and early years settings. The analysis of these findings will have identified areas for improvement and identified and implemented strategies for achieving improvements.

The Council aims to provide at least 25.0% of all FSP childcare places through the medium of Welsh. Enhanced marketing of Welsh medium FSP childcare and early years settings will be used to actively encourage parents / carers to consider them as an option for their child.

The Council recognises the development of Welsh medium childcare and early years settings co-located on Welsh medium primary school sites is vital to contributing towards one million people in Wales being Welsh speakers by 2050. This investment is supporting parents / carers to seamlessly continue their child's statutory education journey into Welsh medium education, ensuring a continuum of linguistic progression for their children. The Council will continue to work in partnership with Mudiad Meithrin to support parents / carers of children attending Cylchoedd Meithrin to continue their child's statutory education journey into Welsh medium education.

The Council will continue to ensure that the WG Childcare Offer for Wales is marketed and administered effectively and continues to meet local demand, allowing parents / carers to conveniently access FPN education and additional funded childcare in one location.

English and Welsh medium childcare and early years settings and school staff will be encouraged to use techniques that enable children to use the Welsh language more easily through the Croesi'r Bont programme, via Mudiad Meithrin and the Clebran programme. Continued promotion of Welsh language training courses to childcare and early years settings will continue along with partnership working with them to develop Welsh medium training.

KEY DATA

The data in the table that follows outlines the projected number and percentage of nursery / three year old learners who could receive their education through the medium of Welsh and is based on November 2020 provisional forecasts, compared to the projected number and percentage of nursery / three year old learners who should receive their education through the medium of Welsh if the Council is to achieve its target of 720 year one learners in Welsh medium education by 2032 during the lifespan of this WESP.

Projected Number	er and Percentage of Nursery / Three Year Old Learners Receiving				
their Education Through the Medium of Welsh During the Lifespan of this WESP					
Academic Year	Projected Number and Percentage of Nursery / Three Year Old Learners Who Could Receive their Education Through the Medium of Welsh (Based on November 2020 Provisional Forecasts)		Percentage of Nursery / Three Year Old Learners Who Shou Receive their Education Through the Medium of Wels if the Council is to Achieve i Target of 720 Year Or Learners in Welsh Mediu Education by 2032		
	Number	%	Number	%	
2022 / 2023	481	20.6%	481	20.6%	
2023 / 2024	460	18.7%	509	20.7%	

2024 / 2025	471	19.3%	537	22.1%
2025 / 2026	476	19.5%	568	23.3%
2026 / 2027	485	19.9%	601	24.7%
2027 / 2028	485	19.9%	636	26.1%
2028 / 2029	485	19.9%	672	27.6%
2029 / 2030	485	19.9%	711	29.2%
2030 / 2031	485	19.9%	750	29.6%
2031 / 2032	485	19.9%	750	29.6%

OUTCOME 2: MORE RECEPTION / FIVE YEAR OLD LEARNERS RECEIVE THEIR EDUCATION THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF WELSH

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

There are seventeen Welsh medium primary schools located throughout the County Borough. There are two all through schools for 3 to 19 year olds, three dual language primary schools for 3 to 11 year olds and 12 primary schools for 3 to 11 year olds.

Data demonstrates stability in the ratio split of primary school aged learners attending English and Welsh medium primary schools for the previous three academic years up to and including 2019 / 2020. Over the same timeframe, the number of reception / five year old learners attending Welsh medium primary schools has increased.

The capacities of all schools are kept under regular, annual review by the Council's Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services using data obtained from PLASC, school forecasts, annual admission requests and live birth information from CTMUHB. Any increase in learner populations, particularly within Welsh medium education, is closely monitored and, if the increase is sustained and clear within the catchment area of a particular school, consideration is given to making the required increase in capacity, by whatever means is most appropriate and most suited to that particular school. On an annual basis the Council is required to provide the WG with the Planning of School Places Return, which details the capacity of every school, the number learners on roll and the projected number of learners. Detailed forward planning is undertaken by comparing the capacity every school against the projected number of learners.

The majority of the Welsh medium primary schools currently have surplus capacity. Based on 2019 / 2020 PLASC data, there was a 19.6% surplus capacity in Welsh medium primary schools. However, there are a number of primary schools where growth in capacity is needed, therefore action has or is currently being taken to address these issues. Such action includes:

- The creation of the new 3 to 19 Ysgol Garth Olwg through the closure of the former primary school, Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Garth Olwg, and former secondary school, Ysgol Gyfun Garth Olwg, enabling the former primary school to expand into surplus capacity available in the former secondary school.
- The expansion of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llwyncelyn into the former Llwyncelyn Infants School building (following the opening of Porth Community School).

 The expansion of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Tonyrefail into the former Tonyrefail Primary School building (following the opening of Tonyrefail Community School).

The Council continues to deliver and support its long term strategic investment programme of modernisation to create school environments that meet the needs of our communities and provide the best learning provision and outcomes for children and young people and the wider community. This long term strategic investment programme is supported with Council and WG funding including but not limited to:

- Band B 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme.
- Childcare Grant.
- Community Hub Grant
- Community Infrastructure Levy Grant.
- Early Years Capital Grant
- Reducing Infant Class Sizes Capital Grant.
- Welsh Medium Capital Grant.

Band B of the WGs 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme will invest £2.3 billion in school and college infrastructure across Wales. One of the key investment objectives of the WGs Band B 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme is to provide efficient and effective educational infrastructure that will meet current and future demand for learner places by 2024. More specifically, to provide the right number of learner places for the delivery of English and Welsh medium education. The Council's ambitious Band B 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme comprises a range of projects totalling £160 million, with the inclusion of a number of projects that propose to increase Welsh medium primary school capacity.

Further investment has been made across a number Welsh medium primary schools over the previous three years up to and including the years 2019 / 2020 providing additional Welsh medium primary school learner places and creating improved accommodation for learners. This has been achieved through the Council's Capital Programme which includes a combination of refurbishments, remodels, demolitions and new builds. Over the same timeframe, the Council Planned Minor Capital Works Programme, which includes an on-going rolling programme of investment in schools, has invested approximately £1.2 million in Welsh medium primary schools.

WHERE DO WE AIM TO BE WITHIN THE FIRST FIVE YEARS OF THIS WESP AND HOW WE PROPOSE TO GET THERE?

- Data demonstrates stability in the ratio split of learners who could attend English and Welsh medium primary schools during the forthcoming five academic years.
- The projected surplus capacity in Welsh medium primary schools is likely to increase to 28.1% during the forthcoming five academic years.
- Based on November 2020 provisional forecasts, the number of reception / five year old learners who will receive their education through the medium of Welsh during the first five academic years of this WESP is projected to fall.

In order to meet our target of 720 year one learners in Welsh medium education by 2032, the Council, along with officers from a number of external groups and organisations who form the WESP Strategic Group need to work collectively to divert this projection.

In order to gain a detailed understanding of where surplus capacity exists, a mapping exercise of all Welsh medium primary schools will be undertaken. These findings will be analysed, and a gap analysis produced along with areas for improvement identified with proposed strategies for achieving improvements.

There are a few Welsh medium primary schools where demand is high and as such growth in capacity is needed. In these primary schools, action has or is currently being taken to address these issues. The Council's ambitious Band B 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme comprises a range of projects totalling £160 million, with the inclusion of a number of projects that propose to increase the capacity of Welsh medium primary schools. During the first five years of this WESP, the Council's ambitious Band B 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme will have been completed. This, alongside funding directly from the Council, will:

- Amend the language medium of Penderyn Community Primary School from a dual language primary school to a Welsh medium primary school (following the opening of Hirwaun Primary School). The catchment area of Penderyn Community Primary School will also be extended.
- Deliver an extension to Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Aberdar.
- Deliver a new Welsh medium primary school for Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llyn y Forwyn.
- Deliver a new Welsh medium primary school on the current Heol y Celyn Primary School site, to accommodate learners currently attending Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and the Welsh medium learners attending the dual language Heol y Celyn Primary School.
- Deliver a new dual language primary school, in the first instance, as an extension to the dual language primary school Dolau Primary School, as part an extensive housing development.

These projects will create additional learner places, increasing the capacity of Welsh medium primary schools.

We must also demonstrate to parents / carers that it is never too late to be educated through the medium of Welsh with the use of Welsh language immersion classes to support learners who are late comers to Welsh medium education. The Council recognises the importance of immersion in the Welsh language for learners who wish to transition from English to Welsh medium education, so as to further encourage the uptake of Welsh medium education. Although the Council has no Welsh language immersion classes for late comers in any of our schools at present, schools requiring Welsh language immersion support for learners who are late comers are funded to support the accelerated acquisition of Welsh language skills for learners as and when the need arises. As such, Welsh medium schools are provided with funding directly to ensure that any late comers to Welsh medium education are provided with the necessary support and skills to enable them to thrive within their school.

This is considered to be working effectively, however, given that many LAs are implementing varying models of Welsh language immersion classes to support learners who are late comers to Welsh medium education, work with the WG, CSCJES and other regional education consortia could be beneficial in understanding what opportunities for joint working could be had to ensure learners who are late comers to Welsh medium education are sufficiently supported. The Council will consider creating a Welsh language immersion class for late comers alongside the development of its 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme.

WHERE DO WE EXPECT TO BE AT THE END OF OUR WESP?

Investment made across a number Welsh medium primary schools over the previous three years up to and including the years 2019 / 2020 through the Council's Capital Programme has provided additional Welsh medium primary school learner places and along with the Council's Planned Minor Capital Works Programme, created improved accommodation for learners. At the end of the lifespan of this WESP, this investment will have increased further. In addition, the Council's ambitious Band B 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme, alongside funding directly from the Council, will have been completed, delivering a four classroom extension to an existing primary school and two new Welsh medium primary schools. These projects will have created additional learner places, increasing the capacity of Welsh medium primary schools.

During the lifespan of this WESP, it is anticipated that additional funding will be available to further invest in Welsh medium primary schools. When additional funding is made available, the Council will be ambitious with its proposals to invest in Welsh medium primary schools in order to meet the target of 720 year one learners in Welsh medium education by 2032.

Alongside this, the Council will have gained a detailed understanding of where surplus capacity exists, through the completion of a mapping exercise of all Welsh medium primary schools. The analysis of these findings will have identified areas for improvement and identified and implemented strategies for achieving improvements.

In addition, proposed work with the WG, CSCJES and other regional education consortia to understand what opportunities for joint working could be had to ensure learners who are late comers to Welsh medium education are sufficiently supported would have been completed. The Council will have created a Welsh language immersion class for later comers alongside the development of its Band B 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme.

KEY DATA

The data in the table that follows outlines the projected number and percentage of reception / five year old learners who could receive their education through the medium of Welsh and is based on November 2020 provisional forecasts, compared to the project number and percentage of reception / five year old learners who should receive their education through the medium of Welsh if the Council is to achieve its target of 720 year one learners in Welsh medium education by 2032 during the lifespan of this WESP.

_	Per and Percentage of Reception / Five Year Old Learners Receiving Through the Medium of Welsh During the Lifespan of this WESP Projected Number and Percentage of Reception / Five Year Old Learners Who Could Receive their Education Through the Medium of Welsh (Based on November 2020 Provisional Forecasts) Projected Number a Percentage of Reception / Five Year Old Learners Who Shound Receive their Education Through the Medium of Welsh (Based on November 2020 Provisional Forecasts) Through the Medium of Percentage of Reception / Five Year Old Learners Who Shound Receive their Education Through the Medium of Welsh (Based on November 2020 Provisional Forecasts)			
	Number	%	Number	%
2022 / 2023	513	21.5%	513	21.5%
2023 / 2024	489	21.5%	533	23.4%
2024 / 2025	468	21.7%	554	25.6%
2025 / 2026	480	21.5%	575	25.8%
2026 / 2027	487	21.6%	598	26.2%
2027 / 2028	488	21.6%	621	27.5%
2028 / 2029	488	20.9%	645	28.6%
2029 / 2030	488	20.6%	671	29.7%
2030 / 2031	488	20.3%	697	30.9%
2031 / 2032	488	21.6%	724	32.0%

OUTCOME 3: MORE CHILDREN CONTINUE TO IMPROVE THEIR WELSH LANGUAGE SKILLS WHEN TRANSFERRING FROM ONE STAGE OF THEIR STATUTORY EDUCATION TO ANOTHER

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Data demonstrates that during the academic year 2015 / 2016 all children leaving Cylchoedd Meithrin transferred into primary schools, of which 57.3% (284) of children transferred into Welsh medium primary schools. This percentage increased to 67.9% (343) of children transferring into Welsh medium primary schools during the academic year 2019 / 2020.

The transition rates of learners between each key stage for Welsh medium primary and secondary schools does not appear to be a problem. The growth demonstrated in the percentage of learners transitioning between key stage two to three (primary to secondary school) is due to secondary school aged learners residing outside of the County Borough attending Welsh medium secondary schools in the County Borough.

For example, Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun in the Cynon valley area is the only Welsh medium secondary school option for secondary school aged learners residing in the County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil, due to there being no Welsh medium secondary school located in their County Borough. As such, secondary school aged learners residing in the County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil attend Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun. As part of the development of their new Local Development Plan (LDP), Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council has committed to continue to assess the demand for a Welsh medium secondary school located within their County Borough. The Council has and

will continue to conduct cross border planning with all our neighbouring LAs in order to meet our target of 720 year one learners in Welsh medium education by 2032.

Similarly, Ysgol Llanhari in the South Taf area is the nearest Welsh medium secondary school option for some secondary school aged learners residing in the County Borough of Bridgend, due to the only Welsh medium secondary school in the County Borough of Bridgend being located in Maesteg. As such, some secondary school aged learners residing in the County Borough of Bridgend attend Ysgol Llanhari.

Likewise, data demonstrates the retention rates of learners on transition between each key stage for Welsh medium primary and secondary schools does not appear to be a problem, until the transition between key stage four to five (years ten and eleven to Sixth Form).

WHERE DO WE AIM TO BE WITHIN THE FIRST FIVE YEARS OF THIS WESP AND HOW DO WE PROPOSE TO GET THERE?

- It is not possible to obtain projection data on the projected transition rates of children leaving Cylchoedd Meithrin who transfer into Welsh medium primary schools. However, data for the previous four academic years demonstrates that the percentage of children leaving Cylchoedd Meithrin who transfer into Welsh medium primary schools is increasing.
- The projected transition rates of learners between each key stage for Welsh medium primary and secondary schools does not appear to be a problem.
- It is not possible to obtain projection data on the projected retention rates of learners on transition between each key stage for Welsh medium primary and secondary schools. However, data for the previous three academic years demonstrates that the retention rates of learners on transition between each key stage for Welsh medium primary and secondary schools does not appear to be a problem.

In order to meet our target of 720 year one learners in Welsh medium education by 2032, the Council, along with officers from a number of external groups and organisations who form the WESP Strategic Group need to work collectively.

Although the percentage of children leaving Cylchoedd Meithrin who transfer into Welsh medium primary schools is increasing, there are still a large percentage of children attending Cylchoedd Meithrin who do not transfer into Welsh medium primary schools. This may be due to a number of factors, including the location and proximity of the Cylchoedd Meithrin to Welsh medium primary schools, which emphasises that in order to promote wider access to Welsh medium education, there may be a need to ensure the availability of Welsh medium childcare and early years settings co-located on Welsh medium primary school sites.

The Council recognises the development of Welsh medium childcare and early years settings co-located on Welsh medium primary school sites is vital to contributing towards one million people in Wales being Welsh speakers by 2050. By investing in Welsh medium childcare and early years settings co-located on Welsh medium primary school sites, the Council is supporting parents / carers to seamlessly continue their child's statutory education journey into Welsh medium education, ensuring a

continuum of linguistic progression for their children. The Council will continue to work in partnership with Mudiad Meithrin to support parents / carers of children attending Cylchoedd Meithrin to continue their child's statutory education journey into Welsh medium education.

Whilst the transition and retention rates of learner's on transition between each key stage for Welsh medium primary and secondary schools does not appear to be a problem, a mapping exercise of the transition and retention rates of learner's on transition between each key stage for Welsh medium primary and secondary schools will be undertaken. These findings will be analysed, and areas for improvement will be identified along with the development proposed strategies for achieving improvements.

The Council will continue to monitor the transition and retention rates of learners on transition between each key stage for Welsh medium primary and secondary schools.

In addition, the Council will continue to provide initiatives to support the transition and retention rates of learners on transition between each key stage for Welsh medium primary and secondary schools. These initiatives include but are not limited to:

- Learners in year six spending time in their new secondary school prior to the start of their first term at secondary school.
- Teachers from secondary schools attending primary schools to provide activity sessions.
- The Urdd Gobaith Cymru (the Urdd) assisting Welsh medium primary schools to organise residential trips to Llangrannog in their secondary school cluster.

Alongside this, the Council will actively work with parents / carers to promote a continuum of linguistic progression for their child to ensure both parents / carers and learners are supported in the transition between each key stage and learners continue their education through the medium of Welsh. The Council will also work to ensure that all staff likely to have contact with parents / carers are aware of the key messages regarding Welsh medium and Welsh language education and a continuum of linguistic progression so they can answer any questions that may arise.

Using the Choice Architecture Model¹⁸, the Council will implement a review of its online school admissions process. The Choice Architecture Model is a simplified version of the Mindspace Model¹⁹ commissioned by the United Kingdom Cabinet Office in 2009 to understand how behavioural theory could help achieve better outcomes. The Choice Architecture Model could be used to assist in the uptake of Welsh medium education by ensuring that choices on Welsh medium education made available to parents / carers when completing their child's online school admissions application are easy, attractive, sociable and timely (or EAST).

WHERE DO WE EXPECT TO BE AT THE END OF OUR WESP?

¹⁸ Welsh Government – Guidance on Welsh in Education Strategic Plans – 2021

¹⁹ United Kingdom Cabinet Office – Mindspace Model – 2009

At the end of the lifespan of this WESP, investment in the development of Welsh medium childcare and early years settings co-located on Welsh medium primary school sites via the Childcare Offer Capital Grant Scheme and Welsh Medium Capital Grant Scheme will have been completed. The Council recognises the development of Welsh medium childcare and early years settings co-located on Welsh medium primary school sites is vital to contributing towards one million people in Wales being Welsh speakers by 2050. This investment is supporting parents / carers to seamlessly continue their child's statutory education journey into Welsh medium education, ensuring a continuum of linguistic progression for their children. The Council will continue to work in partnership with Mudiad Meithrin to support parents / carers of children attending Cylchoedd Meithrin to continue their child's statutory education journey into Welsh medium education.

Alongside this, the Council will have gained a detailed understanding of the transition and retention rates of learner's on transition between each key stage for Welsh medium primary and secondary schools, through the completion of a mapping exercise of all Welsh medium primary and secondary schools. The analysis of these findings will have identified areas for improvement and identified and implemented strategies for achieving improvements.

The Council will continue to provide initiatives to support the transition and retention rates of learners on transition between each key stage for Welsh medium primary and secondary schools. The Council will also continue to actively work with parents / carers to promote a continuum of linguistic progression for their child to ensure both parents / carers and learners are supported in the transition between each key stage and learners continue their education through the medium of Welsh. In addition, the Council will also work to ensure that all staff likely to have contact with parents / carers are aware of the key messages regarding Welsh medium and Welsh language education and a continuum of linguistic progression so they can answer any questions that may arise

At the end of the lifespan of this WESP, the Council will have reviewed and implemented its online school admissions process using the Choice Architecture Model to assist in the uptake of Welsh medium education by ensuring that choices on Welsh medium education made available to parents / carers when completing their child's online school admissions application and thar they are EAST.

KEY DATA

The data in the table that follows outlines the projected percentage of learners who could transition between each key stage for Welsh medium primary and secondary schools during the lifespan of this WESP and is based on November 2020 provisional forecasts.

•	rcentage of Learners who Could Transition Between Each Key Stage for m Primary and Secondary Schools				
Academic	Transition				
Year	Foundation	Key Stage Two	Key Stage Three	Key Stage Four	
	Phase to Key	to Key Stage	to Key Stage	to Key Stage	
	Stage Two	Three	Four	Five	

	%	%	%	%
2022 / 2023	96.1%	111.3%	98.3%	54.8%
2023 / 2024	97.1%	113.9%	98.3%	55.1%
2024 / 2025	97.4%	116.4%	98.3%	54.5%
2025 / 2026	97.5%	116.9%	98.3%	54.6%
2026 / 2027	97.6%	111.9%	98.3%	54.1%
2027 / 2028	97.2%	111.9%	98.4%	54.0%
2028 / 2029	97.2%	112.0%	98.3%	54.1%
2029 / 2030	97.2%	111.9%	98.4%	54.2%
2030 / 2031	97.2%	111.9%	98.4%	54.2%
2031 / 2032	97.2%	111.9%	98.4%	54.2%

OUTCOME 4: MORE LEARNERS STUDY FOR ASSESSED QUALIFICATIONS IN WELSH (AS A SUBJECT) AND SUBJECTS THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF WELSH

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

There are four Welsh medium secondary schools located throughout the County Borough. There are two all through schools for 3 to 19 year olds and two secondary schools for 11 to 19 years olds.

Data demonstrates stability in the ratio split in secondary school aged learners attending English and Welsh medium secondary schools for the previous three academic years, up to and including 2019 / 2020. Over the same timeframe, the number of year ten learners attending Welsh medium secondary schools has increased.

The capacities of all schools are kept under regular, annual review by the Council's Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services using data obtained from PLASC, school forecasts, annual admission requests and live birth information from CTMUHB. Any increase in learner populations, particularly within Welsh medium education, is closely monitored and, if the increase is sustained and clear within the catchment area of a particular school, consideration is given to making the required increase in capacity, by whatever means is most appropriate and most suited to that particular school. On an annual basis the Council is required to provide the WG with the Planning of School Places Return, which details the capacity of every school, the number learners on roll and the projected number of learners. Detailed forward planning is undertaken by comparing the capacity of every school against the projected number of learners.

The majority of the Welsh medium secondary schools currently have surplus capacity. Based on 2019 / 2020 PLASC data, there was a 23.1% surplus capacity in Welsh medium secondary schools. However, there are a few secondary schools where growth in capacity is needed, therefore action is currently being taken to address these issues.

The Council continues to deliver and support its long term strategic investment programme of modernisation to create school environments that meet the needs of our communities and provide the best learning provision and outcomes for children

and young people and the wider community. This long term strategic investment programme is supported with Council and WG funding including but not limited to:

- 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme Band B Capital Grant.
- Community Hub Grant.
- Community Infrastructure Levy Grant.
- Welsh Medium Capital Grant.

Band B of the WGs 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme will invest £2.3 billion in school and college infrastructure across Wales. One of the key investment objectives of the WGs Band B 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme is to provide efficient and effective educational infrastructure that will meet current and future demand for learner places by 2024. More specifically, to provide the right number of learner places for the delivery of English and Welsh medium education. The Council's ambitious Band B 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme comprises a range of projects totalling £160 million, with the inclusion of projects that propose to increase Welsh medium secondary school capacity.

Further investment has been made across a number Welsh medium secondary schools over the previous three years up to and including the years 2019 / 2020 providing additional Welsh medium secondary school learner places and creating improved accommodation for learners. This has been achieved through the Council's Capital Programme which includes a combination of refurbishments, remodels, demolitions and new builds. Over the same timeframe, the Council Planned Minor Capital Works Programme, which includes an on-going rolling programme of investment in schools, has invested approximately £3.5 million in Welsh medium secondary schools.

The data in the table that follows outlines the number and percentage of secondary school aged learners who were assessed for GCSE Welsh first language and GCSE Welsh Second Language during the academic year 2019 / 2020.

Number and Percentage of Secondary School Aged Learners Assessed for GCSE Welsh First Language and GCSE Welsh Second Language During the Academic Year 2019 / 2020					
Academic Year	GCSE Welsh Fire	st Language	GCSE Welsh Second Language		
	Number	%	Number	%	
2019 / 2020	482	18.6%	1,641	63.3%	

The data in the table that follows outlines the number and percentage of secondary school aged learners who were assessed for AS and A Level Welsh first and second language during the academic year 2019 / 2020.

Number and Percentage Secondary School Aged of Learners Assessed for AS and					
Advanced Level Welsh First Language and AS and A Level Welsh Second Language					
During the Aca	demic Year 2019 / 2020				
Academic	AS and A Le	evel Welsh First	AS and A Level	Welsh Second	
Year	Language		Language		
	Number	%	Number	%	

2019 / 2020 15 1.7% 29 3.2%

All Welsh medium secondary schools work collaboratively with one another and other providers, including Coleg Y Cymoed, to provide GCSE, AS and A Level provision. However, collaboration is difficult due to their locations and proximity to one another.

During the summer of 2018, the WG approved funding to pilot the Gatsby Good Career Benchmarks programme in secondary schools. The Gatsby Good Career Benchmarks programme supports secondary schools to develop a wider range of learning pathways for 14 to 19 year old learners in preparation for the world of work, training and further education and is based around the eight Gatsby Good Career Benchmarks. All secondary schools took part in the pilot and an evaluation²⁰ of the pilot acknowledged positive impacts and outlined a number of recommendations which were developed into an action plan. The Council has committed to continue the work started by the pilot for a further two years to further develop the Gatsby Good Career Benchmarks in all secondary schools.

Building on the positive impacts of the Gatsby Good Career Benchmarks programme, the Council has further developed the Gatsby + Mentoring Model. The Gatsby + Mentoring Model is an extension of the Gatsby Good Career Benchmarks programme which works with secondary schools to support learners who are underachieving or in danger of becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET).

WHERE DO WE AIM TO BE WITHIN THE FIRST FIVE YEARS OF THIS WESP AND HOW DO WE PROPOSE TO GET THERE?

- Data demonstrates stability in the ratio split of learners who could attend English and Welsh medium secondary schools for the forthcoming five academic years.
- The projected surplus capacity in Welsh medium secondary schools is likely to increase to 24.1% during the forthcoming five academic years.
- Based on November 2020 provisional forecasts, the number year ten learners who will receive their education through the medium of Welsh during the first five academic years of this WESP is projected to fall.

In order to meet our target of 720 year one learners in Welsh medium education by 2032, the Council, along with officers from a number of external groups and organisations who form the WESP Strategic Group need to work collectively to divert this projection.

In order to gain a detailed understanding of where surplus capacity exists, a mapping exercise of all Welsh medium secondary schools will be undertaken. These findings will be analysed, and a gap analysis produced along with areas for improvement identified with proposed strategies for achieving improvements.

There are a few Welsh medium secondary schools where demand is high and as such growth in capacity is needed. In these secondary schools, action has or is currently being taken to address these issues. The Council's ambitious Band B 21st Century

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²⁰ Gatsby Benchmarking Pilot: Interim Evaluation – January 2021

Schools and Colleges Programme comprises a range of projects totalling £160 million, with the inclusion of a number of projects that propose to increase the capacity of Welsh medium secondary schools. During the first five years of this WESP, the Council's ambitious Band B 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme will have been completed. This, alongside funding directly from the Council, will deliver:

- Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun Due for completion in September 2022, this
 investment will create improved and extended accommodation by adding
 additional teaching accommodation along with a new sports facility to
 compliment the recently completed 3G sports pitch and will provide an
 additional 187 Welsh medium secondary school learner places. These
 additions will provide state of the art facilities for both Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun
 and the local community, increasing opportunities for participation in the wider
 community.
- Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda Due to limitations of the current site, on 9th April 2019 the Council's Cabinet²¹ granted approval to proceed to undertake a feasibility study to invest in either refurbishing the existing Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda or to relocate the school to a new 21st Century standard school to be built in the Rhondda. A further commitment to undertake this feasibility study was made by the Council's Cabinet on 28th January 2021²².

These projects will create additional learner places, increasing the capacity of Welsh medium secondary schools.

All Welsh medium secondary schools work collaboratively with one another and other providers, including Coleg Y Cymoed, to provide GCSE, AS and A Level provision. However, collaboration is difficult due to their locations and proximity to one another. Options to maintain and broaden GCSE, AS and A Level provision need to be further explored. Options to be explored could include the E-sgol project, which was launched by Ceredigion County Council in 2018. The E-sgol project formed part of the WG Rural Education Action Plan – 2018²³, and provides GCSE, AS and A Level learners with the provision of a wider range of GCSE, AS and A Level subjects through virtual pedagogy via the use of Microsoft Teams through Hwb.

Through the Gatsby Good Career Benchmarks programme and Gatsby + Mentoring Model, the Council will support secondary schools to develop a wider range of learning pathways for 14 to 19 year old learners in preparation for the world of work, training and further education. Further work will be undertaken to create a system of support and training for Career Leaders in secondary schools to facilitate the incorporation of Benchmark Four – Linking Curriculum Learning to Carers into the Curriculum for Wales – 2022.

WHERE DO WE EXPECT TO BE AT THE END OF OUR WESP?

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²¹ Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council – Cabinet – Planning for Welsh Medium Education Places – 9th April 2019

²² Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council – Cabinet – Welsh in Education Strategic Plan – Annual Update 2020 – 28th January 2021

²³ Welsh Government – Rural Education Action Plan – 2018

Investment made across a number Welsh secondary schools over the previous three years up to and including the years 2019 / 2020 through the Council's Capital Programme has provided additional Welsh medium secondary school learner places and along with the Council's Planned Minor Capital Works Programme, created improved accommodation for learners. At the end of the lifespan of this WESP, this investment will have increased further. In addition, the Council's ambitious Band B 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme, alongside funding directly from the Council, will have been completed, delivering an improved and extended Welsh medium secondary school and with another secondary school either refurbished or relocated to a new 21st Century standard school. These projects will have created additional learner places, increasing the capacity of Welsh medium secondary schools.

During the lifespan of this WESP, it is anticipated that additional funding will be available to further invest in Welsh medium secondary schools. When additional funding is made available, the Council will be ambitious with its proposals to invest in Welsh medium secondary schools in order to meet the target of 720 year one learners in Welsh medium education by 2032.

Alongside this, the Council will have gained a detailed understanding of where surplus capacity exists, through the completion of a mapping exercise of all Welsh medium secondary schools. The analysis of these findings will have identified areas for improvement and identified and implemented strategies for achieving improvements.

All Welsh medium secondary schools work collaboratively with one another and other providers, including Coleg Y Cymoed, to provide GCSE, AS and A Level provision. During the lifespan of this WESP, the Council is hopeful that these collaborative working arrangements will be continued and expanded with options such as E-sgol further explored to maintain and wide GCSE, AS and A Level provision.

During the lifespan of this WESP, the Council is hopeful that the Gatsby Good Career Benchmarks programme and Gatsby + Mentoring Model will have developed a wide range of learning pathways for 14 to 19 year old learners in preparation for the world of work, training and further education.

KEY DATA

The data in the table that follows outlines the projected number and percentage of year ten learners who could receive their education through the medium of Welsh and is based on November 2020 provisional forecasts, compared to the projected number and percentage of year ten learners who should receive their education through the medium of Welsh if the Council is to achieve its target of 720 year one learners in Welsh medium education by 2032 during the lifespan of this WESP. Although it would take ten years for the effect of an increase in year one learners to have an impact upon year ten learners, this data has been included for comparison purposes.

Projected Number and Percentage of Year Ten Learners Receiving their Education							
Through the Medium of Welsh During the Lifespan of this WESP							
Academic Year	Projected Number and Percentage	Projected	Nun	nber	and		
	of Year Ten Learners Who Could	Percentage	of	Year	Ten		

	Receive their Edu the Medium of W November 202 Forecasts)	lelsh (Based on	their Education Through the Medium of Welsh if the Council is to Achieve its Target of 720 Year One Learners in Welsh Medium Education by 2032		
	Number	%	Number	%	
2022 / 2023	557	19.4%	577	20.1%	
2023 / 2024	545	18.6%	595	20.3%	
2024 / 2025	517	17.9%	615	21.3%	
2025 / 2026	538	17.6%	630	20.6%	
2026 / 2027	521	17.8%	640	21.9%	
2027 / 2028	519	18.2%	660	23.1%	
2028 / 2029	487	17.4%	675	24.1%	
2029 / 2030	524	18.7%	690	24.6%	
2030 / 2031	502	18.2%	705	25.6%	
2031 / 2032	518	20.3%	720	28.2%	

OUTCOME 5: MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNERS TO USE WELSH IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS IN SCHOOL

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The school environment provides learners with the opportunity to use the Welsh language within different contexts. A lack of opportunity to use the Welsh language leads to a lack of confidence and the erosion of Welsh language skills. As such, learners, along with parents / carers and the wider community should be supported and encouraged to participate in a wide range of cultural, social and sporting activities through the medium of Welsh within their primary and secondary school in order to improve their confidence and retain their fluency in the Welsh language.

In recent years, support has been given to promote and increase learner's use of the Welsh language in primary and secondary schools and in social contexts. This has been done through the Welsh Language Charter (Siarter laith), developed by Gwynedd Council, and various other projects, in partnership with the CSCJES and the Urdd. These include but are not limited to:

- Implementing the Welsh Language Charter in all Welsh medium primary and secondary schools in order to develop learners' use of the Welsh language.
- Implementing Cymraeg Campus in a number of English medium primary schools and piloting it in two English medium secondary schools.
- Publishing a toolkit for Welsh medium secondary schools to use to embed learner's use of the Welsh language.
- Supporting Welsh medium secondary schools to develop activities to encourage the informal use of the Welsh language.
- Supporting English medium secondary schools to provide informal opportunities to use the Welsh language and intensive Welsh language learning opportunities through the Urdd's Cymraeg Bob Dydd project.

The aim has been to embed positive habits and attitudes towards the Welsh language through purposeful planning within primary and secondary schools and to promote the informal use of the Welsh language amongst learners inside and outside primary and secondary schools. Facilitating the use of the Welsh language, across the curriculum and in wider contexts in primary and secondary schools, to ensure a continuum of linguistic progression to support learner's in the transition between key stages offers all learners the opportunity to become fully bilingual and aligns with the Curriculum for Wales – 2022.

To date, all Welsh medium primary schools have achieved the bronze award for the Welsh Language Charter, whilst eight Welsh medium primary schools have achieved the silver award for the Welsh Language Charter and eighteen English medium primary schools have achieved the bronze award for Cymraeg Campus. To date, all four Welsh medium secondary schools are working towards achieving the bronze award for the Welsh Language Charter, whilst two English medium secondary schools are part of the Cymraeg Campus pilot.

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011²⁴ (the 2011 Measure), requires the Council to produce a five year strategy to facilitate and promote the Welsh language. The first five year strategy, RCT – Welsh Language Promotion Strategy²⁵, was approved in 2016 and outlined a number of key policy areas to maintain and increase the number of Welsh speakers during its lifecycle. In developing this WESP, the RCT – Welsh Language Promotion Strategy has been taken into consideration in order to encourage and facilitate long term growth in Welsh medium and Welsh language education and the Council has and will continue to ensure there is a clear alignment with it.

Learners attending English and Welsh medium primary and secondary schools are encouraged to participate in a wide range of cultural, social and sporting activities through the medium of Welsh in order to improve their confidence and retain their fluency in the Welsh language.

The Council's Cultural Services Team employs officers whose skills, expertise and knowledge supports the development of opportunities to use the Welsh language in different contexts. Learners are provided with a range of opportunities to use the Welsh language informally in community settings including:

- Presenting a theatre piece at one of the Council's theatres for key stage one and two learners.
- Participating in a performing arts workshops at Ysgol Garth Olwg Lifelong Learning Centre for key stage two, three and four learners.
- Co-producing and presenting a theatre piece at one of the Council's theatres for key stage three and four learners.

As an Arts Portfolio Wales client, in receipt of revenue funding from the Arts Council of Wales, the Council's Cultural Services Team are required to have their own Welsh

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²⁴ Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 (the 2011 Measure)

²⁵ Rhondda Cynon Taf – Welsh Language Promotion Strategy – 2016

Language Plan, which supports the delivery of the RCT – Welsh Language Promotion Strategy.

The Council's YEPS Team employ Welsh speaking Youth Engagement Officers, located within each Welsh medium secondary school, whose role is to provide a range of activities for learners through the medium of Welsh in different contexts, therefore, normalising the Welsh language and encouraging its use outside of the classroom. The Youth Engagement Officers provide opportunities for learners to use the Welsh language more informally in community settings, such as:

- Offering 'positive activities' five days per week, after the school day, delivered through the medium of Welsh.
- Offering 'extended provision' two evenings a week through the medium of Welsh. Extended provision covers the following four areas:
 - o Education, employment and training.
 - o Advice and guidance.
 - Participation and consultation.
 - Leisure, sporting and cultural opportunities.

In addition, the Council's YEPS Team has a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Menter laith, to lead on the development of Welsh Language Youth Forums in each secondary school. The Welsh Language Youth Forums are expected to input into the County Youth Forum to ensure there is sufficient Welsh language representation.

The Urdd provide a range of opportunities for young people over the age of seventeen to gain employment, practical experience and professional qualifications, working alongside stakeholders to develop Welsh medium apprenticeships. Apprenticeships are available within the outdoor activity, sports and youth and community services. Apprentices get the opportunity to learn from experienced staff and lead high quality activities for children and young people whilst gaining accredited qualifications. The Council will work to strengthen links with the Urdd, to provide learners with a wide range of activities through the medium of Welsh within their primary and secondary school.

Eligible parents / carers and the wider community are supported and encouraged to participate in activities through the medium of Welsh order to improve their confidence and retain their fluency in the Welsh language. Communities for Work (CfW), a WG partnership programme between the LA and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), supported by the European Social Fund (ESF), delivers employment support services in all fifty two Communities First Clusters (CFC) in Wales. Dedicated CfW Project Teams are in place to provide support to individuals to access employment. CfW offer pre-employment activities that introduce conversational Welsh to parents / carers and the wider community and a pathway to employment course that includes basic Welsh language skills which can lead onto a Welsh for Adults course.

WHERE DO WE AIM TO BE WITHIN THE FIRST FIVE YEARS OF THIS WESP AND HOW DO WE PROPOSE TO GET THERE?

In order to further embed positive habits and attitudes towards the Welsh language in primary and secondary schools and to promote the informal use of the Welsh language amongst learners inside and outside primary and secondary schools, the Council intends to increase the total number of Welsh and English medium primary and secondary schools being awarded the Welsh Language Charter and Cymraeg Campus during the first five years of this WESP.

It is anticipated that supporting and promoting learners to increase their use of the Welsh language in primary and secondary schools and in social contexts will assist the Council in contributing towards one million people in Wales being Welsh speakers by 2050. The Council's Cultural Services and YEPS TEAM Teams will continue to develop and provide opportunities for learners to use the Welsh language in different contexts.

The Council's Cultural Services Team intend to establish a strategic relationship with primary and secondary schools in the County Borough, supporting their delivery for Welsh medium and Welsh language education through a cultural provision.

The Council's YEPS Team will continue to offer a language choice of English or Welsh to learners. There will continue to be a Welsh speaking Youth Engagement Officer located within each Welsh medium secondary school, as well as a Welsh speaking Youth Engagement Officer in some English medium secondary schools. In addition, the Council's Youth Engagement Officers will continue to offer additional activities to learners, with a Welsh language provider being sourced for learners attending Welsh medium secondary schools wherever possible, with the aim of increasing the number of external providers who can deliver activities through the medium of Welsh. In addition, the Council's YEPS Team, Menter laith and the Urdd will continue to meet regularly to co-produce a range of opportunities for learners to use the Welsh language in different contexts.

In recent years, the County Borough is honoured to have been confirmed as the host for the 2024 National Eisteddfod of Wales, an indication of the Council's commitment to contributing towards one million people in Wales being Welsh speakers by 2050. Through this, there will be opportunities to promote the Welsh language and for learners to use the Welsh language in different contexts at school and beyond.

WHERE DO WE EXPECT TO BE AT THE END OF OUR WESP?

One of the aims within the Cymraeg 2050 Work Programme is to embed positive Welsh language use, supported by formal and informal opportunities to use the Welsh language socially. In order to achieve the vision of one million people in Wales being Welsh speakers by 2050, it is necessary to increase the number of opportunities for learners to use the Welsh language in different contexts. Learners should be supported and encouraged to participate in a wide range of cultural, social and sporting activities through the medium of Welsh within their primary and secondary schools in order to improve their confidence and retain their fluency in the Welsh language.

By the end of the lifespan of this WESP, the Council expects all primary and secondary schools to have achieved the Welsh Language Charter and Cymraeg Campus and an increase in the opportunities for learners to use the Welsh language in different

contexts in school via the Council's Cultural Services Team and YEPS Team by 2032 during the lifespan of this WESP.

KEY DATA

In order to further embed positive habits and attitudes towards the Welsh language in primary and secondary schools and to promote the informal use of the Welsh language amongst learners inside and outside primary and secondary schools, the Council intends to increase the number of opportunities for learners to use Welsh different contexts by 2032 during the lifespan of this WESP.

OUTCOME 6: AN INCREASE IN THE PROVISION OF WELSH MEDIUM EDUCATION FOR LEARNERS WITH ALN (IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE DUTIES IMPOSED BY THE ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS AND EDUCATION TRIBUNAL (WALES) ACT 2018

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Considerable changes are underway in relation to the statutory provision required to meet the needs of learners with ALN. The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018²⁶ (the ALNET Act 2018) was introduced in January 2018 and will be implemented in September 2021. The ALNET Act 2018 requires LAs to keep the arrangements for supporting learners between the ages of 0 to 25 with ALN under review and consider whether these arrangements are sufficient. It includes a statutory requirement to take reasonable steps to create a Welsh medium and bilingual system of support for learners with ALN. The ALNET Act 2018 is supported by new regulations, including secondary legislation and a new statutory ALN Code (The New Code²⁷).

For learners with significant ALN, who experience difficulties in coping in mainstream primary and secondary schools, specialist provisions are required. There are a range of specialist provisions which include:

- 44 Learning Support Classes (LSCs).
- 2 PRUs.
- 4 Special Schools.

In addition, approximately £3.4 million Additional Needs Funding (ANF) is available to mainstream primary and secondary schools to ensure robust, inclusive provision for learners who attend mainstream primary and secondary schools with severe and persistent ALN.

Welsh medium learners with ALN, who experience difficulties within mainstream primary and secondary schools and require more specialist support, are supported by a specialist peripatetic team – the WCNT. The WCNT, which includes a Welsh medium specialist teacher and two Learning Support Assistants, provide support through an inclusive delivery model, whereby learners are provided with specialist support within

²⁶ The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act

²⁷ The Additional Learning Needs Code For Wales 2021

their mainstream primary and secondary schools. During the academic year 2019 / 2020, the WCNT supported a number of learners. Analysis suggests that learners accessing support from the WCNT were making progress that was comparable to that of their peers in equivalent English medium primary and secondary school settings. Further analysis suggests that this inclusive model adopted in Welsh medium primary and secondary schools has been very positive.

The Council provides an excellent range of LSC provisions. However, in light of the requirements of the ALNET Act 2018, concerns regarding rising exclusions and an increase in requests for SEBD placements it was considered necessary to enhance the LSC provision. Data analysis found that there was:

- Insufficient SEBD provision in the secondary sector.
- No discreet specialist provision for Welsh medium learners with ALN.

As such, a report, approved by the Council's Cabinet on 17th December 2019²⁸, outlined proposals for change that sought to:

- Enhance the continuum of linguistic progression of provision that effectively addressed the need for specialist SEBD provision within key stage three and four.
- Create a specialist LSC provision for Welsh medium key stage three and four learners with significant ALN.
- Commence a consultation on proposals to enhance LSC provision for Welsh medium key stage three and four learners with SEBD by establishing a LSC at Ysgol Garth Olwg.

Due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the proposals to enhance LSC provision for Welsh medium key stage three and four learners with SEBD by establishing a LSC at Ysgol Garth Olwg were lapsed and, as such, on 25th June 2020, the Council's Cabinet²⁹ agreed to progress with an amended proposal to extend an earlier pilot to fund mainstream secondary schools to establish their own alternative curriculum for learners with SEBD. As a result, in September 2020, funding was provided to establish an in house, Welsh medium secondary school based alternative provision to meet the needs of learners presenting with SEBD within their local Welsh medium mainstream secondary school.

The development of Welsh medium ALN provision formed part of the 2020 / 2021 Regional ALN Transformation Plan. For the years 2020 / 2021, the work stream fell under Priority One, to:

• Ensure that all LAs develop consistent practices and collaborate effectively with key partners to prepare for the new ways of working.

The focus of Priority One was on three main areas:

²⁹ Cabinet Report – 25th June 2020 – Review of Learning Support Class Provision for Learners with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) Significant Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

²⁸ Cabinet Report – 17th December 2019 – Review of Learning Support Class Provision for Learners with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) Significant Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

- Delivery of a Welsh medium ALN Regional Delivery Plan.
- Development of Welsh medium resources.
- Development of a standardised Welsh medium reading test.

Actions in the 2020 / 2021 Regional ALN Transformation Plan were concerned with continuing to develop a regional approach to support Welsh medium provision and increase the consistency and sharing of best practice.

WHERE DO WE AIM TO BE WITHIN THE FIRST FIVE YEARS OF THIS WESP AND HOW DO WE PROPOSE TO GET THERE?

The ALNET Act 2018 requires all LAs to keep ALN provision under review. As such, LAs must:

- 1. Keep under review the arrangements in its locality for learners who have ALN.
- 2. Consider the extent to which the arrangements are sufficient to meet the needs of the learners ALN.
- 3. Consider the sufficiency of ALN provision through the medium of Welsh.
- 4. Consider the size and capability of the workforce available.
- 5. Take all reasonable steps to remedy any insufficient arrangements.
- 6. At fitting times, consult such persons considered appropriate.

In developing this WESP, The ALNET Act 2018 has been taken into consideration. The Council will endeavour to provide sufficient ALN provision for leaners, who request it, through the medium of Welsh along with a workforce of sufficient size and capability.

The ALNET Act 2018, requires all LAs to use a wide range of quantitative data and qualitative information in order to keep ALN provision under review. Such data and information to be utilised includes but is not limited to:

- The number of Welsh medium learners with ALN.
- The different types and severity of ALN of Welsh medium learners.
- The outcomes of Welsh medium learners with ALN.
- Specialist workforce audits in relation to capacity in delivering support for Welsh medium learners with ALN.
- Specialist placement capacity.
- Any local, regional and national performance indicators relating to ALN.
- Any agreed data sets with CTMUHB and FEI.

The Council has and will continue to work collaboratively with the CSCJES to ensure a shared understanding of high quality, universal and effective ALN provision for learners and will use agreed quality assurance processes to monitor the quality of Welsh medium provision in both mainstream primary and secondary schools and special schools / classes.

The requirements of The ALNET Act 2018 for LAs to take all reasonable steps to implement a Welsh medium and bilingual ALN system will ensure that the ongoing monitoring and review of Welsh medium ALN provision will form an integral part of the

Council's Access and Inclusion Service's action planning, monitoring, evaluation and reviewing. Where possible, the Council will align with The ALNET Act 2018.

WHERE DO WE EXPECT TO BE AT THE END OF OUR WESP?

At the end of the lifespan of this WESP, the Council will have robust processes in place to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to secure Welsh medium and bilingual ALN provision and will endeavour to provide sufficient ALN provision for leaners, who request it, through the medium of Welsh along with a workforce of sufficient size and capability.

OUTCOME 7: INCREASE THE NUMBER OF TEACHING STAFF ABLE TO TEACH WELSH (AS A SUBJECT) AND TEACH THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF WELSH

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

In contributing towards the vision of one million people in Wales being Welsh speakers by 2050, it is vital to ensure a childcare and early years setting and school based workforce of sufficient size and capability. In order to create more Welsh speakers, our childcare and early years settings and education system is dependent on its workforce and we must work locally, regionally and nationally to ensure we create a childcare and early years setting and school based workforce with robust linguistic skills, able to inspire and motivate learners in Welsh medium and Welsh language education.

The childcare and early years settings in the County Borough benefit from highly skilled, qualified staff. Work has been ongoing over several years to upskill the childcare and early years workforce. Changes to qualification requirements in the national minimum standards have also placed more emphasis on ensuring a suitably qualified workforce.

In the year 2020, the Council employed 12,457 people, 42.4% (5,290) of which made up the school based workforce. Data demonstrates that 17.3% (917) of the school based workforce had fluent or fairly fluent Welsh language skills (Welsh Language Skills Levels Three, Four and Five).

The WG recently introduced the School Workforce Annual Census³⁰ (SWAC) as a new data collection tool. The CSCJES Welsh in Education Officer (WiEO) supports schools to accurately complete the Welsh language element of the PLASC and SWAC. The SWAC has been introduced to provide comprehensive data on the:

- Size of the workforce.
- Staff demographics.
- Staff recruitment and retention.
- Use of supply cover.
- Absences.

Capacity for Welsh medium teaching and subject specific teaching.

Cost of teachers pay.

-

³⁰ School Workforce Annual Census – 2019 / 2020

Data from the SWAC will be used to inform future WG policy. The data will enable schools, LAs, regional education consortia and the WG to have a better understanding of the Welsh language skills of the school based workforce. During the academic year data demonstrates that 39.0% (805) of the school based workforce (including headteachers, school teachers and school learning support workers) employed by the Council had intermediate, advance or proficient Welsh language skills levels.

During the same timeframe, data also demonstrates that 21.7% (448) of the school based workforce employed by the Council were teaching / working through the medium of Welsh, whilst 6.9% (143) of the school based workforce employed by the Council were able to teach / work through the medium of Welsh but were not doing so in their current post.

In contributing towards the vision of one million people in Wales being Welsh speakers by 2050, we must work to ensure we create a childcare and early years setting and school based workforce with robust linguistic skills, able to inspire and motivate learners in Welsh medium and Welsh language education. This work will be driven at a national level, by the WG, who are currently implementing numerous strategies including, but not limited to:

- A programme of activities aimed at increasing the number of secondary school aged learners who are assessed for AS and A Level Welsh first and second language.
- Promoting a pathway into teaching Welsh as a subject.
- The continuation of laith Athrawon Yfory.
- The development of alternative routes into teaching.
- The distribution of specific funding to regional education consortia.
- The implementation of a digital marketing campaign, marketing to specific groups of potential teachers.
- The piloting of transition courses for teachers with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) to teach in primary schools to receive additional training and support to teach in secondary schools.
- The Welsh Language Sabbatical Scheme (WLSS).
- Working closely with Initial Teacher Education (ITE) partnerships to deliver ITE accredited ITE programmes.
- Working closely with the Education Workforce Council (EWC) and ITE providers to complement and support recruitment across Wales.

The WLSS offers Welsh language courses to the primary and secondary school based workforce. The aim of the WLSS, which is funded by the WG, is to increase the number of the school based workforce who can teach through the medium of Welsh or bilingually. The WLSS offers opportunities for specialised, continuing professional development and is offered at various language proficiency levels in various locations across Wales.

The data in the table that follows outlines the number the school based workforce who are employed by the Council and have participated in and completed a WLSS over the previous four academic years up to and including 2020 / 2021.

Number of the School Based Workforce who are Employed by the Council and have Participated in and Completed a WLSS Course Over the Previous Four Academic Years

Academic Year	Number
2017 / 2018	1
2018 / 2019	3
2019 / 2020	5
2020 / 2021	3*

^{*}A further two school teachers and school learning support assistants were offered place but decided to defer until 2021 / 2022 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The CSCJES provides the school based workforce who have completed WLSS with continued professional learning, networking and opportunities to share best practice within and across the schools located in the County Boroughs that comprise the CSCJES.

Two Welsh medium secondary schools in the County Borough, Ysgol Gyfun Garth Olwg and Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun have formed an alliance with Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd and Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Plasmawr, in partnership with Cardiff Metropolitan University to run an ITE programme. The secondary schools that form part of the alliance are required to provide training days for all secondary school PGCE learners who study the PGCE course through the medium of Welsh. Every PGCE learner must be placed in one of the secondary schools who form part of the alliance for one of their placements. To assist and support the PGCE learners, each secondary school that forms part of the alliance provides a Research Champion, Welsh Language Coordinator, Subject Mentor and Senior Mentor. During the academic year 2020 / 2021, there are 15 PGCE leaners across the alliance.

The Urdd provide a range of opportunities for young people over the age of seventeen to gain employment, practical experience and professional qualifications, working alongside stakeholders to develop Welsh medium apprenticeships. Apprenticeships are available in within the outdoor activity, sports and youth and community services. Apprentices get the opportunity to learn from experienced staff and lead high quality activities for children and young people whilst gaining accredited qualifications. The Council will work to strengthen links with the Urdd, creating alternative, additional pathways for learners.

The Council and the CSCJES provides numerous professional learning opportunities to take account of the language progression of the school based workforce employed by the Council. The Council and the CSCJES records attendance at courses organised.

WHERE DO WE AIM TO BE WITHIN THE FIRST FIVE YEARS OF THIS WESP AND HOW DO WE PROPOSE TO GET THERE?

In order to meet our target of 720 year one learners in Welsh medium education by 2032, the Council, along with officers from a number of external groups and organisations who form the WESP Strategic Group need to work collectively.

In contributing towards the vision of one million people in Wales being Welsh speakers by 2050, it is vital to ensure a childcare and early years setting and school based workforce of sufficient size and capability. In order to create more Welsh speakers, our childcare and early years settings and education system is dependent on its workforce and we must work locally, regionally and nationally to ensure we create a school based workforce with robust linguistic skills, able to inspire and motivate learners in Welsh medium and Welsh language education.

If the Council is to achieve its target of 720 year one learners in Welsh medium education by 2032 during the lifespan of this WESP, it could result in the requirement for an increased childcare and early years setting and school based workforce. Early immersion in the Welsh language and support for parents / carers to seamlessly continue their child's statutory education journey into Welsh medium education is important in ensuring a continuum of linguistic progression. We need to ensure that there is an adequate childcare and early years settings workforce to support parents / carers to attend Ti a Fi and Cymraeg i Blant parent / carer and toddler sessions, followed by Cylch Meithrin nursery groups. At present, projections show adequate surplus capacity across Welsh medium primary and secondary schools to meet our target. However, we need to ensure that childcare and early years and school based staff have robust linguistic skills and are able to inspire and motivate learners in Welsh medium and Welsh language education.

The Council will work collaboratively with Mudiad Meithrin to ensure there is an adequate childcare and early years workforce to provide early immersion in the Welsh language and support for parents / carers to seamlessly continue their child's statutory education journey into Welsh medium.

The Council and the CSCJES will analyse data from the PLASC and SWAC to monitor linguistic competency and identify the professional learning needs of the school based workforce. Utilising local, regional and national training programmes, that take account of the language progression of the school based workforce employed by the Council, including the WLSS, the school based workforce will be supported with continued professional learning, networking and opportunities to share best practice within and across the schools that comprise the CSCJES.

In addition, the Council will work collaboratively with the CSCJES to increase the capacity of the school based workforce in English medium primary and secondary schools to teach through the medium of Welsh. Whilst also continuing to develop and support secondary school teachers who are not subject specialists to teach through the medium of Welsh.

The Council and the CSCJES will work collaboratively to increase leadership capacity at all levels in the Welsh medium sector with progression into headship. The CSCJES provides clear leadership progression opportunities for the Welsh medium sector through leadership development programmes at various levels, including the Aspiring Headteacher Programme (AHP), which is a one year development programme for experienced school leaders who wish to become headteachers in the near future and the subsequent National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) Programme which is the national professional qualification for headteachers. There are currently

eighteen Welsh medium primary or secondary school teachers employed by the Council participating in the AHP and NPQH programme.

Notwithstanding the work that will be driven at a national level, by the WG, there are numerous strategies that could be implemented at a regional and national level. These include but are not limited to:

- Exploring how the Council's Apprenticeship Programme could be utilised to provide school based workforce apprenticeship opportunities within Welsh medium primary and secondary schools.
- Working in partnership with the Urdd, the Council will work to strengthen links to create alternative, additional pathways for learners through the development of Welsh medium apprenticeships.
- Utilising the Gatsby Good Career Benchmarks programme, which supports secondary schools to develop a wider range of learning pathways for 14 to 19 year old learners in preparation for the world of work, ensuring the early promotion of the professional learning pathway.
- Investigating alternative professional learning pathways with the Council's Adult Education Team.
- Continuing to support the delivery of the ITE programme in alliance with the secondary schools that have formed a partnership with Cardiff Metropolitan University.
- Continuing to support the progression of the current school based workforce in completing their ITE programme.

WHERE DO WE EXPECT TO BE AT THE END OF OUR WESP?

In order to meet our target of 720 year one learners in Welsh medium education by 2032, the Council, along with officers from a number of external groups and organisations who form the WESP Strategic Group need to work collectively.

In contributing towards the vision of one million people in Wales being Welsh speakers by 2050, it is vital to ensure a school based workforce of sufficient size and capability. In order to create more Welsh speakers, our education system is dependent on its school based workforce and we must work locally, regionally and nationally to ensure we create a school based workforce with robust linguistic skills, able to inspire and motivate learners in Welsh medium and Welsh language education.

This work will be driven at a national level, by the WG, who are currently implementing numerous strategies alongside the numerous strategies that could be implemented at a regional and national level by the CSCJES and Council.

MARKETING

The use of marketing and promotion strategies to promote Welsh medium and Welsh language education will become integral in the contribution to one million people being Welsh speakers by 2050. The Council will utilise both national and regional marketing and promotion strategies, developed and provided by the WG and CSCJES, as well as local marketing and promotion strategies developed by the Council along with

officers from a number of external groups and organisations who form the WESP Strategic Group.

Through the various mapping exercises that will be conducted through many of the outcomes within this WESP, the Council will have gained an understanding of Welsh medium and Welsh language education at a school by school level and from this understanding, where required, will be able to develop bespoke marketing and promotion strategies to assist in the promotion of Welsh medium and Welsh language education.

In addition to this, the Council will continue to raise awareness of the benefits of Welsh medium and Welsh language education through the use of existing marketing materials, created as a result of existing marketing and promotion strategies, whilst also developing new marketing materials.

To support this, a Marketing and Promotion Sub Group comprised of officers from the Council, along with officers from a number of external groups and organisations will be established. This Marketing and Promotion Sub Group will be guided by a Terms of Reference.

ACHIEVING OUR VISION

In accordance with the 2019 Regulations, the Council will make every effort to build and maintain constructive working relationships with all relevant groups and organisations who can contribute towards the success of this WESP. These groups and organisations include, but are not limited to:

- CSCJES.
- Coleg y Cymoedd.
- CTMUHB.
- Menter laith.
- Mudiad Meithrin.
- RhaG.
- The Urdd.
- University of South Wales.
- WG.

Of particular importance in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of this WESP will be our WESP Strategic Group. The WESP Strategic Group is comprised of officers from the Council, along with officers from a number of external groups and organisations and is guided by a Terms of Reference.

Alongside, the WESP Strategic Group and of upmost importance to the success of this WESP is the Marketing and Promotion Sub Group. The Marketing and Promotion Sub Group is comprised of officers from the Council, along with officers from a number of external groups and organisations and is guided by a Terms of Reference.

In Addition to the WESP Strategic Group and Marketing and Promotion Sub Group, where and when necessary, the Council will establish 'task and finish' Sub Groups comprised of officers from the Council, along with officers from a number of external

groups and organisations. Each Sub Group will be tasked with the achievement of specified objectives and guided by Terms of Reference.

From 2023 onwards, the Council will implement two main methods of reporting on the progress of this WESP:

- 1. Annual Work Plan (AWP).
- 2. Annual Progress Report (APR).

The AWP is intended to be a practical working document to help keep track of progress in the short term and will be utilised by the WESP Strategic Group to track progress of this WESP.

The 2019 Regulations require LAs to review their WESP and submit an APR, based on that review, to the WG by 31st July each year. The APR is intended to capture the key achievements in relation to the WESP.

Whilst the statutory responsibility for the WESP sits with the Council, a range of external groups and organisations have a key role in formulating, implementing and evaluating its progress regularly throughout its lifespan.



ANNEX ONE: METHODOLOGY FOR TARGET SETTING

Cymraeg 2050 sets out the overall long term target of one million people in Wales being Welsh speakers by 2050. In order to achieve this target, Cymraeg 2050 sets out a long term trajectory which includes milestone targets set out in ten year increments. Targets have been set for each LA and have been calculated by the WG in order to establish a clear path to reach the national target.

The methodology implemented by the WG involves using baseline data from the 2019 PLASC, more specifically, the number of year one learner's being taught through the medium of Welsh. The data from each LA has been compared and LAs have been grouped together based on this and other factors including the models of Welsh medium education provision adopted by the LA and the linguistic nature of the LA. This methodology is regarded to be fair, as it acknowledges the different challenges faced by each LA.

Each group of LAs has a set target to increase the percentage of year one learners taught through the medium of Welsh by a fixed range of percentage points. The Council is in Group Three. This is demonstrated in the table that follows:

LA Group TI	LA Group Three Targets					
LA	2019 Bas	eline (PLASC	2032 Targ	get		
	2019)		Lower Ra	Lower Range		inge
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Caerphilly County Borough Council	359	17.9%	520	26.0%	600	30.0%
Cardiff City Council	702	16.9%	1,035	25.0%	1,200	29.0%
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	100	14.0%	155	22.0%	185	26.0%
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	506	19.1%	720	27.0%	825	31.0%
Swansea Council	390	15.4%	590	23.0%	695	27.0%
Vale of Glamorgan Council	221	14.3%	345	22.0%	405	26.0%
Wrexham County Borough Council	235	15.0%	360	23.0%	425	27.0%

According to data from the 2019 PLASC, between 14.0% and 19.1% of year one learners in these LAs were taught through the medium of Welsh.

It is proposed that each group of LAs calculates a target to increase the percentage of year one learners being taught through the medium of Welsh by a fixed range of percentage points, based on existing provision in each LA. In Group Three, the percentage point ranges are between 8.0% and 12.0%. The lower range as been set for each group of LAs so that the national target of 30.0% of year one learners being taught through the medium of Welsh is achieved by during the lifespan of this WESP.



ANNEX TWO: LINGUISTIC PROFILE OF THE COUNTY BOROUGH

Every ten years the nation sets aside one day for the Census, a count of all people and households. The Census is a key source of information about the number of people who can speak Welsh.

The 2011 Census³¹ indicated that of the 225,555 residents living in the County Borough, 12.3% (27,779) were able to speak Welsh, whilst the remaining 87.7% (197,776) were not able to speak Welsh. This can be compared to the all Wales figures that showed of the 2,955,841 residents living Wales, 19.0% (562,016) were able to speak Welsh, whilst the remaining 81.0% (2,393,825) were not able to speak Welsh.

The Annual Population Survey³² collects information about respondents' Welsh speaking ability and includes a question on how often people speak Welsh. It is updated quarterly, so is a more up-to-date source than the Census. The Annual Population Survey for the quarter ending September 2020, reported that 19.3% of respondents living in the County Borough said they could speak Welsh, this is compared to the all Wales percentage of 28.8% of respondents. This can be further broken down to the data contained in the table that follows.

Welsh Language Skills of Residents – (%)			
	County Borough of	Wales	
	Rhondda Cynon Taf		
Can Read Welsh	18.2%	25.8%	
Can Write Welsh	16.7%	23.5%	
Can Understand Spoken	23.5%	33.0%	
Welsh			

The data demonstrates that in each Welsh language skill area, the all Wales percentages are notably higher than the County Borough percentages. However, the current data shows an increase in the number of residents that can read, write, and understand spoken Welsh since the 2011 Census.

When asked about their frequency of speaking Welsh, the table that follows shows a breakdown of responses of respondents living in the County Borough compared to the all Wales responses.

Residents Frequency of Speaking Welsh- (%)			
	County Borough of	Wales	
	Rhondda Cynon Taf		
Speak Welsh Daily	6.9%	16.2%	
Speak Welsh Weekly	5.0%	4.8%	
Use it Less Often	5.7%	6.2%	

The data demonstrates that the percentage of respondents who speak Welsh daily is far lower for the County Borough than the all Wales percentage.

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³¹ 2011 Census

³² Annual Population Survey

The Welsh Language Use Survey³³ for the years 2013 to 2015, contains detailed information about Welsh speaker's fluency and their use of the Welsh language in a range of settings. When looking where respondents living in Wales learned to speak Welsh, the majority, 45.0%, learned to speak Welsh at home, followed by 26.0% who learned to speak Welsh at nursery and primary school between the ages of 2 to 10 and 14.0% who learned to speak Welsh at secondary school at the age of 11 plus. The remaining 2.0% learned to speak Welsh in other settings, including at Welsh for Adults courses.



³³ Welsh Language Use Survey 2013 to 2015

ANNEX THREE: BASELINE DATA

OUTCOME 1: MORE NURSERY / THREE YEAR OLD LEARNERS RECEIVE THEIR EDUCATION THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF WELSH

The data in the table that follows is derived from the Council's CSA for the period between 2017 and 2022. It demonstrates the total number of registered and unregistered English and Welsh medium childcare and early years settings alongside the number of places available across the County Borough.

Total Number of English and Welsh Medium Childcare and Early Years Settings Available Across the County Borough						
Childcare Type		Total Number of Registered Childcare Settings		Total Number of Unregistered Childcare Settings	Total Number of Paces	
Childm	inder	117	564	0	0	
Day Care	Full Day Care	35	142	0	0	
	Sessional Day Care	29	47	5	6	
	Crèches	0	0	0	0	
	Out of School Care	9	15	6	6	
	Open Access Play Provision	5	7	4	4	
	Nanny	0	0	0	0	
Total		195	775	15	16	

The data in the table that follows, again derived from the Council's CSA for the period between 2017 and 2022, demonstrates the total number of registered and unregistered Welsh medium childcare and early years settings (both Welsh medium and bilingual) alongside the number of places available across the County Borough.

Total Number of Welsh Medium Childcare and Early Years Settings Available Across the County Borough							
Childo	are Type	;	Total Number of Registered Childcare Settings	Total Number of Places	Total Number of Unregistered Childcare Settings		
Childm	ninder		1	9	0	0	
Day Care	Full Care	Day	7	282	0	0	
	Sessior Day Ca		16	416	0	0	
	Crèche	S	0	0	0	0	

	Out School Care	of	2	64	5	80
Total			26	771	5	80

The data in the table that follows is provided by the Council's FSP Team and outlines the FSP childcare places that were commissioned from childcare and early years settings by the Council in order to provide the FSP offer to all eligible children. It contains information since the last FSP tender exercise which took place in 2018.

FSP Childcare Places	FSP Childcare Places Commissioned from Childcare Settings						
FSP Childcare Places	Number of Commissioned Childcare and Early	Commissioned	%				
	Years Settings						
Total FSP Childcare	23	530	77.3%				
English Medium							
Places							
Commissioned							
Total FSP Childcare	9	156	22.7%				
Welsh Medium							
Places							
Commissioned							
Total	32	686	100.0%				

The data in the table that follows is provided by the Council's FSP Team and demonstrates that as of November 2020 across the County Borough, an additional thirty four Welsh medium FSP childcare places had been purchased via approved childcare and early years settings, whilst an additional twelve English medium FSP childcare places had been purchased via approved childcare and early years settings taking the total number of childcare places purchased to 732. This is due to parent / carer choice or insufficient space available in local childcare settings.

Additional FSP Childcare Places Commissioned from Childcare and Early Years Settings – As at November 2020							
FSP Childcare Places		New Total Number of Commissioned Places					
Total FSP Childcare English	12	542					
Medium Places							
Commissioned							
Total FSP Childcare Welsh	34	190					
Medium Places							
Commissioned							
Total	46	732					

The data in the table that follows is provided by the WG and outlines the total number of children attending Cylchoedd Meithrin over the previous five academic years.

Total Number of Children Attending Cylchoedd Meithrin Over the Previous Five Academic Years						
Settings	Academic Y	ear				
	2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	2017 / 2018	2018 / 2019	2019 / 2020	
Number of Settings	22	24	25	23	19	
Number of	25	27	25	25	20	
Cylchoedd Meithrin						
Number of Children	716	813	804	860	669	
Attending						
Cylchoedd Meithrin						

The data in the table that follows is derived from PLASC and outlines the number of pre nursery, pre nursery part time, nursery and nursery part time learners attending Welsh medium primary schools for the previous three academic years.

Total Number of Pre Nursery, Pre Nursery Part Time, Nursery and Nursery Part Time Learners Attending Welsh Medium Primary Schools Over the Previous Three Academic Years							
Year Group	Academic Year						
-	2017 / 2018 2018 / 2019 2019 / 2020						
Pre Nursery	73	24	27				
Pre Nursery Part	0	19	29				
Time							
Nursery	519	421	406				
Nursery Part Time							
Total	592	604	592				

OUTCOME 2: MORE RECEPTION / FIVE YEAR OLD LEARNERS RECEIVE THEIR EDUCATION THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF WELSH

The data in the table that follows is derived from PLASC and outlines the total number of primary school aged learners attending primary schools across the County Borough, split by English and Welsh medium for the previous three academic years.

Total Number of Primary School Aged Learners Attending Primary Schools Split by English and Welsh Medium Over the Previous Three Academic Years						
Category	Academic	Year				
	2017 / 201	8	3 2018 / 2019		2019 / 2020	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Total Number of	18,241	81.0%	18,153	81.0%	18,078	81.0%
Learners Attending						
English Medium						
Primary Schools						
Total Number of	4,291	19.0%	4,269	19.0%	4,220	19.0%
Learners Attending						
Welsh Medium						
Primary Schools						

Total Number of	22,532	22,422	22,298
Learners Attending			
Primary Schools			

The data in the table that follows is derived from PLASC and outlines the total number of reception / five year old learners attending Welsh medium primary schools for the previous three academic years.

Total Number of Reception / Five Year Old Learners Attending Welsh Medium Primary Schools Over the Previous Three Academic Years								
Year Group	Academic Year							
	2017 / 2018 2018 / 2019 2019 / 2020							
Reception	554	517	565					
Reception Part	0	1	0					
Time	me							
Total	554	518	565					

OUTCOME 3: MORE CHILDREN CONTINUE TO IMPROVE THEIR WELSH LANGUAGE SKILLS WHEN TRANSFERRING FROM ONE STAGE OF THEIR STATUTORY EDUCATION TO ANOTHER

The data in the table that follows is provided by the WG outlines the transition rates of children attending Cylchoedd Meithrin into English and Welsh medium primary schools for the previous five academic years.

Transition Rates of Children Attending Cylchoedd Meithrin into English and Welsh Medium Primary Schools for the Previous Five Academic Years						
Settings	Academic Year					
		2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	2017 / 2018	2018 / 2019	2019 / 2020
Number o	f Children	716	813	804	860	669
Attending						
Cylchoedo	d Meithrin					
Number o	f Children	495	492	550	602	505
Leaving	Leaving Cylchoedd					
Meithrin						
Number o	f Children	495	492	550	602	505
Transferri	-					
Primary So	chool					
Welsh	Number	284	288	319	359	343
Medium	%	57.3%	58.5%	58.0%	59.6%	67.9%
English	Number	148	130	150	150	133
Medium	%	52.1%	45.1%	47.0%	41.7%	38.7%
Other	Number	63	74	81	93	29

The data in the table that follows is derived from PLASC and outlines the transition rates of learners between each key stage for Welsh medium primary and secondary schools for the previous three academic years.

Transition Rates of Learners Between Each Key Stage for Welsh Medium Primary and Secondary Schools for the Previous Three Academic Years					
Transition	Academic Year				
	2017 / 2018	2018 / 2019	2019 / 2020		
Foundation Phase to	97.7%	98.2%	98.3%		
Key Stage Two					
Key Stage Two to	111.7%	113.9%	110.1%		
Key Stage Three					
Key Stage Three to	95.5%	98.4%	97.3%		
Key Stage Four					
Key Stag Four to Key	62.2%	55.5%	59.6%		
Stage Five					

The data in the table that follows is derived from PLASC and outlines the retention rates of learners on transition between each key stage for Welsh medium primary and secondary schools for the previous three academic years.

Retention Rates of Learners on Transition Between Each Key Stage for Welsh Medium Primary and Secondary Schools for the Previous Three Academic Years				
Transition	Academic Year			
	2017 / 2018	2018 / 2019	2019 / 2020	
Foundation Phase to	97.1%	97.6%	97.5%	
Key Stage Two				
Key Stage Two to	93.7%	97.3%	94.0%	
Key Stage Three				
Key Stage Three to	95.3%	98.8%	97.9%	
Key Stage Four				
Key Stag Four to Key	60.8%	56.6%	56.0%	
Stage Five				

OUTCOME 4: MORE LEARNERS STUDY FOR ASSESSED QUALIFICATIONS IN WELSH (AS A SUBJECT) AND SUBJECTS THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF WELSH

The data in the table that follows is derived from PLASC and outlines the total number of secondary school aged learners attending secondary schools, split by English and Welsh medium for the previous three academic years.

Total Number of Secondary School Aged Learners Attending Secondary Schools Split by English Medium and Welsh Medium Over the Previous Three Academic Years						
Category	Academic					
	2017 / 2018	3	2018 / 2019	9	2019 / 2020)
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Total Number of Learners Attending English Medium Secondary Schools	12,550	80.7%	12,685	80.6%	12,868	80.4%

Total Number of Learners Attending Welsh Medium Secondary	3,010	19.3%	3,058	19.4%	3,141	19.6%
Schools Total Number of Learners Attending Secondary Schools	15,560		15,743		16,009	

The data in the table that follows is derived from PLASC and outlines the total number of year ten learners attending Welsh medium secondary schools for the previous three academic years.

Total Number of Year Ten Learners Attending Welsh Secondary Schools Over the Previous Three Academic Years					
Year Group	Academic Year				
	2017 / 2018	2018 / 2019	2019 / 2020		
Year Ten	491	496	513		

OUTCOME 5: MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNERS TO USE WELSH IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS IN SCHOOL

The data in the table that follows is provided by the CSCJES and outlines the total number of Welsh and English medium primary and secondary schools that have achieved the Welsh Language Charter and Cymraeg Campus to date.

Total Number of Welsh and English Medium Primary and Secondary Schools that have Achieved the Welsh Language Charter and Cymraeg Campus				
Level	Welsh Language	Charter	Cymraeg Campu	IS
	Welsh Medium Primary School	Welsh Medium Secondary School	English Medium Primary School	English Medium Secondary School
Achieved Bronze Award	17	All 4 Welsh medium secondary schools working towards achieving he bronze award.	N/A	N/A
Achieved Silver Award	8	N/A	18	N/A
Other	N/A	N/A	N/A	Two English medium secondary schools are part

		of the Cymraeg
		Campus pilot.

OUTCOME 6: AN INCREASE IN THE PROVISION OF WELSH MEDIUM EDUCATION FOR LEARNERS WITH ALN (IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE DUTIES IMPOSED BY THE ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS AND EDUCATION TRIBUNAL (WALES) ACT 2018

N/A.

OUTCOME 7: INCREASE THE NUMBER OF TEACHING STAFF ABLE TO TEACH WELSH (AS A SUBJECT) AND TEACH THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF WELSH

The data in the table that follows is provided by the Council's Welsh Language Unit and outlines the total number and percentage of staff who identified themselves as fluent or fairly fluent in the Welsh language and was correct as at August 2020:

Total Numb	Total Number of Staff who Identified Themselves as Fluent or Fairly Fluent in Welsh						
Number of	Staff with	Fluent	(Welsh	Fairly	Fluent	Total	(Welsh
Welsh Language Skills		Language Level (Welsh Language Level Three)		Language Level Three, Four and Five)			
	1	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Category	Total Number of Staff						
School Based Staff	5,290	742	14.0%	175	3.3%	917	17.3%
Non- School Based Staff	7,167	575	8.0%	143	1.9%	718	10.0%
Total	12,457	1,317	10.5%	318	2.5%	1,635	13.1%

The data in the table that follows is derived from SWAC and outlines the Welsh language ability of the Council's school based workforce for the academic year 2019 / 2020.

Welsh Language Ability of Total Teachers (Including Headteachers, School Teachers and School Learning Support Workers) Employed by the Council					
Skill Level	Academic Year	r			
	2019 / 2020				
	Number	%			
No Skills (NS)	457	22.1%			
Entry Level (EL)	456	22.1%			
Foundation Level (FL)	325	15.7%			
Intermediate Level (IL)	166	8.0%			
Advanced Level (AL)	128	6.2%			

Proficient Level (PL)	511	24.8%
Information Not Obtained (INO)	21	1.0%
Total	2,064	100.0%

The data in the table that follows is derived from SWAC and outlines the total number of the school based workforce (including headteachers, school teachers and school learning support workers) employed by the Council teaching / working through the medium of Welsh for the academic year 2019 / 2020.

Total Teachers Employed by the Council 1 Welsh	eaching / Working Th	rough the Medium of	
Category	Academic Year		
	2019 / 2020		
	Number	%	
Teaching/Working Through the Medium	448	21.7%	
of Welsh in Current Post			
Able to Teach/Work Through the Medium	143	6.9%	
of Welsh but not doing so in Current Post			
Unable to Teach/Work Through the	838	40.6%	
Medium of Welsh			
Teaching Welsh as a Subject Only	635	30.7%	
Total	2,064	100.0%	

GLOSSARY	
AHP	Aspiring Headteacher Programme
AL	Advanced Level
ALN	Additional Learning Need
ANF	Additional Needs Funding
APR	Annual Progress Report
AWP	Annual Work Plan
CFC	Communities First Clusters
CfW	Communities for Work
CIW	Care Inspectorate Wales
CSA	Childcare Sufficiency Assessment
CSCJES	Central South Consortium Joint Education Service
CTMUHB	Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EAST	Easy, Attractive, Sociable and Timely
EL	Entry Level
ESF	European Social Fund
EWC	Education Workforce Council
FEI	Further Education Institutions
FIS	Family Information Service
FL	Foundation Level
FPN	Foundation Phase Nursery
FSP	Flying Start Programme
IL	Intermediate Level
INO	Information Not Obtained
ISP	Information Sharing Protocol
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
LA	Local Authority
LDP	Local Development Plan
LSCs	Learning Support Classes
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NPQH	National Professional Qualification for Headship
NQTs	Newly Qualified Teacher
NS	No Skills
PL	Proficient Level
PRUs	Pupil Referral Units
QTS REPs	Qualified Teacher Status
	Registered Education Provider
SEBD	Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SWAC	School Workforce Annual Census
The 2002 Code	SEN Code of Practice for Wales 2002
The 2006 Act	The Childcare Act 2006
The 2011 Measure	Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011
The 2013 Act	The School Standards and Organisation Act 2013
The 2016 Regulations	The Childcare Act 2006 (Local Authority Assessment) (Wales)
	Regulations 2016

The 2019 Regulations	The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (Wales) Regulations 2019
The 2020 Regulations	The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (Wales) (Amendment)
	(Coronavirus) Regulations 2020
The ALNET Act 2018	The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018
TI - D - (O - I -	
The Draft Code	The Draft ALN Code for Wales – December 2018
The Measure	Section 13 of The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008
The New Code	The New Statutory ALN Code
The Urdd	Urdd Gobaith Cymru
WCNT	The Welsh Complex Needs Team
WESP	Welsh in Education Strategic Plan
WG	Welsh Government
WiEO	Welsh in Education Officers
WLSS	Welsh Language Sabbatical Scheme
YEPS Team	Youth Engagement and Participation Service Team
RCT	Rhondda Cynon Taf
RHP	Resilience Health Programme
RFS	Resilient Families Service
SOGs	Schedule of Growing Skills





To:

Gofynnwch Am:
Please Ask For:
Rhif Est:
Telephone N°:
Ffacs:
Fax:
E-Bost:
E-Mail:
Cylchlythyr:
Circular:

Fy nghyf: My Ref: Eich Cyf: Your Ref: Dyddiad: 13.09.2021 Date:

Dear Consultee,

Re: Welsh in Education Plan (WESP) Consultation

The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 places a duty on all Local Authorities in Wales to consult on, produce and review plans that provide the strategic direction for the planning and delivery of Welsh medium and Welsh language education in their locality.

Since the Council's first WESP was initially prepared and submitted to the Welsh Government, there have been significant changes in the Welsh medium education sector at local and national levels. Changes have been mainly influenced by legislation, in particular the new Welsh in Education Action Plan – 2017 to 2021 and further implementation of the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme. In addition, regulations regarding WESP's have been updated. The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (Wales) Regulations 2019 and The Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020 focus on four key proposals, the principal two being:

- 1. Extending the duration of the WESP from its current implementation cycle to a ten year implementation cycle (2022 to 2032).
- Removal of the current duty on Local Authorities to plan their provision of Welsh medium education based on demand with the requirement that Local Authorities achieve targets set by the Welsh Government, which aim to increase the percentage of year one learners in Welsh medium education over the duration of the WESP.

Integral to achieving these goals is ensuring there are good schools, so all children and young people have equitable access to good Welsh medium and Welsh language education. The Council will deliver this by ensuring the availability of Welsh medium education, from the initial early years through to primary and secondary education then progressing through to higher and further education, for all learners whatever their learning need in line with achieving the vision of one million people in Wales being Welsh speakers by 2050, as set out in Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh Speakers.

Tŷ Trevithick

Abercynon, Aberpennar, CF45 4UQ Abercynon, Mountain Ash, CF45 4UQ Ffôn/Tel: 01443 744000 Ffacs/Fax: 01443 744024

Gaynor Davies

Cyfarwyddwr Addysg a Gwasanaethau Cynhwysiant | Director of Education and Inclusion Services

Dewiswch iaith a diwyg eich dogfen | Available in alternative formats and languages

Croesawn ohebu yn Gymraeg a fydd gohebu yn y Gymraeg ddim yn arwain at oedi. Rhowch wybod inni beth yw'ch dewis iaith e.e Cymraeg neu'n ddwyieithog. We welcome correspondence in Welsh and corresponding with us in Welsh will not lead to a delay. Let us know your language choice if Welsh or bilingual.







Whilst the statutory responsibility for the WESP sits with the Council, a range of external groups and organisations have a key role in formulating, implementing and evaluating its progress regularly throughout its lifespan.

The Council's target, during the ten year lifespan of this WESP, that has been set by the Welsh Government, is to:

Increase the percentage of year one learners in Welsh medium education by between 8.0% to 12.0% during the ten year lifespan of this WESP. This equates to an increase from 506* year one learners in Welsh medium education to between 720 and 825 year one learners in Welsh medium education.

*This target is based on 2019/2020 PLASC data.

This target will contribute to the overall long term target, set out in Cymraeg 2050 – A Million Welsh Speakers and will be achieved via the delivery of seven outcomes, set by the Welsh Government:

- 1. Outcome 1: More nursery/three year old learners receive their education through the medium of Welsh.
- 2. Outcome 2: More reception/five year old learners receive their education through the medium of Welsh.
- 3. Outcome 3: More learners continue to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another.
- 4. Outcome 4: More learners study for assessed qualifications in Welsh (as a subject) and subjects through the medium of Welsh.
- 5. Outcome 5: More opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school.
- 6. Outcome 6: An increase in the provision of Welsh medium education for learners with additional learning needs.
- 7. Outcome 7: Increase the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and through the medium of Welsh.

We would like to hear your views on how the Council and its partners aim to achieve the WESP target and each of the seven outcomes. The consultation starts on <u>Monday 13th September</u> and ends at <u>5pm on Monday 8th November</u>. You can have your say in a number of ways:

Online: https://wh1.snapsurveys.com/s.asp?k=162930049222

Email: consultation@rctcbc.gov.uk

Telephone: 01443 425014

Write: Freepost RSBU-HJUK-LSSS

Research & Consultation Public Relations & Strategy

The Pavilions

Cambrian Industrial Park

Clydach Vale Tonypandy CF40 2XX

Yours sincerely

Congror Dines

Gaynor Davies

Director of Education and Inclusion Services



<u>Draft Welsh in Education Plan (WESP) Consultation</u>

Our target, during the ten year lifespan of this WESP, that has been set by the Welsh Government, is to:

Increase the percentage of year one learners in Welsh medium education by between 8.0% to 12.0% during the ten year lifespan of this WESP. This equates to an increase from 506* year one learners in Welsh medium education to between 720 and 825 year one learners in Welsh medium education.

*This target is based on 2019/2020 PLASC data.

This target is based on contributing to the overall long term target, set out in Cymraeg 2050 – A Million Welsh Speakers of one million people in Wales being Welsh speakers by 2050.

As well as the target to increase the percentage of year one learners in Welsh medium education, the WESP includes seven outcomes or areas setting out how local authorities are expected to improve Welsh medium and Welsh language education in their locality. These outcomes are set by the Welsh Government. They are:

- 1. Outcome 1: More nursery/three year old learners receive their education through the medium of Welsh.
- 2. Outcome 2: More reception/five year old learners receive their education through the medium of Welsh.
- 3. Outcome 3: More learners continue to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another.
- 4. Outcome 4: More learners study for assessed qualifications in Welsh (as a subject) and subjects through the medium of Welsh.
- 5. Outcome 5: More opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school.
- 6. Outcome 6: An increase in the provision of Welsh medium education for learners with additional learning needs.
- 7. Outcome 7: Increase the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and through the medium of Welsh.

We would like to hear your views on how the Council and its partners aim to achieve the WESP target and each of the seven outcomes.

Outcome	Please provide your views:
1	



Outcome	Please provide your views:
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	

Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duties, the Council has a legal duty to look at how its decisions impact on people because they may have particular characteristics.

How would the WESP affect you because of your:

Characteristic	How would the WESP affect you:
Gender	
Age	
Ethnicity	
Disability	
Sexuality	
Religion/Belief	
Gender identity	
Relationship status	
Pregnancy	
Preferred language	



With regards to the WESP and the impact it may have, please let us know if you feel it could impact opportunities for people to use and promote the Welsh language (positive or negative) and if in any way, it treats the Welsh language less favourably than the English language?

How positive effects	
could be increased, or	
negative effects be	
decreased?	

Thank you for taking the time to provide us with feedback.



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Equality & Socio-Economic Impact Assessment



DRAFT
July 2021



EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM INCLUDING SOCIO ECONOMIC DUTY

(REVISED MARCH 2021)

Please refer to the current Equality Impact Assessment guidance when completing this document. If you would like further guidance please contact the Diversity and Inclusion Team on 01443 444529.

An Equality Impact Assessment must be undertaken at the outset of any proposal to ensure robust evidence is considered in decision making. This documentation will support the Council in making informed, effective and fair decisions whilst ensuring compliance with a range of relevant legisaltion, including:

- Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011.
- Socio-economic Duty Sections 1 to 3 of the Equality Act 2010.

This document will also contribute towards our duties to create a More Equal Wales within the:

• Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The 'A More Equal Wales – Mapping Duties' guide highlights the alignment of our duties in respect of the above-mentioned legislation.

SECTION 1 – PROPOSAL DETAILS

Lead Officer: Grace Zecca-Hanagan.

Service Director: Andrea Richards.

Service Area: 21st Century Schools and Transformation.

Date: 21st June 2021.

1. a) What are you assessing for impact?

Strategy / Plan	Service Re-Model / Discontinuation of Service	Policy / Procedure	Practice	Information / Position Statement
X				

1. b) What is the name of the proposal?

Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP).

1. c) Please provide an overview of the proposal providing any supporting links to reports or documents.

Section 84 of The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013¹ requires Local Authorities (LAs) to prepare a WESP. The WESP must contain proposals and targets to improve the:

- 1. Planning and standards of Welsh medium education and teaching; and
- 2. Report on progress made to meet the targets of the previous WESP.

¹ School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013

Since our first WESP was submitted to the Welsh Government (WG) in 2016, there have been significant changes in the Welsh medium education sector at local and national levels. These changes have been mainly influenced by WG legislation, in particular the new Welsh in Education Action Plan² and further implementation of the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme³.

The WG has also updated the regulations regarding WESPs, with the WESP (Wales) Regulations 2019⁴ and the WESP (Wales) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020⁵ focusing on four proposals. The principal two being:

- 1. Extending the duration of the WESP from its current three year implementation cycle to a ten year implementation cycle; and
- 2. The removal of the current duty on LAs to plan their provision of Welsh medium education based on demand, with the requirement that LAs achieve targets set by the WG which aim to increase the percentage of year one learners in Welsh medium education over the duration of the WESP.

Our target, during the ten year lifespan of this WESP, that has been set by the WG, is to:

Increase the percentage of year one learners in Welsh medium education by between 8.0% to 12.0% during the ten year lifespan of this WESP. This equates to an increase from 506 year one learners in Welsh medium education to between 720 and 825 year one learners in Welsh medium education.

This target is based on contributing to the overall long term target, set out in Cymraeg 2050 – A Million Welsh Speakers⁶ of one million people in Wales being Welsh speakers by 2050.

As well as the target to increase the percentage of year one learners in Welsh medium education, the WESP includes seven outcomes or areas setting out how LAs are expected to improve Welsh medium and Welsh language education in their locality. The priorities are:

- 1. Outcome 1: More nursery / three year old learners receive their education through the medium of Welsh.
- 2. Outcome 2: More reception / five year old learners receive their education through the medium of Welsh.
- 3. Outcome 3: More learners continue to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another.

² Welsh in Education Action Plan

³ 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme

⁴ The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (Wales) Regulations 2019

⁵ The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (Wales) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020

⁶ Cymraeg 2050 – A Million Welsh Speakers

- 4. Outcome 4: More learners study for assessed qualifications in Welsh (as a subject) and subjects through the medium of Welsh.
- 5. Outcome 5: More opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school.
- 6. Outcome 6: An increase in the provision of Welsh medium education for learners with additional learning needs.
- 7. Outcome 7: Increase the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and through the medium of Welsh.

The main strategies and policies that are linked with the WESP are:

National:

- Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- Prosperity for All: The National Strategy 2017.
- The Programme for Government: Taking Wales Forward 2016 to 2021.
- Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh Speakers.
- The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.
- The Welsh in Education Strategic Plans and Assessing the Demand (Wales) Regulations 2013.
- Professor Donaldson's Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales 2015.
- Curriculum for Wales 2022.
- Cymraeg 2050 Action Plan 2019.
- Education in Wales Our National Vision 2017 to 2021.
- Welsh in Education Action Plan 2017 to 2021.
- Welsh Medium Capital Grant.
- Childcare Act 2006.
- WG Childcare Offer.
- Reducing Infant Class Sizes.
- The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018.
- Special Educational Needs Code of Practice for Wales.

Regional:

- CSC JES: Business Plan 2021 to 2022.
- Cwm Taf Public Services Board: Wellbeing Plan 2018 to 2023.

Local:

- RCTCBC Corporate Plan 2020 to 2024: Making a Difference.
- RCTCBC Local Development Plan 2006 to 2021.
- RCTCBC Education and Inclusion Services' Directorate's Strategic Business Plan: Every School a Great School.
- RCTCBC Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2016 to 2021.
- RCTCBC WESP 2017 to 2020.
- RCTCBC Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2017 to 2022.

More specifically:

- Prosperity for All: The National Strategy and The Programme for Government: Taking Wales Forward aim to drive forward improvements to the Welsh economy and public services. One of the priorities is to enable all learners to be able to use the Welsh language when they leave school.
- Cymraeg 2050 A Million Welsh Speakers, sets out the WGs ambition for reaching one million Welsh speakers by 2050 and encouraging more people to use and speak Welsh in their everyday lives.
- Education in Wales Our National Mission, sets out how the education sector will move forward to ensure that the new curriculum is implemented effectively. The intention is for learners to become increasingly bilingual with a strong grasp for other languages. To support this, the Welsh in Education Action Plan and Cymraeg 2050 Action Plan sets the direction for the development of Welsh medium education.

There are links to the Council's Corporate Plan for the period between 2020 to 2024, specifically the priority:

- Prosperity Creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative, entrepreneurial and fulfil their potential and prosper:
 - o Ensuring we have good schools, so all children have access to a great education.

Likewise, the Council's Five Year Welsh Language Promotion Strategy for the period between 2016 to 2021 facilitates and promotes the Welsh language in the County Borough.

1. d) Please outline where delivery of this proposal is affected by legislation or other drivers such as code of practice.

- Section 84 of The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.
- The WESP (Wales) Regulations 2019.
- The WESP (Wales) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020.

1. e) Please outline who this proposal affects:

Service users: XEmployees: X

• Wider community: X

SECTION 2 – SCREENING TEST – IS A FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT REQUIRED

Screening is used to determine whether the initiative has positive, negative or neutral impacts upon protected groups. Where negative impacts are identified for protected groups then a full Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Please provide as much detail as possible of how the proposal will impact on the following groups, this may not necessarily be negative, but may impact upon a group with a particular characteristic in a specific way.

Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to have "due regard" to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality opportunity between different groups; and foster good relations between different groups. Please take an intersectional approach in recognising an individual may have more than one protected characteristic.

Protected Characteristics	Does the propopositive, negative impacts	•	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Age (Specific age groups i.e., young people or older people).	Positive.		impact on children and young people of all ages. As a result of the WESP, the Council is expected to improve Welsh medium and Welsh language education and increase	The Council has the highest percentage of statutory school aged learners who access their learning through Welsh medium primary, middle and secondary schools across each of the five LA areas that comprise the Central South Consotium Joint Education Service (CSC JES) for the previous three academic years.

Pa	There are seventeen Welsh medium primary schools located throughout the County Borough. There are two all through schools for 3 to 19 year olds, three dual language primary schools for 3 to 11 year olds and twelve primary schools for 3 to 11 year olds. The total number of primary school aged learners attending schools in the County Borough, split by English and Welsh medium for the previous three academic years has remined stable.
Page 98	There are four Welsh medium secondary schools located throughout the County Borough. There are two all through schools for 3 to 19 year olds and two secondary schools for 11 to 19 years olds. The total number of secondary school aged learners attending schools in the County Borough, split by English and Welsh medium for the previous three academic years has remined stable.
	The Council's target, during the ten year lifespan of this WESP, is to:

rage 99		Increase the percentage of year one learners in Welsh medium education by between 8.0% to 12.0% during the ten year lifespan of this WESP. This equates to an increase from 506 year one learners in Welsh medium education to between 720 and 825 year one learners in Welsh medium education. As well as the target to increase the percentage of year one learners in Welsh medium education, the WESP includes seven outcomes or areas setting out how LAs are expected to improve Welsh medium and Welsh language education in
		 Outcome 1: More nursery / three year old learners receive their education through the medium of Welsh. Outcome 2: More reception / five year old learners receive their education through the medium of Welsh. Outcome 4: More learners study for assessed qualifications in

	Welsh (as a subject) and subjects through the medium of Welsh.
Page 100	At the end of the lifespan of this WESP, the Council will have delivered a number of projects funded via the WG Childcare Offer Capital Grant Scheme and Welsh Medium Capital Grant Scheme. These projects support capital works that facilitate growth in Welsh medium education, with funding specifically aimed at developing or expanding Welsh medium childcare and early years settings co-located on Welsh medium primary school sites. The projects comprise:
	 Dolau Primary School (including Welsh unit). Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Abercynon. Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Aberdar. Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Evan James. Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Ynyswen. Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Ynyswen. Ysgol Gynradd Gymunedol Gymraeg Llantrisant. Ysgol Llanhari.

		In addition, The Council's ambitious Band B 21 st Century Schools and Colleges Programme, alongside funding directly from the Council, will: • Amend the language medium of Penderyn Community Primary School from a dual language primary school to a Welsh
Page 101		 medium primary school (following the opening of Hirwaun Primary School). The catchment area of Penderyn Community Primary School will also be extended. Deliver an extension to Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Aberdar. Deliver a new Welsh medium primary school for Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llyn y Forwyn. Deliver a new Welsh medium
		primary school on the current Heol y Celyn Primary School site, to accommodate pupils currently attending Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and the Welsh medium pupils attending the dual

		language Heol y Celyn Primary School. Deliver a new dual language primary school, in the first instance, as an extension to the dual language primary school Dolau Primary School, as part an extensive housing
Page 102		 Undertake a feasibility study to invest in either refurbishing the existing Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda or to relocate the school to a new 21st Century standard school to be built in the Rhondda. Improve and extend accommodation with a new sports facility for Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun.
		These projects will create additional learner places, increasing the capacity of Welsh medium primary and secondary schools.
		All Welsh medium secondary schools work collaboratively with one another and other providers, including Coleg Y Cymoed, to provide Welsh first language, Welsh Second Language and

subjects through the medium of Welsh at GCSE, AS and A Level. However, at present, collaboration can be difficult due to their locations and proximity to one another. Options to maintain and broaden GCSE, AS and A Level provision will be further explored. Options to be explored could include the Esgol project, which was launched by Ceredigion County Council in 2018. The E-sgol project formed as part of the WG Rural Education Action Plan – 2018, and provides GCSE, AS and A Level learners with the provision of a broader range of GCSE, AS and A Level subjects through virtual pedagogy via the use of Microsoft Teams through
Whilst the school environment provides learners with the opportunity to use the Welsh language within different contexts, one of the aims within the Cymraeg 2050 Work Programme is to embed positive Welsh language use, supported by formal and informal opportunities to use the Welsh language socially. A lack of

ı	Ι,
	learners with ALN under review and
	consider whether these
	arrangements are sufficient. It
	includes a statutory requirement to
	take reasonable steps to create a
	Welsh medium and bilingual
	system of support for learners with
	ALN. The ALNET Act 2018 is
	supported by new regulations,
	including secondary legislation and
	a new statutory ALN Code (The
	New Code).
	For learners with significant ALN,
_	who experience difficulties in
á	coping in mainstream primary and
cor age	secondary schools, specialist
1	provisions are required. There are a
C	range of specialist provisions
	located throughout the County
	Borough which include:
	• 44 Learning Support
	Classes (LSCs).
	2 Pupil Referal Units
	(PRUs).
	 4 Special Schools.
	Placements within these specialist
	provisions are agreed by the
	Council's Access and Inclusion
	Service Panels.

includes a Welsteacher and two Assistants, provious an inclusive whereby learne specialist sup mainstream prir schools. During 2019 / 2020, the a number of suggests that	In addition, approximately £3.4 million Additional Needs Funding (ANF) is available to mainstream primary and secondary schools to ensure robust, inclusive provision for learners who attend mainstream primary and secondary schools with severe and persistent ALN. Welsh medium learners with ALN, who experience difficulties within mainstream primary and secondary schools and require more specialist support, are supported by a	Pag
making prog	specialist peripatetic team – the Welsh Complex Neets Team (WCNT). The WCNT, which includes a Welsh medium specialist teacher and two Learning Support Assistants, provide support through an inclusive delivery model, whereby learners are provided with specialist support within their mainstream primary and secondary schools. During the academic year 2019 / 2020, the WCNT supported a number of learners. Analysis suggests that learners accessing support from the WCNT were	Page 106

				equivalent English medium primary and secondary school settings. Further analysis suggests that this inclusive model adopted in Welsh medium primary and secondary schools has been very positive. At the end of the lifespan of this WESP, the Council will have robust processes in place to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to secure Welsh medium and bilingual ALN provision and will endeavour to provide sufficient ALN provision for
Page 1				leaners, who request it, through the medium of Welsh along with a workforce of sufficient size and capability.
107	Gender Reassignment (Anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex they were assigned at birth including non-binary identities).	Neutral.	N/A.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic.
	Marriage or Civil Partnership (People who are married or in a civil partnership).	Neutral.	N/A.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic.
	Pregnancy or Maternity (Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave).	Neutral.	N/A.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic.

	Race (Ethnic and racial groups i.e., Gypsy, Roma and Travellers).	Neutral.	authorised and two unauthorised	impact on people that share this
a	Religion or Belief (People with different religions and philosophical beliefs including people with no beliefs).	Neutral.	N/A.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic.
ge 108	Sex (Women and men, girls and boys).	Neutral.	N/A.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic.
	Sexual Orientation (bisexual, gay, lesbian, straight).	Neutral.	N/A.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic.

In addition, due to Council commitments made to the following groups of people we would like you to consider impacts upon them:

Protected Characteristics	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	<u>-</u>	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Armed Forces Community	Neutral.	Based on 2021 data, there are 114	There is no evidence to suggest
(Anyone who is serving, has		school aged learners who are	that the proposal will have an

served, family members and the bereaved).		service children attending 48 English and Welsh medium primary and secondary schools across the County Borough.	·
		In total, there are 32 school aged learners who are service children attending 10 Welsh medium primary and secondary schools across the County Borough with 19 primary school aged learners and 13 secondary school aged learners.	
Carers (Anyone of any age who provides unpaid care).	Neutral.	N/A.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic.

If the initial screening test has identified negative impacts, then a full Equality Impact Assessment (section 4) must be undertaken. However, if after undertaking the above screening test you determine a full Equality Impact Assessment is not relevant please provide an adequate explanation below:

No negative impacts have been identified. Therefore, the Council will continue to implement the draft WESP. The evidence to support these conclusions is fully outlined in the draft WESP and the Cabinet report date 20th July 2021. This Equality and Socio-economic Impact Assessment is a live document and as such it will be reviewed by the Council's 21st Century Schools Team at key points, subject to securing Cabinet approval to engage and consult with a wide range of stakeholders on the draft WESP.

Are you happy you have sufficient evidence to justify your decision? Yes: X No:

Name: Grace Zecca-Hanagan.

Position: 21st Century Schools.

Date: 21st June 2021.

Please forward a copy of this completed screening form to the Diversity and Inclusion Team.

PLEASE NOTE – there is a separate impact assessment for Welsh Language. This must also be completed for proposals. Section 3 Socio-economic Duty needs only to be completed if proposals are of a strategic nature of when reviewing previous strategic decisions. Definition of a 'strategic nature' is available on page 6 of the <u>Preparing for the Commencement of the Socio-economic Duty</u> Welsh Government Guidance.

SECTION 3 – SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY (STRATEGIC DECISIONS ONLY)

The Socio-economic Duty gives us an opportunity to do things differently and put tackling inequality genuinely at the heart of key decision making. Socio-economic disadvantage means living on a low income compared to others in Wales, with little or no accumulated wealth, leading to greater material deprivation, restricting the ability to access basic goods and services.

Please consider these additional groups and the impact your proposal may or may not have on them:

_		_	
→ •	Single parents and vulnerable families.	•	People living in the most deprived areas in Wales.
4•	Pensioners.	•	People with low literacy and numeracy.
•	Looked after children.	•	People who have experienced the asylum system.
•	Homeless people.	•	People misusing substances.
•	Students.	•	People of all ages leaving a care setting.
•	Single adult households.	•	People involved in the criminal justice system.

Socio-economic disadvantage	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	•	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Low income / income poverty (Cannot afford to maintain payments such as bills, food, clothing, transport etc.).		Measure 2008 (the Measure)	

they reside beyond safe walking distance to that school. The term suitable school applies to the catchment area for English and Welsh medium, dual language or voluntary aided (faith) mainstream primary, secondary, special school / class or PRU as appropriate. The law relating to safe walking distance is defined as two miles for learners of compulsory school age receiving primary education and three miles for learners of compulsory school age receiving secondary education.

The Council has exercised the discretionary powers afforded to it under the Measure to make a more generous provision to learners as set out below:

- The eligibility criterion for walking distance for learners receiving compulsory primary education at their nearest suitable school has been set at one and a half miles, instead of two miles.
- Free transport to the nearest suitable school, where places are available, is provided to learners who meet the one and

Page	a half mile eligibility criterion from the start of the Foundation Phase (the start of the school term after their third birthday), rather than from the start of compulsory education (the start of the school term after their fifth birthday). The eligibility criterion for walking distance for learners receiving compulsory secondary education at their nearest suitable school has been set at two miles instead of three miles. Free transport is provided to post 16 learners who meet the two mile eligibility criterion for two years after the end of compulsory education, rather than until the end of compulsory education (the last Friday in June of the school year in which a learner reaches the age of 16). This provision applies to full time attendance at the nearest school or college to the learner's home at which the approved course of study that they wish to
	school or college to the learner's home at which the approved

learners (as set out above) in accordance with their preferred religious denomination. The Council's Learner Travel Policy, Information and Arrangements contains information and advice to parents / carers and learners on how the policy is practically implemented ensures that it is applied consistently and equitably. The Council's current policy is that learners attending the nearest Welsh medium or dual language school receive free transport in accordance with its agreed policy on walking distance and safe routes. The discretionary elements of the Council's policy are not currently subject to review, but there is an appreciation that if they were to be reviewed in the future, any changes to discretionary provision could have an adverse effect on Welsh medium education. Any proposed changes would be subject to a consultation with parents / carers and learners and, if agreed, would

		usually apply from the start of a school year and would have regard to the Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance – June 2014.	
Low and / or no wealth (Enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with an unexpected spends and no provisions for the future).	Neutral/	N/A.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic.
Material deprivation (Unable to access basic goods i.e., financial products like life insurance, repair / replace broken electrical goods, warm home, hobbies etc.).	Neutral.	N/A.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic.
Area deprivation (Where you live (rural areas) where you work (accessibility of public transport).	Neutral.	N/A.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic.
Socio-economic background (Social class i.e., parents' education, employment and income).	Neutral.	N/A.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic.
Socio-economic disadvantage (What cumulative impact will the proposal have on people or groups because of their protected characteristic(s) or vulnerability or because they are already disadvantaged)	Neutral	The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas, also known as Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs). There are 1,909 LSOAs.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic.
		The WIMD is currently made up of eight separate domains, compiled	

You should use the information gathered at the screening stage to assist you in identifying possible negative / adverse impacts and clearly identify which groups are affected.

4. a) In terms of disproportionate / negative / adverse impacts that the proposal may have on a protected group, outline the steps that will be taken to reduce or mitigate for each group identified. Attached a separate action plan where impacts are substantial.

There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have a disproportionate / negative / adverse impact on a protected group.

4. b) If ways of reducing the impact have been identified but are not possible, please explain why they are not possible.

There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have a disproportionate / negative / adverse impact on a protected group.

4. c) Give sufficient detail of data or research that has led to your reasoning, in particular, the sources used for establishing the demographics of service users / staff.

There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have a disproportionate / negative / adverse impact on a protected group.

4. d) Give details of how you engaged with services users / staff on the proposals and the steps taken to avoid any disproportionate impact on a protected group. Explain how you have used feedback to influence your decision.

There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have a disproportionate / negative / adverse impact on a protected group.

4. e) Are you satisfied that the engagement process complies with the requirements of the Statutory Equality and Socio-economic Duties?

Yes: X No:

SECTION 5 - MONITORING AND REVIEW

5. a) Please outline how the implementation of the proposal will be monitored:

In accordance with the WESP (Wales) Regulations 2019, the Council will make every effort to build and maintain constructive working relationships with all relevant groups and organisations who can contribute towards the success of this WESP. Of particular importance in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of this WESP will be our WESP Strategic Group. The WESP Strategic Group is comprised of officers from the Council, along with officers from a number of external groups and organisations and is guided by a Terms of Reference.

Alongside, the WESP Strategic Group and of upmost importance to the success of this WESP is the Marketing and Promotion Sub Group. The Marketing and Promotion Sub Group is comprised of officers from the Council, along with officers from a number of external groups and organisations and is guided by a Terms of Reference.

In Addition to the WESP Strategic Group and Marketing and Promotion Sub Group, where and when necessary, the Council will establish 'task and finish' Sub Groups comprised of officers from the Council, along with officers from a number of external groups and organisations. Each Sub Group will be tasked with the achievement of specified objectives and guided by a Terms of Reference.

5. b) When is the evaluation of the proposal due to be reviewed?

From 2023 onwards, the Council will implement two main methods of reporting on the progress of this WESP:

- 1. Annual Work Plan (AWP).
- 2. Annual Progress Report (APR).

The AWP is intended to be a practical working document to help keep track of progress in the short term and will be utilised by the WESP Strategic Group to track progress of this WESP.

The WESP (Wales) Regulations 2019 require LAs to review their WESP and submit an APR, based on that review, to the WG by 31st July each year. The APR is intended to capture the key achievements in relation to the WESP.

Whilst the statutory responsibility for the WESP sits with the Council, a range of external groups and organisations have a key role in formulating, implementing and evaluating its progress regularly throughout its lifespan.

5. c) Who is responsible for the monitoring and review of the proposal?

21st Century Schools Team.

5. d) How will the results of the monitoring be used to develop future proposals?

The Councils target, during the ten year lifespan of the WESP, that has been set by the WG, contributes to the overall long term target, set out in Cymraeg 2050 – A Million Welsh Speakers, of one million people in Wales being Welsh speakers by 2050. In order to achieve this long term target, the WG has set out a series of targets, in ten yearly increments. The Council will make every effort to build and maintain constructive working relationships with all relevant groups and organisations who can contribute towards the success of this WESP.

SECTION 6 – REVIEW

As part of the Impact Assessment process all proposals that fall within the determination of 'Key Decisions' must be submitted to the Review Panel. This panel is made up of officers from across Council Services and acts as a critical friend before your proposal is finalised and published for SLT / Cabinet approval.

If this proposal is a 'Key Decisions' please forward your impact assessment to <u>Councilbusiness@rctcbc.gov.uk</u> for a Review Panel to be organised to discuss your proposal. The EqIA guidance document provides more information on what a Key Decision is.

It is important to keep a record of this process so you can demonstrate how you have considered equality and socio-economic outcomes. Please ensure you update the relevant sections below:

Officer Review Panel Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Officer Review Panel considerations
Consultation Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consultation

SECTION 7 – SUMMARY OF IMPACTS FOR THE PROPOSAL

Provide below a summary of the Equality Impact Assessment. This summary should be included in the equality and socio-economic impact section of the Cabinet report template. The Equality Impact Assessment should be published alongside the report.

In summary, this Equality and Socio Economic Impact Assessment identifies positive and neutral impacts, and no negative impacts upon the protected characteristics.

The proposal will have a positive impact on children and young people of all ages. As a result of the WESP, the Council is expected to improve Welsh medium and Welsh language education and increase the number of learners in Welsh medium education.

Likewise, the proposal will have a positive impact on children and young people of all ages. As a result of the WESP, the Council is expected to improve Welsh medium and Welsh language education and increase the number of learners in Welsh medium education.

As the Council looks to the future, it wants to build on what it has achieved to date and make sure that every town and community in the County Borough is a great place to live, work and play. The Council's ambition is for everyone to be as healthy, independent and prosperous as possible throughout their lives. Enabling access to a good education, developing skills and decent employment opportunities are all priority areas.

Integral to achieving this ambition is the vision that:

There are good schools, so all children and young people, whatever their learning need is, have equitable access to good English and Welsh medium education.

The Council will deliver this vision by supporting children to have the best start in life and be ready for learning through an improved early years' system, supporting families through the childcare offer and by investing in new and significantly improved school and community facilities through the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme.

The Council will show clear leadership and commitment in its vision for Welsh medium education and, as such, our target is to:

Increase the percentage of year one learners in Welsh medium education by between 8.0% to 12.0% during the ten year lifespan of this WESP. This equates to an increase from 506 year one learners in Welsh medium education to between 720 and 825 year one learners in Welsh medium education.

The achievement of this target will require a multifaceted approach. Ensuring the availability of Welsh medium education in the right location from the initial early years, through to primary and secondary education, then progressing through to higher and further education for all learners, whatever their learning need, is fundamental to contributing towards the vision of one million people in Wales being Welsh speakers by 2050.

Recognising the importance of Cymraeg 2050, and how essential the education system is to achieve its vision, the WESP sets out the Council's ten year plan for increasing and improving the planning of the provision of Welsh medium and Welsh language education. It builds on the work of the previous WESP for the period between 2017 to 2022 and sets out a workplan which demonstrates how the Council intends to achieve its ten year vision.

In developing this WESP, all current and relevant local, regional and national legislation, strategies, policies and action plans have been taken into consideration in order to encourage and facilitate long term growth in Welsh medium and Welsh language education, including the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 and the Socio-economic Duty - Sections 1 to 3 of the Equality Act 2010. The Council has and will continue to ensure there is a clear alignment with all current and relevant local, regional and national legislation, strategies, policies and action plans that impact upon Welsh medium and Welsh language education.

SECTION 8 – AUTORISATIONS

Lead Officer:

Name:
Positon:
Date:
I recommend that the proposal:

Is implemented with no ammendments:

Is implemented taking into account the mitigating actions outlined:

Is rejected due to disproportionate negative impacts on protected groups of socio-economic disadvantage:

Head of Service / [irector Approval:
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Name:

Position:

Date:

Please submit this impact assessment with any SLT / Cabinet reports.

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Welsh Language Impact Assessment



DRAFT
July 2021

RHONDDA CYNON TAF

WELSH LANGUAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This Welsh Language Impact Assessment (WLIA) enables the Council to consider the principles and requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015¹ to ensure compliance with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011².

It is to be read alongside the draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and the Equality and Socio-Economic Impact Assessment, as the information in all documents is related and the themes within them are cross-cutting.

Stage One – Information Gathering			
Proposal Name	Draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP).		
Directorate / Department	Education and Inclusion Services – 21st Century Schools Team.		
Service Director	Andrea Richards.		
Officer Completing the WLIA	Grace Zecca-Hanagan.		
Email	Grace.C.Zecca-Hanagan@rctcbc.gov.uk		
Brief Description	Section 84 of The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013³ requires Local Authorities (LAs) to prepare a WESP. The WESP must contain proposals and targets to improve the:		
	 Planning and standards of Welsh medium education and teaching; and Report on progress made to meet the targets of the previous WESP. 		
	Since our first WESP was submitted to the Welsh Government (WG) in 2016, there have been significant changes in the Welsh medium education sector at local and national levels. These changes have been mainly influenced by WG legislation, in particular the new Welsh in Education Action Plan ⁴ and further implementation of the 21 st Century Schools and Colleges Programme ⁵ .		
	The WG has also updated the regulations regarding WESPs, with the WESP (Wales) Regulations 2019 ⁶ and the WESP (Wales) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020 ⁷ focusing on four proposals. The principal two being:		
	Extending the duration of the WESP from its current three year implementation cycle to a ten year implementation cycle; and		

¹ Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015

² Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011

³ School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013

⁴ Welsh in Education Action Plan

 ^{5 21}st Century Schools and Colleges Programme
 6 The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (Wales) Regulations 2019

⁷ The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (Wales) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020

			2. The removal of the current duty on LAs to plan their provision of Welsh medium education based on demand, with the requirement that LAs achieve targets set by the WG which aim to increase the percentage of year one learners in Welsh medium education over the duration of the WESP.
Date			21 st June 2021.
Outline	who	this	The WESP is a County Borough wide plan. As such all children and

Outline who this Proposed Strategy / Plan Affects?

The WESP is a County Borough wide plan. As such all children and young people, learners, parents / carers and the wider community residing in the County Borough could benefit from it.

In addition, several external groups and organisations could benefit from the WESP. These include, but are not limited to:

- Central South Consortium Joint Education Service (CSC JES).
- Coleg y Cymoedd.
- Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board (CTMUHB).
- Menter laith.
- Mudiad Meithrin.
- RhaG.
- The Urdd.
- University of South Wales.
- WG.

Aims of the Proposed Strategy / Plan? How do these Relate to the Welsh language?

Our target, during the ten year lifespan of this WESP, that has been set by the WG, is to:

Increase the percentage of year one learners in Welsh medium education by between 8.0% to 12.0% during the ten year lifespan of this WESP. This equates to an increase from 506 year one learners in Welsh medium education to between 720 and 825 year one learners in Welsh medium education.

This target is based on contributing to the overall long term target, set out in Cymraeg 2050 – A Million Welsh Speakers⁸ of one million people in Wales being Welsh speakers by 2050.

As well as the target to increase the percentage of year one learners in Welsh medium education, the WESP includes seven outcomes or areas setting out how LAs are expected to improve Welsh medium and Welsh language education in their locality. The priorities are:

- 1. **Outcome 1:** More nursery / three year old learners receive their education through the medium of Welsh.
- 2. **Outcome 2:** More reception / five year old learners receive their education through the medium of Welsh.
- 3. **Outcome 3:** More learners continue to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another.

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⁸ Cymraeg 2050 – A Million Welsh Speakers

- 4. **Outcome 4:** More learners study for assessed qualifications in Welsh (as a subject) and subjects through the medium of Welsh.
- 5. **Outcome 5:** More opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school.
- 6. **Outcome 6:** An increase in the provision of Welsh medium education for learners with additional learning needs.
- 7. **Outcome 7:** Increase the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and through the medium of Welsh.

Current Linguist Profile of Geographical Area(s) Concerned

Every ten years the nation sets aside one day for the Census. It is a source of information about the number of people who can speak Welsh.

The 2011 Census⁹ indicated that of the 225,555 residents living in the County Borough, 12.3% (27,779) were able to speak Welsh, whilst the remaining 87.7% (197,776) were not able to speak Welsh. This can be compared to the all Wales figures that showed of the 2,955,841 residents living Wales, 19.0% (562,016) were able to speak Welsh, whilst the remaining 81.0% (2,393,825) were not able to speak Welsh.

The Annual Population Survey¹⁰ collects information about respondents' Welsh speaking ability and includes a question on how often people speak Welsh. It is updated quarterly, so is a more up-to-date source than the Census. The Annual Population Survey for the quarter ending September 2020, reported that 19.3% of respondents living in the County Borough said they could speak Welsh, this is compared to the all Wales percentage of 28.8% of respondents. This can be further broken down to the data contained in the table that follows.

Welsh Language Skills of Residents – (%)				
	County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf	All Wales		
Can Read Welsh	18.2%	25.8%		
Can Write Welsh	16.7%	23.5%		
Can Understand	23.5%	33.0%		
Spoken Welsh				

The data demonstrates that in each Welsh language skill area, the all Wales percentages are notably higher than the County Borough percentages. However, the current data shows a significant increase in the number of residents that can read, write, and understand spoken Welsh since the 2011 Census.

When asked about their frequency of speaking Welsh, the table that follows shows a breakdown of responses of respondents living in the County Borough compared to the all Wales responses.

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⁹ 2011 Census

¹⁰ Annual Population Survey

Welsh Language Skills of Residents – (%)									
	County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf	All Wales							
Speak Welsh Daily	6.9%	16.2%							
Speak Welsh Weekly	5.0%	4.8%							
Use it Less Often	5.7%	6.2%							

The data demonstrates that the percentage of respondents that speak Welsh daily is far lower for the County Borough than the all Wales percentage.

The Welsh Language Use Survey¹¹ for the years 2013 to 2015, contains detailed information about Welsh speaker's fluency and their use of the Welsh language in a range of settings. When looking where respondents living in Wales learned to speak Welsh, the majority, 45.0%, learned to speak Welsh at home, followed by 26.0% who learned to speak Welsh at nursery and primary school between the ages of 2 and 10 and 14.0% who learned to speak Welsh at secondary school at the age of 11 plus. The remaining 2.0% learned to speak Welsh in other settings, including at 'Welsh for Adults' courses.

The table that follows outlines the total percentage of statutory school aged learners (aged 5 to 15) who access their learning through Welsh medium primary, middle and secondary schools across each of the five LA areas that comprise the CSC JES for the previous three academic years and is derived from the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC):

Total Percentage of Statutory School Aged Learners Who Access their Learning Through Welsh Medium Primary, Middle and Secondary Schools									
LA	Academic Ye	ar							
	2018	2019	2020						
Bridgend	7.8%	7.5%	7.4%						
Cardiff	14.8%	15.0%	15.3%						
Merthyr Tydfil	7.3%	7.6%	7.72%						
Rhondda	18.8%	18.0%	18.8%						
Cynon Taf									
Vale of	12.4%	12.7%	12.8%						
Glamorgan									
CSC JES	13.9%	14.0%	14.2%						

The Council has the highest percentage of statutory school aged learners who access their learning through Welsh medium primary,

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¹¹ Welsh Language Use Survey 2013 to 2015

middle and secondary schools across each of the five LA areas that comprise the CSC JES for the previous three academic years.

There are seventeen Welsh medium primary schools located throughout the County Borough. There are two all through schools for 3 to 19 year olds, three dual language primary schools for 3 to 11 year olds and twelve primary schools for 3 to 11 year olds. The table that follows outlines the total number of primary school aged learners attending schools in the County Borough, split by English and Welsh medium for the previous three academic years and is derived from the PLASC:

Total Number of Primary School Aged Learners Attending Schools in the County Borough Split by English and Welsh Medium											
Category	Academic Year										
	2017		2018		2019						
	Number	%	Number %		Number	%					
Total	18,241	80.9%	18,153	80.9%	18,078	81.0%					
Number											
of											
Learners											
Attending											
English											
Medium											
Primary Schools											
Total	4,291	19.0%	4,269	19.0%	4,220	18.9%					
Number	4,231	13.076	4,203	19.070	4,220	10.570					
of											
Learners											
Attending											
Welsh											
Medium											
Primary											
Schools											
Total	22,532		22,422		22,298	·					
Number											
of											
Learners											
Attending											
Primary											
Schools											

The data demonstrates stability in the ratio split of primary school aged learners attending English and Welsh medium primary schools for the previous three academic years.

There are four Welsh medium secondary schools located throughout the County Borough. There are two all through schools for 3 to 19 year olds and two secondary schools for 11 to 19 years olds. The table that follows outlines the total number of secondary school aged learners attending schools in the County Borough, split by English and Welsh medium for the previous three academic years and is derived from the PLASC:

Total Number of Secondary School Aged Learners Attending Schools in the County Borough Split by English and Welsh Medium								
Category	Academi	c Year						
	2017		2018		2019			
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%		
Total	12,550	80.7%	12,685	80.6%	12,868	80.4%		

Number of Learners Attending English Medium Secondary Schools						
Total Number of Learners Attending Welsh Medium Secondary Schools	3,010	19.3%	3,058	19.4%	3,141	19.6%
Total Number of Learners Attending Secondary Schools	15,560		15,743		16,009	

The data demonstrates stability in the ratio split of secondary school aged learners attending English and Welsh medium secondary schools for the previous three academic years.

The table that follows shows the transition rates from each Key Stage for the previous three years academic years in the County Borough and is derived from the PLASC:

Transition from Each Key Stage for the Previous Three Years in the County Borough								
Transition	Academic Year							
	2017	2018	2019					
Foundation	97.7%	98.2%	98.3%					
Phase to Key								
Stage Two								

Key Stage Two to Key Stage Three	111.7%	113.9%	110.1%
Key Stage Three to Key Stage Four	95.5%	98.4%	97.3%
Key Stag Four to Key Stage Five	62.2%	55.5%	59.6%

The transition data indicates that transition of learners between Key Stages does not appear to be a significant problem.

Other Relevant Data / Research

The main strategies and policies that are linked with the WESP are:

National:

- Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- Prosperity for All: The National Strategy 2017.
- The Programme for Government: Taking Wales Forward 2016 to 2021.
- Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh Speakers.
- The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.
- The Welsh in Education Strategic Plans and Assessing the Demand (Wales) Regulations 2013.
- Professor Donaldson's Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales – 2015.
- Curriculum for Wales 2022.
- Cymraeg 2050 Action Plan 2019.
- Education in Wales Our National Vision 2017 to 2021.
- Welsh in Education Action Plan 2017 to 2021.
- Welsh Medium Capital Grant.
- Childcare Act 2006.
- WG Childcare Offer.
- Reducing Infant Class Sizes.
- The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018
- Special Educational Needs Code of Practice for Wales.

Regional:

- CSC JES: Business Plan 2021 to 2022.
- Cwm Taf Public Services Board: Wellbeing Plan 2018 to 2023.

Local:

- RCTCBC Corporate Plan 2020 to 2024: Making a Difference.
- RCTCBC Local Development Plan 2006 to 2021.
- RCTCBC Education and Inclusion Services' Directorate's Strategic Business Plan: Every School a Great School.

- RCTCBC Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2016 to 2021.
- RCTCBC WESP 2017 to 2020.
- RCTCBC Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2017 to 2022.

More specifically:

- Prosperity for All: The National Strategy and The Programme for Government: Taking Wales Forward aim to drive forward improvements to the Welsh economy and public services. One of the priorities is to enable all learners to be able to use the Welsh language when they leave school.
- Cymraeg 2050 A Million Welsh Speakers, sets out the WGs ambition for reaching one million Welsh speakers by 2050 and encouraging more people to use and speak Welsh in their everyday lives.
- Education in Wales Our National Mission, sets out how the education sector will move forward to ensure that the new curriculum is implemented effectively. The intention is for learners to become increasingly bilingual with a strong grasp for other languages. To support this, the Welsh in Education Action Plan and Cymraeg 2050 Action Plan sets the direction for the development of Welsh medium education.

There are links to the Council's Corporate Plan for the period between 2020 to 2024, specifically the priority:

- Prosperity Creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative, entrepreneurial and fulfil their potential and prosper:
 - Ensuring we have good schools, so all children have access to a great education.

Likewise, the Council's Five Year Welsh Language Promotion Strategy for the period between 2016 to 2021 facilitates and promotes the Welsh language in the County Borough.

Stage Two – Impact Assessment										
Will the Proposed Strategy / Plan Affect Any / All of the Following?										
		No	No Impact / Negligible	Why it will have a + VE + / - VE - Impact on the Welsh Language?	Evidence	Action(s) to Mitigate – VE – Impacts / Better Contribute to + VE + Impacts?				
1. Opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language.	X			Our target, during the ten year lifespan of this WESP, is to: Increase the percentage of year one learners in Welsh medium education by between 8.0% to 12.0% during the ten year lifespan of this WESP. This equates to an increase from 506 year one learners in Welsh medium education to between 720 and 825 year one learners in Welsh medium education. As well as the target to increase the percentage of year one learners in Welsh medium education, the WESP includes seven outcomes or areas setting out how LAs are expected to improve Welsh medium and Welsh language education in their locality. The priorities are: 1. Outcome 1: More nursery / three year old learners receive	in Welsh medium education is based on contributing to the overall long term target of one million people in Wales being Welsh speakers by 2050, as set out in Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh Speakers. The delivery of the WESP will contribute to all seven wellbeing goals within the Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015, in particular: • A More Prosperous Wales, by developing a skilled and well-educated population.	Annual Progress Report is intended to capture the achievements in relation to the WESP and will be used to identify both positive and negative (if any) impacts of it. The target of increasing the percentage of year one learners in Welsh medium education will require a multifaceted approach and the Council will make every effort to build and maintain constructive working relationships with all relevant groups and				

rage Iss		 4. 5. 	their education through the medium of Welsh. Outcome 2: More reception / five year old learners receive their education through the medium of Welsh. Outcome 3: More learners 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.	•	enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances). A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language, by creating a society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.	Ensuring the availability of Welsh medium education in the right location from the initial early years, through to primary and secondary education, then progressing through to higher and further education for all learners, whatever their learning need, is fundamental to contributing towards the vision of one million people in Wales being Welsh speakers by 2050. Alongside the WESP, the Council has developed a Five Year Work Plan
rage Iss		5.	qualifications in Welsh (as a subject) and subjects through the medium of Welsh. Outcome 5: More opportunities for learners to		people to participate in the arts, and sports and	vision of one million people in Wales being Welsh speakers by 2050. Alongside the WESP, the
						Council has developed a Five Year Work Plan which sets out actions for each of the seven outcomes or areas with the aim of contributing towards improving Welsh
			number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and through the medium of Welsh.			medium and Welsh language education and achieving our target of increasing the percentage of year one

			,			
						learners in Welsh
						medium education.
2.	Numbers and / or	Χ		The Welsh Language Use	The development and	The Council will develop
ре	ercentages of Welsh			Survey ¹² for the years 2013 to	implementation of targeted	and implement targeted
	eakers.			2015, contains detailed	marketing and promotion	marketing and promotion
				information about Welsh speaker's	strategies to ensure the	strategies to ensure the
				fluency and their use of the Welsh	benefits of Welsh medium and	benefits of Welsh medium
				language in a range of settings.	Welsh language education are	and Welsh language
				When looking where respondents	promoted to parents / carers	education are promoted
				living in Wales learned to speak	from the initial early years,	to parents / carers.
				Welsh, the majority, 45.0%,	through to primary and	to paromo / carore.
				learned to speak Welsh at home,	. ,	The Council will consider
				followed by 26.0% who learned to	progressing through to higher	creating a Welsh
				speak Welsh at nursery and	and further education for all	language immersion
7				primary school between the ages	learners, whatever their	class for late comers
g				of 2 and 10 and 14.0% who	learning need is fundamental to	alongside the
Page 134				learned to speak Welsh at	increasing the percentage of	development of its Band
$\overline{\omega}$				secondary school at the age of 11	year one learners in Welsh	B 21 st Century Schools
+				plus. The remaining 2.0% learned	medium education.	and Colleges
				to speak Welsh in other settings,	mediam education.	Programme.
				including at 'Welsh for Adults'	In addition, Welsh language	Frogramme.
				courses.	immersion classes will be used	Eligible parents / carers
				courses.		
				The target of increasing the	to support learners who are late comers.	and the wider community
				The target of increasing the	comers.	will be supported and
				percentage of year one learners in		encouraged to participate
				Welsh medium education will	Eligible parents / carers and the	in activities through the
				require a multifaceted approach.	wider community will also be	medium of Welsh in order
				The Council will work to ensure the	supported and encouraged to	to improve their
				benefits of Welsh medium and	participate in activities through	confidence and retain
				Welsh language education are	the medium of Welsh in order to	their fluency in the Welsh

¹² Welsh Language Use Survey 2013 to 2015

	managed to managed to account to	incompany that a confidence of	la a succession thems. It	0044
	promoted to parents / carers and	improve their confidence and	5 5	CIVV
	demonstrate that it is never too late	retain their fluency in the Welsh		
	be educated through the medium	language through CfW pre-	activities.	
	of Welsh with the use of Welsh	employment activities that		
	language immersion classes to	introduce conversational Welsh		
	support learners who are late	to parents / carers and the		
	comers.	wider community and a		
		pathway to employment course		
	Although the Council has no Welsh	that includes basic Welsh		
	language immersion classes for	language skills which can lead		
	late comers in any of our schools	on to a Welsh for Adults course.		
	at present, schools requiring			
	Welsh language immersion			
	support for learners who are late			
	comers are funded to support the			
7 1	accelerated acquisition of Welsh			
	language skills for learners as and			
Page 135	when the need arises. As such,			
إ في	Welsh medium schools are			
	provided with funding directly to			
	ensure that any late comers to			
	Welsh medium education are			
	provided with the necessary			
	support and skills to enable them			
	to thrive within their school.			
	This is a social and to be a self-to-			
	This is considered to be working			
	effectively, however, given that			
	many LAs are implementing			
	varying models of Welsh language			
	immersion classes to support			
	learners who are late comers to			

Welsh medium education, work with the WG, CSC JES and other regional education consortia could be beneficial in understanding what opportunities for joint working could be had to ensure children and young people who are late comers to Welsh medium sufficiently education are supported. In addition, eligible parents / carers and the wider community are supported and encouraged to participate in activities through the medium of Welsh order to improve their confidence and retain their fluency in the Welsh language. Communities for Work (CfW), a partnership programme between the LA and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), supported by the European Social Fund (ESF), delivers employment support services in all fifty two Communities First Clusters (CFC) in Wales. Dedicated CfW Project Teams are in place to provide support to individuals to access employment. CfW offer preemployment activities that introduce conversational Welsh to

_			1		
			parents / carers and the wider		
			community and a pathway to		
			employment course that includes		
			basic Welsh language skills which		
			can lead on to a Welsh for Adults		
			course.		
	3. Opportunities to	Χ	The Council will make every effort	An Annual Work Plan, intended	The Council is required to
	promote the Welsh		to build and maintain constructive	•	review the WESP and
	language.		working relationships with all	,	submit an Annual
	language.		relevant groups and organisations	keep track of progress.	Progress Report, based
			who can contribute towards the	Reep track of progress.	on that annual review, to
			success of this WESP. Of	The development and	*
				l •	
			particular importance in the	implementation of targeted	
			formulation, implementation and	,	is intended to capture the
ψ			evaluation of the WESP will be our	strategies to ensure the	achievements in relation
aq			WESP Strategic Group. The		
Page 137			WESP Strategic Group is	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	used to identify both
갋			comprised of officers from the	•	positive and negative (if
Ĭ			Council, along with officers from a	1	any) impacts of it.
			number of external groups and	through to primary and	
			organisations and is guided by a	secondary education, then	•
			Terms of Reference.	progressing through to higher	
				and further education for all	comprised of officers from
			Alongside, the WESP Strategic	learners, whatever their	the Council, along with
			Group and of upmost importance	learning need is fundamental to	officers from a number of
			to the success of the WESP is the	increasing the percentage of	external groups and
			Marketing and Promotion Sub		
			Group. The Marketing and	medium education. The Council	established and guided
			Promotion Sub Group is	will utilise both national and	by a Terms of Reference.
			comprised of officers from the		,
			Council, along with officers from a		
			number of external groups and	ļ ·	
L		l l	Thanson of oktomal groups and	actoropod and provided by the	

	organisations and is guided by a	WG and CSC JES, as well as	
	Terms of Reference.	local marketing and promotion	
		strategies developed by the	
		Council along with officers from	
		a number of external groups	
		and organisations who form the	
		WESP Strategic Group.	
4. Compliance with the X	The WESP will comply with the	An Annual Work Plan, intended	The Council is required to
Councils statutory	Council's statutory Welsh	to be a practical working	review the WESP and
Welsh language	language standards.	document, will be developed to	submit an Annual
standards.		keep track of progress.	Progress Report, based
	In developing this WESP, all		on that annual review, to
	current and relevant local, regional		the WG each year. The
<u> </u>	and national legislation, strategies,		Annual Progress Report
นี้	policies and action plans have		is intended to capture the
Page 138	been taken into consideration in		achievements in relation
1	order to encourage and facilitate		to the WESP and will be
₩	long term growth in Welsh medium		used to identify both
	and Welsh language education.		positive and negative (if
	The Council has and will continue		any) impacts of it.
	to ensure there is a clear alignment		
	with all current and relevant local,		The target of increasing
	regional and national legislation,		the percentage of year
	strategies, policies and action		one learners in Welsh
	plans that impact upon Welsh		medium education will
	medium and Welsh language		require a multifaceted
	education.		approach and the Council
			will make every effort to
			build and maintain
			constructive working
			relationships with all
			relevant groups and

		1	1		
				organisations who ca	an
				contribute towards it.	
				Of particular important	ce
				in the formulation	
					nd
				evaluation of the WES	
				will be our WES	
				Strategic Group. TI	
				WESP Strategic Group	
				comprised of officers fro	
				the Council, along wi	
				officers from a number	of
				external groups a	nd
_					is
2	1			guided by a Terms	of
ç				Reference.	
_	1				
	\$			In the formulation of the	ne l
	1			WESP, a WESP Virtu	
				Planning Day took place	
				In attendance we	
				officers from the Council	
					-
				along with officers from	
				number of extern	
				groups and organisation	
				who each have a role	
					to
				formulating,	
				implementing a	nd
				evaluating the WES	Р.
				They include:	
		·		1,	

		 CSC JES. Coleg y Cymoedd. CTMUHB. Menter laith. Mudiad Meithrin. RhaG. The Urdd. University of South Wales. WG.
Page 140		In order to ensure the formulation of a robust WESP, the Council also developed an online questionnaire as a prestatutory consultation phase. This was distributed to officers from the Council, along with officers from a number of external groups and organisations.
		All communication, including the WESP virtual Planning Day, email correspondence and documentation as well as the statutory consultation process has

		1	
			and will continue to be
			shared bilingually with all
			external groups and
			organisations.
			Feedback will be
			encouraged to be in the
			medium of Welsh to
			provide opportunities for
			the use of the Welsh
			language. Where
			required and requested,
			simultaneous translation
			has and will continue to
			be provided.
ឬ 5. Treating the Welsh X	As the Council looks to the future,	An Annual Work Plan, intended	The Council is required to
af 5. Treating the Welsh X language, no less	it wants to build on what it has	to be a practical working	
favourably than the	achieved to date and make sure	document, will be developed to	submit an Annual
‡English language.	that every town and community in	keep track of progress.	Progress Report, based
	the County Borough is a great		on that annual review, to
	place to live, work and play. The		the WG each year. The
	Council's ambition is for everyone		Annual Progress Report
	to be as healthy, independent and		is intended to capture the
	prosperous as possible throughout		achievements in relation
	their lives. Enabling access to a		to the WESP and will be
	good education, developing skills		used to identify both
	and decent employment		positive and negative (if
	opportunities are all priority areas.		any) impacts of it.
	Integral to achieving this ambition		The Council will continue
	is the vision that:		to progress and deliver
			the remaining projects

	There are good schools, so all	funded via the WG
	children and young people,	Childcare Offer Capital
	whatever their learning need is,	Grant Scheme and Welsh
	have equitable access to good	Medium Capital Grant
	English and Welsh medium	Scheme. These projects
	education.	support capital works that
	The Occupied Building and the Salara	facilitate growth in Welsh
	The Council will deliver this vision	medium education, with
	by supporting children to have the	funding specifically aimed
	best start in life and be ready for learning through an improved early	at developing or expanding Welsh
	years' system, supporting families	medium childcare and
	through the childcare offer and by	early years settings co-
	investing in new and significantly	located on Welsh medium
<u>a</u>	improved school and community	primary school sites. The
Page 142	facilities through the 21st Century	projects recently
-	Schools and Colleges	completed or due for
#	Programme.	complete during the first
		five academic years of
		the WESP comprise:
		Dalau Brimaan Cabaal
		Dolau Primary School (including Wolch unit)
		(including Welsh unit).Ysgol Gynradd
		Gymraeg Abercynon.
		 Ysgol Gynradd
		Gymraeg Aberdar.
		 Ysgol Gynradd
		Gymraeg Evan
		James.
		 Ysgol Gynradd
		Gymraeg Ynyswen.

			 Ysgol Gynradd Gymunedol Gymraeg Llantrisant. Ysgol Llanhari. The Council's ambitious Band B 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme, alongside funding directly from the Council, will:
Page 143			 Amend the language medium of Penderyn Community Primary School from a dual language primary school to a Welsh medium primary school (following the opening of Hirwaun Primary School). The catchment area of Penderyn Community Primary School will also be extended. Deliver an extension to Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Aberdar. Deliver a new Welsh medium primary school for Ysgol

					Gynradd Gymraeg
					Llyn y Forwyn.
				•	Deliver a new Welsh
					medium primary
					school on the current
					Heol y Celyn Primary
					School site, to
					accommodate leaners
					currently attending
					Ysgol Gynradd
					Gymraeg Pont Sion
					Norton and the Welsh
					medium learners
					attending the dual
	Þ				
g					language Heol y
a	1				Celyn Primary School.
aya I++	\$			•	Deliver a new dual
1	†				language primary
					school, in the first
					instance, as an
					extension to the dual
					language primary
					school Dolau Primary
					School, as part an
					extensive housing
					development.
				•	Undertake a feasibility
					study to invest in
					either refurbishing the
					existing Ysgol Gyfun
					Cwm Rhondda or to
					relocate the school to

	a new 21st Century standard school to be built in the Rhondda. Improve and extend accommodation with a new sports facility for Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun.
--	--

Stage Three – Strengthe	Stage Three – Strengthening the Proposal		
What?		When?	Who?
Consultation and stakeholders.	engagement with		

	All communication, including the WESP virtual Planning Day, email correspondence and documentation as well as the statutory consultation process has and will continue to be shared bilingually with all external groups and organisations.	
	Feedback will be encouraged in the medium of Welsh to provide opportunities for the use of the Welsh language. Where required and requested, simultaneous translation has and will continue to be provided.	
Page 146	The draft WESP will be subject to a comprehensive public consultation with a wide range of stakeholders for no less than an eight week period. In addition, it will be scrutinised by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee and the Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group.	
	Current circumstances will inevitably limit the opportunity for face to face engagement, however, the Council will make best use of a of social media, virtual meetings and digital tools to engage with stakeholders.	
Learners.	The Council acknowledges that learners should be involved as active participants in the development, delivery, management and improvement of their educational and learner experience.	

	Learners have a right to express their views in all matters affecting them and for their views to be heard and given due consideration in accordance with their age and maturity. As such, the Council's 21 st Century Schools Team will ensure that suitable arrangements are made to involve learners as active participants throughout this consultation process.	
WESP Strategic Group.	The Council will make every effort to build and maintain constructive working relationships with all relevant groups and organisations who can contribute towards the success of this WESP. Of particular importance in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of the WESP will be our WESP Strategic Group. The WESP Strategic Group is comprised of officers from the Council, along with officers from a number of external groups and organisations and is guided by a Terms of Reference.	,
	Alongside, the WESP Strategic Group and of upmost importance to the success of the WESP, is the Marketing and Promotion Sub Group. The Marketing and Promotion Sub Group is comprised of officers from the Council, along with officers from a number of external groups and organisations and is guided by a Terms of Reference. In Addition to the WESP Strategic Group and Marketing and Promotion Sub Group, where and when necessary, the Council will establish 'task	

	and finish' Sub Groups comprised of officers from the Council, along with officers from a number of external groups and organisations. Each Sub Group will be tasked with the achievement of specified objectives and guided by Terms of Reference.
Five Year Work Plan.	 The Council is required to review the WESP and submit an Annual Progress Report, based on that annual review, to the WG each year. The Annual Progress Report is intended to capture the achievements in relation to the WESP and will be used to identify both positive and negative (if any) impacts of it. 21st Century Schools Team. WESP Strategic Group.
Page 148	The target of increasing the percentage of year one learners in Welsh medium education will require a multifaceted approach and the Council will make every effort to build and maintain constructive working relationships with all relevant groups and organisations who can contribute towards it. Ensuring the availability of Welsh medium education in the right location from the initial early years, through to primary and secondary education, then progressing through to higher and further education for all learners, whatever their learning need, is fundamental to contributing towards the vision of one million people in Wales being Welsh speakers by 2050.
	Alongside the WESP, the Council has developed a Five Year Work Plan which sets out

actions for each of the seven outcomes or areas with the aim of contributing towards improving Welsh medium and Welsh language education and achieving our target increasing the percentage of year one learners in Welsh	
medium education.	

	Stage Four – Review		
	Welsh Language Services Comments	Date Considered	Brief Description
	This is a very detailed WLIA which lists many of	7 th June 2021.	
	the intended positive impacts this proposal will		
	have on the Welsh language.		
rage 149	Welsh Language Services encourage you to consider further the following:		
	To consider the steps you'll take to increase the positive impacts or mitigate any negative impacts. You may wish to consider things such as marketing activities, choice architecture and proposed interventions that will assist the proposal to reach the targeted outcomes.		
	 In Section Three, we encourage you to draw down the mitigation from Section Two that you intend to implement. This is to 		

demonstrate and record the commitment to these changes for officer(s) / SLT / Cabinet to be aware of (as not all intended actions will be possible to implement).			
Officer Review Comments	Brief Description	Date Considered	
Consultation Comments	Brief Description	Date Considered	

Stage Five – Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing

In accordance with the WESP (Wales) Regulations 2019, the Council will make every effort to build and maintain constructive working relationships with all relevant groups and organisations who can contribute towards the success of this WESP. Of particular importance in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of the WESP will be our WESP Strategic Group. The WESP Strategic Group is comprised of officers from the Council, along with officers from a number of external groups and organisations and is guided by a Terms of Reference.

Alongside, the WESP Strategic Group and of the strategic Group and of the

Alongside, the WESP Strategic Group and of upmost importance to the success of the WESP, is the Marketing and Promotion Sub Group. The Marketing and Promotion Sub Group is comprised of officers from the Council, along with officers from a number of external groups and organisations and is guided by a Terms of Reference.

In Addition to the WESP Strategic Group and Marketing and Promotion Sub Group, where and when necessary, the Council will establish 'task and finish' Sub Groups comprised of officers from the Council, along with officers from a number of external groups and organisations. Each Sub Group will be tasked with the achievement of specified objectives and guided by Terms of Reference.

From 2023 onwards, the Council will implement two main methods of reporting on the progress of this WESP:

- 1. Annual Work Plan.
- 2. Annual Progress Report.

The Annual Work Plan is intended to be a practical working document to help keep track of progress in the short term and will be utilised by the WESP Strategic Group to track progress of this WESP.

The 2019 Regulations require LAs to review their WESP and submit an Annual Progress Report, based on that review, to the WG by 31st July each year. The Annual Progress Report is intended to capture the achievements in relation to the WESP.

Whilst the statutory responsibility for the WESP sits with the Council, a range of external groups and organisations have a role in formulating, implementing and evaluating its progress regularly throughout its lifespan.

Stage Six - Summary of Impacts for the Proposed Strategy / Plan

As the Council looks to the future, it wants to build on what it has achieved to date and make sure that every town and community in the County Borough is a great place to live, work and play. The Council's ambition is for everyone to be as healthy, independent and prosperous as possible throughout their lives. Enabling access to a good education, developing skills and decent employment opportunities are all priority areas.

Integral to achieving this ambition is the vision that:

There are good schools, so all children and young people, whatever their learning need is, have equitable access to good English and Welsh medium education.

The Council will deliver this vision by supporting children to have the best start in life and be ready for learning through an improved early years' system, supporting families through the childcare offer and by investing in new and significantly improved school and community facilities through the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme.

The Council will show clear leadership and commitment in its vision for Welsh medium education and, as such, our target is to:

Increase the percentage of year one learners in Welsh medium education by between 8.0% to 12.0% during the ten year lifespan of this WESP. This equates to an increase from 506 year one learners in Welsh medium education to between 720 and 825 year one learners in Welsh medium education.

The achievement of this target will require a multifaceted approach. Ensuring the availability of Welsh medium education in the right location from the initial early years, through to primary and secondary education, then progressing through to higher and further education for all learners, whatever their learning need, is fundamental to contributing towards the vision of one million people in Wales being Welsh speakers by 2050.

Recognising the importance of Cymraeg 2050, and how essential the education system is to achieving its vision, the WESP sets out the Council's ten year plan for increasing and improving the planning of the provision of Welsh medium and Welsh language education. It builds on the work of the

previous WESP for the period between 2017 to 2022¹³ and sets out a workplan which demonstrates how the Council intends to achieve its ten year vision.

In developing this WESP, all current and relevant local, regional and national legislation, strategies, policies and action plans have been taken into consideration in order to encourage and facilitate long term growth in Welsh medium and Welsh language education. The Council has and will continue to ensure there is a clear alignment with all current and relevant local, regional and national legislation, strategies, policies and action plans that impact upon Welsh medium and Welsh language education.

	Stage Seven – Sign Off				
	Name of Officer	Completing	Grace Zecca-Hanagan	Service Director	Andrea Richards, Service Director
	WLIA				for 21 st Century Schools and
	Position		21st Century Schools		Transformation
				I recommend that the proposed	Is implemented with no
τ]			strategy / plan	amendments.
age					Is implemented taking into account
Эę					the mitigating actions outlined.
7	. 1				Is rejected due to disproportionate
75	,				negative impacts on the Welsh
					language.
	Signature		Grace Zecca-Hanagan.	Signature	
	Date		21 st June 2021.	Date	

¹³ Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council – Welsh in Education Strategic Plan – 2017 to 2020



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2021/22

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13th OCTOBER 2021

UPDATE ON THE EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS AND PRUS IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES

Author(s): Tim Britton, Head of Achievement (Primary sector)
Sarah Corcoran, Head of Achievement and Well-being (Secondary and All through sector)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To provide members of the Children and Young People's Committee with an overview of the progress Rhondda Cynon Taf local authority has made in relation to recommendations from the overarching thematic report Estyn published in January 2021.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Consider Estyn's letter on the Council's work to support schools to provide a quality provision during 2020-21.
- 2.2 Consider whether they require further information to be provided in any future meetings.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 To provide Members with an update on Estyn reviews of the critical actions taken by the Education and Inclusion Services Directorate during 2020-21.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 During the early autumn term of 2020, the Welsh Government asked Estyn to undertake a review of local authorities' work in supporting their learning communities in schools and pupil referral units (PRUs) during the period from March to October 2020. Estyn's thematic report 'Local Authority and Regional Consortia Support for Schools and PRUs in Response to COVID-19' was published in January 2021.
- 4.2 The thematic review involving all 22 local authorities identified five recommendations for the Welsh Government to consider and recognised that a whole system approach was needed to address these. These recommendations are summarised as follows:
 - Recommendation 1: Urgently address barriers to learning at home, particularly where this is due to a lack of access to suitable computers or adequate connectivity.
 - **Recommendation 2:** Improve the quality of the distance and blended learning experiences for pupils by supporting more effective teaching across and within schools and PRUs.
 - Recommendation 3: Develop a coherent approach to improve progress in literacy, numeracy and personal and social skills of vulnerable pupils disproportionally affected by the pandemic, for example pupils eligible for free school meals.
 - **Recommendation 4:** Establish strategies to monitor and address the long-term impact of the pandemic on the physical and mental health of pupils.
 - Recommendation 5: Create opportunities to take stock and evaluate the impact of policies and practices developed since the start of the pandemic to inform future ways of working and curriculum design.

The full report, can be accessed via the following link:

<u>Local authority and regional consortia support for schools and PRUs in response</u>
to COVID-19 | Estyn (gov.wales)

The first three recommendations were immediate and urgent in nature, whilst time would be needed to address the last two fully.

- 4.3 The report is based on virtual meetings with officers and the Cabinet Lead Member for Education and Inclusion Services; a meeting with the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive; and engagement calls with a significant number of schools and PRUs across the local authority.
- 4.4 Consideration was also given to supporting documentation and evidence provided to Estyn link inspectors by senior local authority officers and the feedback from

surveys of schools/PRU leaders, governors, teachers and support staff, parents and pupils during engagement visits throughout the autumn term.

5. UPDATE/CURRENT POSITION

In respect to the following five recommendations Estyn identified many strengths as well as some areas of development in Rhondda Cynon Taf:

5.1 **Recommendation 1:** Urgently address barriers to learning at home, particularly where this is due to a lack of access to suitable computers or adequate connectivity.

Estyn positively referenced the following:

- The local authority worked well with schools to identify further barriers to learning following on from the useful support provided during the early stages of the pandemic.
- Officers used data well to plan their approaches strategically, which included the data systems developed by the local authority to identify the exact needs of digitally excluded pupils to support better strategic planning and more targeted support.
- The Attendance and Wellbeing Service Officers, Family Engagement Officers and school staff supported families well by acting as a conduit between home and school to overcome barriers to learning.
- The local authority encouraged schools to adapt their offer and to take better
 account of the views of parents. In addition, the local authority
 communicated regularly with families to help parents and carers to support
 their children's learning.
- 5.2 **Recommendation 2:** Improve the quality of the distance and blended learning experiences for pupils by supporting more effective teaching across and within schools and PRUs.

Estyn positively referenced the following:

- Officers from the local authority gathered a suitable range of first-hand evidence and listened to the views of parents and pupils, helping them to identify need and plan support accordingly. Estyn noted that schools reported they valued this approach and the support offered.
- The local authority and regional consortium worked closely to provide information and advice on distance and blended learning strategies.
- Over the course of the pandemic, the local authority has developed a useful tracking system to monitor pupil engagement.
- 5.3 **Recommendation 3:** Develop a coherent approach to improve progress in literacy, numeracy and personal and social skills of vulnerable pupils disproportionally affected by the pandemic, for example pupils eligible for free school meals.

Estyn positively referenced the following:

- Effective use of digital technology and management information systems across the authority that has enabled data to be analysed to evaluate the progress and engagement of vulnerable groups of learners.
- The close working relationship between services and agencies to develop joint guidance to identify the best support for those most in need.
- The local authority has continued to support pupils' Welsh language skills by providing bilingual services and guidance for schools and families.
- 5.4 **Recommendation 4:** Establish strategies to monitor and address the long-term impact of the pandemic on the physical and mental health of pupils.

Estyn positively referenced the following:

- The authority's awareness that the pandemic significantly impacted on the mental health of many groups of children and young people.
- The data team's support for schools to identify specific groups or cohorts of learners disproportionately affected by school closures.
- Staff in the Attendance and Wellbeing Service work with schools identifying wellbeing needs and supporting effective safeguarding of pupils.
- The authority has procured a software package to manage and record all safeguarding concerns across all schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- The development of the local authority data 'dashboard' to identify trends in safeguarding, and the work of Bronze command, giving a wider strategic view of safeguarding needs.
- The Education Psychology Service has established a helpline to support families, early years' settings, agencies, and schools.'
- 5.5 **Recommendation 5:** Create opportunities to take stock and evaluate the impact of policies and practices developed since the start of the pandemic to inform future ways of working and curriculum design.

Estyn positively referenced the following:

- The local authority feels that partnership working with schools is strong. They consider that the local authority and schools are one team with shared aims and ambitions.
- Cross directorate working in Rhondda Cynon Taf has always been considered a positive feature by officers, and they now believe it has been further strengthened during the pandemic.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not currently required - the contents of the report are for information purposes only.

7. CONSULTATION

7.1 There is no requirement to undertake any consultation.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

8.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

9. <u>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED</u>

9.1 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

10. <u>LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN/OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/SIP</u>

10.1 This is an information report presenting the overview of progress made by the local authority in relation to recommendations from the thematic report published in January 2021 by Estyn to Welsh Government which outlines how the Council is responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The report is clearly connected to one of the priorities in the Council's corporate plan 2020- 2024 that is:

Creating Places: where people are proud to live, work and play;

Within this priority one of the Council's commitments is to ensure it has "good schools so all children have access to a great education".

11. CONCLUSION

11.1 It is hoped that the Children and Young People's Committee consider themselves to be updated on the feedback provided and have a clear understanding of the progress the local authority has made against the recommendations in respect of Estyn's thematic report published January 2021.

The local authority will continue to work in close partnership with the regional School Improvement Service and all its schools to ensure that strong progress is made against all the recommendations identified by Estyn in the thematic report.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE COMMITTEE

13th OCTOBER 2021

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES

Officer(s) to contact:

Tim Britton, Head of Achievement (Primary sector)
Sarah Corcoran, Head of Achievement and Well-being (Secondary and All through sector)

APPENDIX 1:

Estyn's overview of the progress made by Rhondda Cynon Taf in relation to recommendations from the overarching thematic report published January 2021. The detail is an extract from a letter to the Chief Executive of the Council.

Recommendation 1 – Urgently address barriers to learning at home, particularly where this is due to a lack of access to suitable computers or adequate connectivity.

The local authority conducted a stakeholder survey to identify all barriers to learning including digital concerns. They worked closely with schools to record details of the pupils in need of devices and distributed an additional 2,500 laptops and tablets to local families. Officers used data well to plan their approaches strategically. From their analyses, they observed that pupils eligible for free school meals make up only around half of the pupils that are digitally excluded. The data systems developed by the local authority identify the exact needs of digitally excluded pupils to support better strategic planning and more targeted support.

The attendance and wellbeing service officers, family engagement officers and school staff have supported families well be acting as a conduit between home and school to overcome barriers to learning. For example, they have delivered devices for families with transport issues, provided doorstep tuition on digital skills and techniques, reset passwords, and have helped families to understand how to use games consoles and tablets to access online learning platforms. In consultation with schools and in light of their experiences during the pandemic, the local authority is further developing their existing digital strategy. This will align with the Welsh Government's Hwb EdTech Infrastructure Project to provide a sustainable digital education infrastructure for the local authority.

Other than access to technology, officers identified the main barriers to learning to be the variability of engagement in live lessons and the fatigue of parents and pupils. They have encouraged schools to adapt their offer and to take better account of the views of parents. In addition, the local authority communicated regularly with families to help parents and carers to support their children's learning. They explained how they were supporting schools to work with families to provide a flexible approach to learning including consideration of the timing and number of live lessons. The local authority has also organised the deployment of teaching assistants to act as supportive adults for older pupils where appropriate.

Recommendation 2 – Improve the quality of the distance and blended learning experiences for pupils by supporting more effective teaching across and within schools and PRUs.

During the spring term 2021, local authority officers continued to work with the regional consortia and school leaders to review and refine distance and blended learning provision.

Improvement partners from the regional consortium used key questions to identify which schools were progressing well with blended and distance learning, and those that needed additional support. Officers from the local authority also gathered a suitable range of first-hand evidence and listened to the views of parents and pupils. This helped them to identify need and plan support offered.

In addition to gathering first-hand evidence and returning more recently to work reviews and lesson observations, the local authority and regional consortium have used a wider range of approaches to gather evidence about the quality of blended learning from schools. For example, to evaluate the quality of distance learning and how responsive the school was to the needs and preferences of the pupils, improvement partners observed an online meeting with pupils at Penrhys Primary School. In addition, the improvement partner at Ysgol Nant Gwyn observed initial teacher education students talking about their experiences of contributing to a distance learning package for learners. The local authority considers learner voice to be a priority and even more so post Covid-19. At Maerdy Community Primary School the improvement partner hosted a virtual meeting with learners to evaluate learning.

The local authority and regional consortium have worked closely to provide information and advice on distance and blended learning strategies during the most recent lockdown period. Strengths of provision have been captured in a series of case studies and this has facilitated the sharing of good practice. In general, schools have valued the useful training opportunities and webinars provided by the regional consortium to help staff to develop further their approaches to blended learning. To support governors to improve the challenge they provide to schools about learners' distance learning experiences, the cluster of Welsh-medium schools held joint governor meetings and engaged governors in an example live lesson. This helped governors to understand the logistics of online teaching and be better informed when making decisions.

Over the course of the pandemic, the local authority has developed a useful tracking system to monitor pupil engagement. Engagement measures have been further refined to include the quality of the work, as well as the completion of tasks. In addition, schools are supported well to make effective use of the family engagement officers.

Recommendation 3 – Develop a coherent approach to improve progress in literacy, numeracy and personal and social skills of vulnerable pupils disproportionately affected by the pandemic, for example pupils eligible for free schools meals.

Rhondda Cynon Taf local authority has developed its systems to capture and use data well during the past year. Local authority officers have collected information from a varied range of sources to help identify vulnerable pupils that have been disproportionately

affected by the pandemic. The effective use of digital technology and management information systems across the authority has enabled data to be analysed to evaluate the progress and engagement of vulnerable groups of learners. Officers have worked closely with children's services and the health board to develop joint guidance to identify the best support for those most in need. This guidance, along with the up-to-date pupil information provided to schools, has helped to ensure targeted and swift support has been in place.

To support schools with the use of the additional funding for pupils whose skills development has been affected by the pandemic, the local authority and regional consortium has put in place a range of professional learning opportunities and guidance. This includes the sharing of good practice, webinars, repositories of resources, and school-to-school support. In addition, the heads of department network meetings for secondary schools have continued to ensure that support at middle leader level focuses appropriately on identifying and addressing skills' deficit. School leaders have reported to officers and to Estyn during engagement calls that although reading skills have been maintained overall, pupils' listening and speaking skills and basic number skills have generally regressed. In addition, some schools feel that there has been a deterioration in pupils' levels of concentration and physical fitness. In order to improve pupils' literacy skills, the local authority has begun to develop school and cluster-based groups to consider how best to progress these skills. Although at an early stage, these groups are jointly developing research-informed initiatives aimed at improving outcomes in listening, speaking, reading and writing.

The local authority has continued to support pupils' Welsh language by providing bilingual services and guidance for schools and families. All social media posts and graphics are also issued bilingually. In addition, they are increasing the capacity for Welsh-medium education within the authority as part of their longer-term strategic planning.

Recommendation 4 – Establish strategies to monitor and address the long-term impact of the pandemic on the physical and mental health of pupils.

The authority is aware that the pandemic has had a significant impact on the mental health of any groups of children and young people. For example, they recognise that post-16 learners' engagement and attendance is a cause for concern. As a result, their well-being action plan aims to build capacity of schools to meet the emotion and mental health and well-being needs of learners. Wole school training in approaches to anxiety, cognitive behaviour therapy, and staff well-being has been developed and accessed widely by practitioners.

Schools are supported by the data team to identify specific groups or cohorts of learners that have been disproportionately affected by school closures. For instance, they provide regular updated local authority reports and live data on vulnerable groups. The vulnerable groups include those pupils on the child protection register, children in need of care and support, young carers, children who are looked after and those with statements of special educational needs. The accessibility of data ensures that schools are informed quickly of learners whose personal circumstances have been challenging and may have

changed. This, in turn, triggers enhanced well-being calls by the school and, where necessary, access to specialist services and support, such as the Attendance and Wellbeing Service, Youth Engagement and Participation Service, Resilient Families Service and the Educational Psychology Service.

Staff in the Attendance and Well-being Service work with schools on a rota bass to ascertain wellbeing needs and to support the effective safeguarding of pupils. They refer learners and families directly to the most appropriate service area. In addition, the authority has procured a software package to manage and record all safeguarding concerns across all schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf. This, in conjunction with the further development of the local authority data 'dashboard' which identifies the trends in safeguarding, and the work of Bronze command (the multi-agency safeguarding group), gives a wider strategic view of safeguarding needs within the local authority.

The Education Psychology Service has established a helpline to support families, early years' settings, agencies and schools. The helpline has supported over 300 families during the first and second lockdowns and continues to be used widely. General themes that have emerged recently relate to anxiety due to lockdown, an increase in challenging behaviour at home, concerns regarding school transition and advice to support pupils who have experienced bereavement during lockdown. In addition, training has been provided for schools to establish a general measure of well-being for pupils and staff. This is enabling schools to identify trends and respond to specific well-being needs of individual pupils and classes or to respond to whole-school issues.

A number of multi-agency working groups have been established to support the well-being of particular groups of people. For example, Black, Asian and minority ethnic, LGBTQ+ and wellbeing of these groups will be evaluated as they become more established.

As restrictions have eased, the local authority has tried to ensure that pupils are offered food of the correct nutritional value. Breakfast clubs are operating and generally schools have changed their menus to encourage healthy eating.

Recommendation 5 - Create opportunities to take stock and evaluate the impact of policies and practices developed since the start of the pandemic to inform future ways of working and curriculum design.

Officers' report that the changes brought about by the pandemic have made them reflect on their practices and ways of working. They feel that there are many features that they will continue to implement in the future. For example, they intend to continue with the improvements to work digitally across the local authority, within schools, and between them, and ensure this is embedded in day to day practice.

The local authority feels that partnership working with schools is strong. They consider that the local authority and schools are one team with shared aims and ambitions. Generally, schools agree. School leaders report that they are happy to contact the local

authority officers to seek advice. In addition, the local authority is more confident to seek feedback about their services from all stakeholders.

Cross directorate working in Rhondda Cynon Taf has always been considered a positive feature by officers, and they now believe it has been further strengthened during the pandemic. For example, the head of Human Resources and the Director of Public Health and Protection have attended headteacher meetings. This facilitated joint problem-solving and the co-construction of solutions to challenges posed by the pandemic. This supported timely decisions with fewer misunderstandings between schools and the local authority.

The local authority feels that a strength of its team throughout the pandemic is the quality and frequency of its communications with schools and the wider community. Leaders feel that the use of social media to communicate with stakeholders has been strong. Although the use of data is viewed as a strength of the local authority, officers intend to improve the way that this is shared. For example, they plan to share it via the local authority website. They feel this will make it easier for parents to find the additional information.

Opportunities for governors to engage with training has improved during the pandemic. Distance learning modules were offered on topics such as the Curriculum for Wales, additional learning needs and paediatric first aid. This, along with regular termly meetings to consider high level priorities, has resulted in a larger number of governors accessing training and improving the way they work. The local authority will continue to offer a hybrid approach to governor training in the future.





RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2021/22

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13TH OCTOBER 2021

CONSULTATION – EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2021-2024

REPORT OF THE EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES

Author: Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee with an overview of the Education and Inclusion Services Draft Strategic Plan for 2021-2024.
- 1.2 To give Members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee the opportunity to contribute to the consultation process in respect of the Education and Inclusion Services Draft Strategic Plan for 2021-2024.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that members:

- 2.1 Scrutinise the information provided in respect of the Council's Education and Inclusion Services Draft Strategic Plan for 2021-2024.
- 2.2 Provide feedback on the Council's Education and Inclusion Services Draft Strategic Plan for 2021-2024.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 To provide Members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee with an update on the Education and Inclusion Services Draft Strategic Plan for 2021-2024 and to reflect Members comments as part of the consultation process.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The pandemic has shone a light on the critical and invaluable role that our schools play in supporting our learners, their families, and wider communities. Our workforce has worked tirelessly and creatively throughout the pandemic to keep our learners and staff safe, maintaining continuity in learning and supporting the most vulnerable during a period of unprecedented challenge. The highly effective partnership working displayed across our schools and Council departments has demonstrated that together we can make a real difference to the lives of the learners and the communities that we serve.
- 4.2 Learners and their families have shown resilience and perseverance in adapting to the impact of the pandemic, acquiring new ways of accessing education and well-being support. These changes have not been without their challenges, but the invaluable support provided by the educational workforce has ensured that barriers to learning have been proactively addressed and tackled, and learner progression sustained. Nevertheless, we know that some learners and families have been more adversely affected than others, and it is imperative that these learners are well supported to ensure their progression during this next phase of recovery.
- 4.3 There is currently tremendous change within the Education system as schools prepare and implement transformational plans for the delivery of the new Curriculum for Wales and Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal Act (2018). Good well-being for all, ensuring progression for all learners and closing the gap in outcomes between our most and least disadvantaged and vulnerable learners remains a high priority for improvement as we work together to ensure that our learners access the best possible opportunities in the early years, throughout their formal education and beyond.
- 4.4 As an Education Directorate, ensuring that every learner in Rhondda Cynon Taf has access to excellent schools and positive and enriching educational experiences that enable them to achieve the very best possible outcomes that they are capable of is our core purpose. The Education and Inclusion Services Draft Strategic Plan for 2021-2024 (Appendix 1) sets out the direction for the Education and Inclusion Services Directorate and schools for the next 3 years, describing its mission, vision and ambition for our schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 4.5 Our mission quite simply is: 'To deliver equity and excellence in Education and enhanced well-being for all'. The robust partnerships that have been forged between the local authority and non-maintained settings, schools and PRUs throughout the pandemic has strengthened our collective drive and purpose to ensure that all learners access the highest quality teaching and learning experiences, so that they are able to progress and grow as lifelong learners. Our aspirations for our learners have remained steadfastly high despite the challenges faced, as our children have the right to access a first class education that enables them to realise their ambitions

- 4.6 Our mission will be achieved by us realising our vision: 'To inspire and support excellent leadership and professional practice so that all learners in Rhondda Cynon Taf make good progress and become ambitious, capable, creative and ethically informed'. Excellent leadership and professional practice is critical to ensuring that we create an effective culture of equity and excellence in education and high expectations, so that we can ensure the success of all schools and learners across the County Borough.
- 4.7 We need to collectively address the educational impact of the inequalities that have been compounded by the pandemic and ensure that funding and pedagogical policies support the progression and development of all learners, including the most vulnerable groups. Ensuring that all learners attend school regularly is of critical importance during this recover phase.
- 4.8 Disruptions to learning and to social interactions and experiences has affected some learners' physical and mental health and well-being, as well as the staff that support them. This plan reaffirms our commitment to learner and staff well-being and mental health, and the vital importance of ensuring that everyone's emotional needs are well supported.
- 4.9 Our revised strategy will give priority to those areas proven to be effective in achieving our mission, vision and the areas identified from robust self-evaluation and stakeholder feedback. These are also reflective of our local Corporate priorities set within the context of national and local recovery and reform.
 - **Priority 1:** Developing a highly skilled educational workforce and excellent leadership at all levels
 - Priority 2: Supporting educational settings to deliver a transformational curriculum, high quality teaching and learning and improved outcomes for all
 - **Priority 3:** Ensuring equity and support for vulnerable learners and their families
 - **Priority 4:** Enhancing the well-being of our learners and the workforce
 - **Priority 5:** Delivering 21st Century learning environments and innovative services for our learners and communities
- 4.10 The Education and Inclusion Services Draft Strategic Plan sets out the high level strategic actions the Directorate will take over the forthcoming three years, up to and including 2024.
- 4.11 The Directorate, therefore, welcomes the opportunity to consult and engage with a wide range of stakeholders to seek their views on the high priorities for strategic development over the next 3 years.

- 4.12 Members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee can also contribute to a consultation via the Council's website once this consultation becomes live.
- 4.13 It is proposed that prior to formal consideration by Cabinet, the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee undertakes pre-scrutiny on the Education and Inclusion Services Strategic Education Plan for 2021-2024. These comments and observations will be presented to Cabinet when it considers this matter.

5. <u>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS/SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY</u>

5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (with Social-Economic Duty) for the Education and Inclusion Services Draft Strategic Plan 2021-2024 has been undertaken and will be available on the Council website in due course.

6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 A Welsh Language Impact Assessment for the Education and Inclusion Services Draft Strategic Plan 2021-2024 has been undertaken and will be available on the Council website in due course.

7. CONSULTATION/INVOLVEMENT

- 7.1 The Education and Inclusion Services Draft Strategic Plan 2021-2024 is subject to a public consultation with a range of stakeholders. Details will be included on the Council website shortly.
- 7.2 In addition to this consultation with headteachers, governing bodies and trade unions will be undertaken and the views of young people will also be sought.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

8.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

9.1 There are no legal requirements aligned to this report.

10. <u>LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND</u> THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

- 10.1 The Education and Inclusion Services Draft Strategic Plan 2021-2024 links to the Corporate Plan, specifically the priority:
 - Prosperity Creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative, entrepreneurial and fulfil their potential and prosper:

- Ensuring we have good schools, so all children have access to a great education.
- 10.2 The delivery of Education and Inclusion Services Draft Strategic Plan 2021-2024 will also contribute to all seven well-being goals within the Future Generation (Wales) Act. In addition, due regard has been made to the Five Ways of Working, as contained within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 The recent pandemic has presented us all with unprecedented challenges and the workforce has worked tirelessly to overcome these for the benefit of our learners and communities. As we now progress to the next phase of reform, it is imperative that this momentum is sustained and that the Education and Inclusion Services Directorate works in partnership with schools and other partners to achieve our shared mission, vision, and priorities for improvement across the education system. A clear and cohesive strategy is now essential for ensuring that our learners have the best start in life, access to the right support at the right time so that they become successful lifelong learners. The need to intervene early and effectively is critical so that the inequalities and difficulties that have been compounded by the pandemic are overcome and greater equity is achieved.
- 11.2 Our school leaders and our education workforce need to access the highest quality professional learning so that our next generation of learners are well supported and have well established literacy, numeracy and digital skills so that they are well prepared for the rapidly changing and digitally connected world that we inhabit. The last 18 months have demonstrated to us that our current and future generation of learners and workforce need to be resilient, adaptable, and creative. We cannot be certain what challenges we will be presented with for the duration of this plan. However, we can be confident that by working collaboratively as one team we are better placed to achieve our mission for equity and excellence in Education, improved well-being for all and a better and brighter future for learners and communities.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 13TH OCTOBER 2021

EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2021-2024

Officer to Contact:

Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services



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Now more than ever, a clear and renewed mission and vision is required for the Education and Inclusion Service and schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf as we 'renew' and 'reform' and tackle the impact of the pandemic on our communities.

The pandemic has shone a light on the critical and invaluable role that our schools play in supporting our learners, their families, and wider communities. Our workforce has worked tirelessly and creatively throughout the pandemic to keep our learners and staff safe, maintaining continuity in learning and supporting the most vulnerable during a period of unprecedented challenge. The highly effective partnership working displayed across our schools and Council departments has demonstrated that together we can make a real difference to the lives of the learners and the communities that we serve. Learners and their families have also shown resilience and perseverance in adapting to the impact of the pandemic, acquiring new ways of accessing education and wellbeing support, with learners gaining qualifications through new centre assessed and determined grade processes. These changes have not been without their challenges. but the invaluable support provided by the educational workforce has ensured that barriers to learning have been proactively addressed and tackled, and learner progression sustained. Nevertheless, we know that some learners and families have been more adversely affected than others, and it is imperative that these learners are well supported to ensure their progression during this next phase of recovery.

A new and exciting era is now upon us as schools prepare and implement transformational plans for the delivery of the new Curriculum for Wales and Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal Act (2018). Good well-being for all, ensuring progression for all learners and closing the gap in outcomes between our most and least disadvantaged and vulnerable learners remains a high priority for improvement as we work together to ensure that our learners access the best possible opportunities in the early years, throughout their formal education and beyond. Our ambitions for our learners remain very high and this strategy outlines our shared vision for improvement and the key actions that we will take together to ensure that this is realised.

Jay Rosser	Councillor Joy Rosser Cabinet Member for Education and Inclusion Services
Congnor Dines	Gaynor Davies Director of Education and Inclusion Services
S. Zoberts	Simon Roberts Chair of the Federation of Primary Headteachers
J.K. OSLM	Justin O'Sullivan Chair of the Association of Secondary Headteachers
DAL.	David Jenkins Chair of the Association of Special School/PRU Headteachers

Section 2: Introduction

As an Education Directorate, ensuring that every learner in Rhondda Cynon Taf has access to excellent schools and positive and enriching educational experiences that enable them to achieve the very best possible outcomes that they are capable of is our core purpose. This Strategic Plan for 2021-2024 sets out the direction for the Education and Inclusion Services Directorate for the next 3 years, describing its mission, vision and ambition for our schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Our mission quite simply is: 'To deliver equity and excellence in Education and enhanced well-being for all'. The robust partnerships that have been forged between the local authority and non-maintained settings, schools and PRUs throughout the pandemic has strengthened our collective drive and purpose to ensure that all learners access the highest quality teaching and learning experiences, so that they are able to progress and grow as lifelong learners. Our aspirations for our learners have remained steadfastly high despite the challenges faced, as our children have the right to access a first class education that enables them to realise their ambitions.

It is recognised that the pandemic has placed the education system under immense pressure and impacted on the health and well-being of our learners, workforce and communities. The economic, social and emotional impact of COVID-19 on our communities has been considerable and we have seen a significant growth in families living in poverty. We know that deprivation can cause inequalities and some disadvantaged and vulnerable families have faced multiple adverse experiences, including financial hardship, bereavement, loss, trauma, poor mental and physical ill-health. Among the learners who have been the most significantly impacted by school closures and other restrictions, basic skills, learning, well-being and attendance have regressed, and it is imperative that we now focus on improving learner progress and mental health and well-being. Ensuring that we secure improved attendance rates is an absolutely priority against a backdrop of ongoing anxiety about the transmission of COVID-19 in our communities.

Our schools' unwavering commitment to achieving continuity in learning and meeting the well-being needs of our school communities throughout the pandemic has made a real difference to the lives of children, young people and their families. This has been achieved through sheer hard work and excellent partnership working within and across schools, and across local authority and regional school improvement departments. The sense of 'one team' pulling together to achieve our shared priorities has remained strong and these solid foundations and robust partnerships will stand us all in good stead as we now progress towards the next phase of renewal and reform, and a brighter and more optimistic future for our learners and our communities.

Our mission will be achieved by us realising our vision: 'To inspire and support excellent leadership and professional practice so that all learners in Rhondda Cynon Taf make good progress and become ambitious, capable, creative and ethically informed'. Excellent leadership and professional practice is critical to ensuring that we create an effective culture of equity and excellence in education and high expectations, so that we can ensure the success of all schools and learners across the County Borough.

The financial environment for the Council, the wider public sector and residents continues to be challenging and we need to ensure that we invest in our priorities and draw on research so that we make informed decisions about the most appropriate high impact strategies and approaches that need to be adopted.

We need to collectively address the educational impact of the inequalities that have been compounded by the pandemic and ensure that funding and pedagogical policies support the progression and development of all learners, including the most vulnerable groups. Ensuring that all learners attend school regularly is of critical importance.

Disruptions to learning and to social interactions and experiences has affected some learners' physical and mental health and well-being, as well as the staff that support them. This plan reaffirms our commitment to learner and staff well-being and mental health, and the vital importance of ensuring that everyone's emotional needs are well supported.

A smooth transition across all phases of education is important if learners are to thrive and achieve the best outcomes possible. Early years is a key area for development as it provides the platform on which future development and learning is built upon. It is important that learners start school with the necessary pre-requisite skills to make expected progress, as this will impact on their future educational experiences. Providing effective intervention in the early years and ensuring high quality provision and intervention for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged learners will remain key priorities so that educational standards are raised, attendance is improved and the attainment gap narrowed. Learners in examination years require specific support to ensure that they achieve their goals and progress to further education, employment, apprenticeships, or training.

As a Council we will continue to invest in our schools as part of our ambitious 21st Century Schools and Capital Investment Programmes so that our learners have access to stimulating learning environments that will adequately prepare them for life in a digitally connected and rapidly evolving society. Our learners need a transformational curriculum that will develop their attributes, skills and knowledge so that they become ambitious, capable, confident and ethically informed individuals.

We will undoubtedly rise to the new challenges that we will face as we 'renew' and 'reform', and together we will ensure that we deliver on our co-constructed priorities for 2021-2024.

Section 3: Our Local Context

The Council's Corporate Plan for 2020-2024 is guided by the vision of making Rhondda Cynon Taf "the best place in Wales to live, work and play, where people and businesses are independent, healthy and prosperous". Its proposed main purpose is: "To provide strong community leadership and create the environment for people and businesses to be independent, healthy and prosperous".

The current Corporate Plan focuses on three key priorities:

- 1. Ensuring People: are independent, healthy and successful;
- 2. Creating Places: where people are proud to live, work and play;
- 3. Enabling Prosperity: creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative; be entrepreneurial; and fulfil their potential and prosper.

The Corporate Plan sets out a vision, priorities and principles that continue to maximise the Council's contribution to the seven national well-being goals outlined in the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The Act requires all public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change. These national goals, together with the five Ways of Working, will continue to be incorporated into the detailed action plans that will deliver the Council's three priorities. The Education Directorate's Strategic Plan will reflect these overarching priorities and a golden thread will run through the Corporate, Directorate and Service Plans to ensure that there is alignment in strategic developments.

The Corporate Plan places an important emphasis on the climate change agenda and highlights the Council's ambition to being a 'A net-zero Green House Gas Council by 2050', to meet the recommendation of the UK Committee on Climate Change. Modernisation of our school buildings and ensuring that they are energy efficient remains a priority, and there is excellent support for our ambitious 21st Century Schools Programme and the effective delivery of our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. The Band B funding envelope provisionally approved by Welsh Government equates to £252M and this investment will build on the excellent work achieved as part of Band A developments.

Effective early intervention and preventative approaches are central to the Corporate Plan so that we overcome the barriers commonly associated with disadvantage and avoid the need for the involvement of statutory services. A clear focus on providing the right support at the right time is imperative if we are to give our children the best start and chances in life. There is a Corporate recognition that learning occurs both within the home and educational context, and effective parental engagement and high quality early years support is essential for getting our learners ready for statutory schooling. This need has been heightened by the pandemic as countless learners have missed out on invaluable early learning, play and social interaction opportunities during this challenging period.

Our schools and the Education Directorate have a critical role in ensuring that the needs of learners are considered in everything that we do and that their voices are

heard. A clear focus on school and service improvement is essential to ensure that our learners have access to the highest quality teaching and learning, and the specialist services to meet their needs. Continuous school and service improvement is critically important and our commissioned School Improvement Service, Central South Consortium (CSC), is instrumental in ensuring that we have a self-improving system across the five local authorities which it represents regionally.

Stakeholder feedback will be routinely sought to ensure that we provide services that are fit for purpose and meet the needs of our learners, schools and wider community. Narrowing the attainment gap that exists between vulnerable groups so that all learners, including those with the most complex additional learning needs and disabilities, achieve their potential is an important Corporate strategic priority. The delivery of a transformational curriculum in excellent schools and PRUs will provide our learners with the best possible chance of achieving their potential and progressing on to further education, employment, training or apprenticeships when they leave school. Providing first class educational opportunities will be critical in breaking the poverty cycle that exists in some of our communities.

Rhondda Cynon Taf's population continues to grow and currently has a population of 241,873. It is the third largest local authority in Wales by population and has lower levels of employment than the Welsh average, with 67.3% of the population (aged 16+) in employment compared with 72.8% across Wales. A total of 18.6% of the population is aged 0-15 (17.8% in Wales). The growth in the number of learners across the County Borough that are eligible for free school meals has been significant and approximately one in four (25.72%, April 2021) learners are now eligible which reflects the significant economic impact of the pandemic on our communities.

Prior to the pandemic, improving attendance and reducing exclusions were priorities for improvement and this remains to be the case. It is imperative that significant improvements in engagement and attendance are secured particularly at a time when anxiety relating to the COVID-19 virus remains high. Schools require strategies to secure good attendance and to improve patterns of behaviour through the development of highly effective whole school, group and targeted approaches. To enhance the capacity of secondary and all through schools to meet need of learners with significant social, emotional and behavioural needs, an additional investment of £1.1M has been made to strengthen the continuum of provision and bespoke learning opportunities for the most disengaged young people. This investment will be instrumental in supporting mainstream inclusion for some of our most disadvantaged, reducing incidents of fixed term exclusion and the demand for more costly specialist PRU placements.

In addition to this enhanced investment, Cabinet has supported the funding of family engagement officers within some of our most disadvantaged communities. These family engagement roles strengthen the capacity of schools to engage with families beyond the school gate, promoting multi-agency working and access to timely family support to overcome hardship and any barriers to learning and engagement. There is well documented research evidence which highlights that family involvement is one of the strongest predictors of children's school success, and that families play pivotal

roles in their children's cognitive, social and emotional development from birth through adolescence. Nevertheless, many families require support to develop resilience and to overcome the multiple stress factors commonly associated with financial hardship, so they are better placed to support their child's learning and engagement in education. Strong partnership working across Council departments, school and families will be essential if we are to achieve sustainable improvements in learner outcomes.

Economic prosperity, social cohesion and well-being are built on the foundations of excellent schools and education and delivering on our Corporate and Education Strategic Plans will be critical in improving the life chances and prosperity of current and future generations of children and young people in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Section 4: The Changing Educational Landscape

The educational landscape is significantly changing and there will be a new curriculum for schools and funded non-maintained settings in Wales from September 2022. The Curriculum for Wales has been shaped by international research and evidence from across the world. A defining feature of the new curriculum framework is the emphasis on learner progression, which will be supported by new assessment arrangements that enable each individual learner to make progress at an appropriate pace, taking into account their diverse needs. To support these developments there are new approaches to professional learning and to supporting schools which will collectively complement and enhance the new 3-16 curriculum. The need for a new curriculum is self-evident, as the current national curriculum was introduced in the late 1980s, when life bore little resemblance to the fast paced, digitally connected and technologically advancing age that we now find ourselves in. Life now is very different, and society is changing. As educators we need to equip our learners with the skills, knowledge and experiences that will ensure that they play a full and active role in their communities and in wider society.

The four core purposes of the new curriculum will form the basis for all future decisions about national and local educational priorities and should underpin all teaching and learning in Rhondda Cynon Taf so that we develop:

- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives;
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work;
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world; and
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

The new curriculum will be an important vehicle for embedding the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in the experience of learning and teaching and for giving our learners an understanding of their rights. Six areas of learning and experience (AOLEs) have been developed as a central element of the new curriculum. These are

- Languages, Literacy and Communication;
- Mathematics and Numeracy;
- Science and Technology;
- Health and Well-being:
- Humanities; and
- Expressive Arts.

Literacy, numeracy and digital competence are mandatory skills that have to be taught across all AOLEs and will need to be considered within all curriculum design. It will be the responsibility of all teachers to ensure progression in these skills across and within all the AOLEs.

In addition to these areas, the school's curriculum will also cover:

- human rights and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- diversity and respecting differences;
- experiences and skills for careers and the workplace;
- local, national and international aspects of all learning; and
- relationships and sexuality education.

The new curriculum should be considered as a journey that builds on knowledge, skills and experiences. There may be times when learners move forward quickly, slow down to make sure they understand a topic, or even take a detour because they discover something that interests them. Progression won't always be linked to a learner's age as learning does not happen in the same way and at the same time for everyone. Learners will progress as their knowledge increases, understanding deepens, communication skills grow, and skills improve. Assessment will be built into a school's curriculum and will be part of children's everyday learning experiences, planned in a way that fosters the teachers' and learners' understanding of individual progression.

As a result, it is vital that the curriculum that is taught and experienced by learners prepares them to thrive in a future where digital skills, adaptability and creativity, alongside knowledge, are crucial. In essence, we are preparing our current generation of learners for jobs that do not yet exist.

There is a recognition that leadership development will be a prime driver in delivering these transformational reforms. The National Academy of Education Leadership (NAEL) has been put in place alongside new developmental teaching and leadership standards for Wales. The main purpose of NAEL is to contribute to the development of the professional capabilities of current and aspiring leaders across the education by providing coherence and quality assurance for the range of educational leadership development opportunities available in Wales. Strong leadership is essential if schools are to evolve into creative learning organisations and to promote the 'readiness' of staff to deliver the new curriculum. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (the OECD) report in 2020, 'Achieving the New Curriculum for Wales', emphasised the importance of all aspects of the school system aligning with the new curriculum and its underlying principles. To support this, the 'School Improvement

Guidance - Framework for Evaluation, Improvement and Accountability' was published by the Welsh Government in January 2021. This draft guidance provides a new point of reference for schools, local authorities, diocesan authorities, regional consortia and Estyn and outlines the expectations of them in contributing to school improvement. Welsh Government plan to make this draft guidance statutory in September 2022.

The introduction of the new curriculum contributes to our national goals as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The underlying importance of promoting well-being is a theme that runs through the new curriculum and in particular the Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience. This is further strengthened by Welsh Government's recently published Framework on embedding a whole-school approach to emotional and mental well-being (2021). This provides a basis for schools, PRUs and education settings to review their own well-being landscape and to develop strategic approaches for securing improvements. The framework recognises that schools alone cannot meet all the needs of a population of children and young people and sets out the role of regional bodies and partner agencies in supporting schools. The new curriculum also supports another of the Act's overarching goals, namely 'A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language'. Welsh Government's strategy 'Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh Speakers', has been devised to achieve this goal.

The current educational landscape has been further complicated by the pandemic. Jeremy Miles, the Minister for Education and Welsh Language, issued a statement in June 2021 outlining Welsh Government's priorities for renewal and reform and the need to place learners' progression and well-being at the heart of everything as we recover from the pandemic. To support schools to progress with recovery and the implementation of key reforms the Minister has implemented a number of key changes to reduce unnecessary burdens on school. These include:

- the suspension of end of key stage assessment and moderation requirements;
- the suspension of key stage 4 and legacy sixth form performance measures has been extended to the 2021/22 academic year. Qualification awards data will not be used to report on attainment outcomes at a school, local authority or regional consortium level and will not be used to hold schools to account for their learners' outcomes;
- school categorisation will not take place in the academic year 2021/22 and schools will not be assigned a published category as part of this support process;
- all schools will be required to undertake effective self-evaluation to support continuous improvement. Evaluation, improvement, and accountability arrangements will require consideration of a broad range of information, relevant to a school's own context. This should include support from local authorities and regional consortia, using the learner level information to reflect on and improve their existing arrangements. A national evaluation and improvement resource is also being produced which will support schools in undertaking robust self-evaluation.

Alongside these key reforms is a national commitment to equity. Significant emphasis has been placed on well-being and the support for learners with additional learning needs (ALN) with significant policy development. The implementation of the Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal Act (2018) (ALNET Act) is upon is and a phased approach to its implementation will be adopted over the next three years. Strong strategic leadership of these transformational ALN reforms will be essential to ensure that schools are compliant with our new statutory responsibilities and effectively meet the needs of our most vulnerable learners and their families.

Estyn have announced that they are extending the suspension of their core inspection programme for schools and pupil referral units to include the autumn term 2021, although monitoring visits to schools in a statutory category will continue. During 2021–2022, Estyn will support the education system in renewing and reforming, with a particular focus on supporting the preparation for Curriculum for Wales and additional learning needs reform. From spring 2022, Estyn will pilot the new inspection arrangements in a small number of schools and PRUs.

New socio-economic duties came into force in Wales 2021 under Section1 of the Equality Act (2010). This places a clear duty on public bodies to consider the impact of strategic decisions on improving the outcomes for those who suffer economic adversity. This legislation aims to improve the lives of those who are most vulnerable by addressing the inequalities most commonly associated with poverty.

The pandemic has undoubtedly created additional pressures on the education system in Wales at a time of significant reform and change. Our local authority strategy will work in synergy with this changing national landscape whilst recognising and addressing the particular needs of Rhondda Cynon Taf. It reflects both national and local priorities and sets out a road map of activity for the Education and Inclusion Services Directorate and schools for the next three years so that we deliver sustainable school and service improvements.

Section 5: Our Key Achievements from March 2020-July 2021

Since March 2020, school leaders and Education officers have radically adapted traditional delivery models to focus on maintaining continuity in learning through blended learning approaches and ensuring that the well-being needs of all learners, and in particular the most vulnerable, have been supported. Emergency childcare hubs for vulnerable learners and the children of key workers were quickly established at the start of the pandemic and strategic plans swiftly refocussed to ensure that these were reflective of new and emerging priorities. It is impossible to capture all of the strategic achievements of the Education and Inclusion Services Directorate and schools during this period, but key achievements are summarised as follows:

Keeping learners and staff safe

- The local authority routinely published robust, well-informed and regularly updated guidance and protocols to support schools to keep learners and staff safe;
- Schools developed and regularly updated complex risk assessments and business continuity plans to reflect changes in national and local guidance and presenting risks;
- Parents and carers were regularly provided with information and guidance to keep their children and communities safe;
- Effective and wide-ranging communication strategies were established with stakeholders to ensure swift and consistent messaging;
- Highly effective systems, support networks and processes for managing high numbers of COVID-19 cases were established for stakeholders 7 days a week, which minimised disruption to learning and maintained continuity in learning. Excellent partnerships and team working both within schools and across Council departments ensured that high numbers of cases and close contacts were efficiently and effectively identified, and swift action taken to mitigate risks;
- The Directorate and schools worked in partnership to establish 25 emergency childcare hubs, ensuring that the children of key workers and vulnerable learners were effectively identified and supported in safe environments;
- Data information systems were aligned across Directorates to produce management information for schools on vulnerable learners as defined by Welsh Government thus ensuring timely targeted support and attendance information was shared to ensure professional oversight and targeted support for our most vulnerable learners and families;
- Schools were swiftly supplied with PPE, signage, sanitiser, thermal devices and face coverings to minimise transmission risks in schools;
- School and classroom layouts were remodelled, and standard operational procedures significantly changed to minimise transmission risk to staff and learners;
- The Education Directorate developed guidance, processes and procedures to deliver a mass lateral flow testing (LFT) pilot on a secondary school site;
- Schools and families were provided with detailed advice, guidance and supplies to undertake lateral flow testing for school staff and secondary school learners; and
- The vaccination programme for eligible school staff was made available to mitigate risks for the most vulnerable learners.

Continuity in Learning

 In partnership with Central South Consortium (CSC), schools had access to advice, guidance and professional learning on blended and remote learning;

- Education and CSC shared best practice on blended and remote learning, which facilitated school to school support;
- Working collaboratively with schools and ICT colleagues, the Education Directorate ensured that all learners had access to digital learning and that digitally excluded learners were identified and provided with appropriate devices (in excess of 5,400 devices were provided across RCT);
- We ensured that learners and staff were safeguarded on-line through the provision of appropriate advice and written guidance for schools;
- In partnership with CSC and schools, the remote learning offer across schools was quality assured and strategic support provided where required;
- We collated and analysed stakeholder feedback (including parent/carer surveys) to shape and further improve the blended learning offer and Council Services; and
- Schools worked tirelessly to develop robust processes and procedures to produce Centre Assessed/Determined Grades that accurately reflected learners' abilities.

Supported the most vulnerable

- Effectively delivered the Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme across 99 settings for 747 children;
- Administered and delivered breakfast clubs for in excess of 3,500 learners on a termly basis;
- Ensured access to free school meals in the community for approximately 8,500 learners at the start of the pandemic;
- Provided BACS payments for in excess of 10,000 learners eligible for free school meals:
- Provided targeted support and transport to engage the most vulnerable in childcare hubs and in distance learning;
- Provided virtual, telephone and home visits to support vulnerable learners and their families;
- Remodelled local authority services and school support for those in need, ensuring that non-statutory and statutory duties were met;
- Secured funding and the provision of family engagement officers for 6 all through/secondary schools;
- Secured additional funding to extend the family engagement officer pilot to 13 primary schools in the areas of greatest deprivation;
- Secured in excess of £1.1M for step 4 provisions in targeted all through/secondary schools which supported the development of bespoke provision for learners with significant social, emotional and behavioural needs;
- In partnership with a range of Council departments and school staff, coordinated and delivered a summer activity programme for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers across 7 educational settings; and

 Delivered the Summer Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP) in 16 school settings.

Enhanced digital capacity across the system

- Developed digital and agile working capacity across the Directorate and schools through the effective use of Zoom, Microsoft Teams and other digital applications and ensured access to training and guidance for the workforce on the use of applications;
- Improved the use of digital technology and management information systems across the Directorate and evaluated data to improve service delivery and secure improvements. This included:
 - collation of data on attendance at childcare hubs according to vulnerable groups and key worker status
 - ▶ production of live data reports attendance, exclusions, admissions, COVID-19 cases in schools and in-year transfers
 - ▶ data reporting on engagement and targeted support for vulnerable groups
 - ▶ data reporting on service engagement and involvement with the most vulnerable
 - ▶ use of e-forms for wide ranging online applications
 - ▶ use of Microsoft forms to inform swift multi-disciplinary decision making on COVID-19 cases and the reduction of transmission risks
 - ▶ introduction of Microsoft forms for undertaking stakeholder feedback
 - ► convened Hub leads, headteacher, governor and multi-disciplinary recovery planning meetings virtually
 - ▶ introduction of 'My Concern' across all settings to digitise safeguarding procedures and to ensure consistency in approaches across settings;
- Implemented the Hwb Infrastructure programme and delivered improved connectivity across school sites; and
- Developed and consulted on a 5-year Digital Strategy for Schools.

School Improvement

- Schools and services continued to progress with Curriculum for Wales and ALNET Act (2018) reforms through professional learning opportunities, cluster workshops, strategic planning and implementation;
- Schools delivered an improved blended learning offer and demonstrated increased learner engagement over time;
- A total of 3 schools were removed from Estyn review during the pandemic;
- Historical red/amber schools actively engaged in progress meetings and have made good or strong progress on recommendations and Post Inspection Action Plans in nearly all cases;
- All schools in budget deficit have made excellent progress in delivering their budget recovery plans;

- Schools have effectively used step 4 funding to establish bespoke provision for learners with significant social, emotional and behaviour difficulties in 11 secondary schools;
- Induction for new and acting headteachers in RCT has been provided;
- A further cohort of aspiring headteachers have successfully completed a local authority leadership programme which was widely reported as transformational by participants;
- A cohort of middle leaders have completed a positively evaluated Leading from the Centre professional learning course; and
- In partnership with CSC and Human Resources, support and guidance for headteacher/staff well-being has been provided.

Continued to deliver on 21st Century Schools Developments

Secured approval in principle of £167.39M (enhanced to £252.207M in September 2021) from Welsh Government for the delivery of Band B Capital projects:

- ► A new school for Hirwaun Primary School has been finalised and £10.2M invested
- ▶ Significant works to increase capacity and provide early years childcare are being undertaken in Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Aberdar with an investment of £4.5M planned
- ➤ Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun is undergoing significant refurbishment with an investment of £12M
- ▶ Plans for a new Welsh medium primary school for Rhydyfelin are underway at an estimated cost of £13M
- ► A new 3-16 school is planned on the Pontypridd High School site, with an estimated investment of £8M
- ► A new 3-16 school is planned on the Hawthorn High School site, with an investment of £21M
- New block/remodelling for Bryncelynnog Comprehensive is planned at a cost of £15M;
- In addition to the Band B Capital projects, the Council has a number of Mutual Investment Model (MIM) schemes in development including 3 new schools for Llanilltud Faerdref Primary, Pontyclun Primary and Penygawsi Primary at an estimated cost of £23M:
- The Council secured a brand new site for a new school planned for Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llyn-y-Forwyn at an estimated cost of £8.5M;
- The significant expansion of Dolau Primary School is planned with an investment of £10M estimated;
- The Council has provided a new £1M early years setting at Treorchy Primary School;
- A new classroom extension has been put in place at Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llantrisant at a cost of £800k;
- A new £700k cylch meithrin has been established at Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Ynyswen;

- Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Abercynon has received an investment of approximately £200k to create a new Welsh medium sessional care provision;
- Significant work at a cost of £730k is being undertaken at Dolau Primary School to create new Welsh medium sessional care provision;
- A new early years provision at Gwauncelyn Primary School will be established at a cost of £745k with completion planned for January 2022;
- A new early years provision at Cwmlai Primary School, costing £750k, is in progress with completion planned for April 2022;
- A small capital grant scheme has resulted in improvements in a number of early years settings to make adaptations to support the effective management of COVID-19; and
- A substantial amount of funding has been invested as part of the schools'
 Capital Programme during the pandemic.

It should be noted that the partnership working with schools extended to other Council departments including Public Health and Protection, Health and Safety, Human Resources, Corporate Estates, Finance, ICT, Children's Services and many others. A culture and ethos of 'one team' working together to make a difference has been a strong feature throughout the pandemic and has enabled the Council and our schools deliver positive outcomes for our communities.

Section 6: Our Mission

Our Mission in Rhondda Cynon Taf is to:

'To deliver equity and excellence in Education and enhanced well-being for all'

Our Mission is to strive for excellence in all we do, where excellence is defined as the gradual result of always striving to do better and securing improvements. The benefits achieved from effective short, medium and long term improvement work focused on a set of key priorities will ensure improved outcomes for our learners and will take us on our journey to a better brighter future.

It is widely acknowledged that excellence 'takes hard work, strong leadership, clear vision and relentless commitment to achieve' (Estyn 2020). We will ensure that our schools are well supported on their journey to achieving equity and excellence in Education and enhanced well-being for all. For settings where practice is already deemed to be excellent or very strong, opportunities for sharing best practice and for facilitating school to school support, in partnership with the Central South Consortium, will be encouraged.

Equity can only be achieved if we ensure that the system successfully identifies and addresses the unique challenges that present themselves to individuals or groups of learners. Our learners deserve to experience equity in education and have access to the right support at the right time to overcome barriers to learning, engagement and attendance. Deprivation, gender, sexuality, adverse childhood experiences, ethnicity, additional learning needs or disability should not prevent our learners from reaching their potential and achieving positive outcomes. To achieve the four core purposes of the new curriculum, strong leadership and a relentless focus on ensuring excellent educational experiences and teaching and learning that meets the needs of all learners will be essential.

Section 7: Our Vision

Our Vision is:

'To inspire and support excellent leadership and professional practice so that all learners in Rhondda Cynon Taf make good progress and become ambitious, capable, creative and ethically informed'

Our workforce is central to us making a difference to the lives of our learners and communities. Despite the challenges faced during the pandemic, we remain positively focused on ensuring that we have the highest quality school leaders and educational practitioners in our schools. Having a highly skilled and trained workforce will enable us to deliver a transformational curriculum and high-quality educational experiences across our schools, which will remain a critical focus over the next three years and beyond.

An emphasis on strong leadership and professional learning, will help deliver on the high expectations we all share for our learners and schools. By investing in the professional development of our school leaders and workforce we aim to create high quality teaching and learning that is underpinned by a robust understanding of pedagogy, child development and subject knowledge. The challenges we face in closing the attainment gap are such that our teaching approaches and interventions need to be research informed and based on best practice at local, regional, national and international levels. Securing improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and the effectiveness of school support will be critical in securing the four core purposes of the new curriculum and sustaining excellent practice across all schools. Central to this vision is good school attendance and engagement in education where all teachers are skilled in meeting the needs of learners with significant ALN and promoting successful inclusion.

Investment in professional learning needs to span the education workforce so learners are well supported across the spectrum of staff with responsibility for teaching, supporting learning, engagement and well-being. Staff with skills in establishing warm, caring and positive relationships and learning environments will be critical in supporting our learners during this important phase of renewal and reform.

Section 8: Our Strategic Priorities

Our revised strategy will give priority to those areas proven to be effective in achieving our mission, vision and the areas identified from robust self-evaluation and stakeholder feedback. These are also reflective of our local Corporate priorities set within the context of national and local recovery and reform.

Priority 1:	Developing a highly skilled educational workforce and excellent leadership at all levels
Priority 2:	Supporting educational settings to deliver a transformational curriculum, high quality teaching and learning and improved outcomes for all
Priority 3:	Ensuring equity and support for vulnerable learners and their families
Priority 4:	Enhancing the well-being of our learners and the workforce
Priority 5:	Delivering 21st Century learning environments and innovative services for our learners and communities

Strategic Priority 1:	Developing	а	highly	skilled	educational	workforce	and	
excellent leadership at all levels								

This priority focuses on developing a highly skilled educational workforce and excellent leadership at all levels by:

- ensuring that governors, senior and middle leaders have the highest ambition and expectations and achieve consistency in the implementation of key policies and systems;
- ensuring school governance is strong through high quality training, support and challenge;

- ensuring effective self-evaluation and the collation of regular stakeholder feedback to shape strategic improvement plans at local authority and school level;
- establishing a headteacher reference group to assist with strategic developments;
- ensuring that school improvement support is aligned with the new draft framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability, and delivers the necessary school improvements;
- in partnership with CSC, further developing our schools as learning organisations as a means of realising the new curriculum;
- o providing excellent professional learning for staff, in partnership with CSC;
- exploring and evaluating different models of professional leadership at school and cluster level through professional learning opportunities and strategic support;
- improving the quality of teachers' pedagogy and research informed practice;
- ensuring the effective implementation of professional standards for teachers and other professionals;
- ensuring school leaders develop effective plans to keep their school communities safe;
- ensuring that all newly appointed school leaders access induction and a mentor;
- ensuring that there is a robust succession planning strategy in place and that there is an investment in leadership training for aspiring headteachers;
- identifying staffing pressures and developing effective approaches to attracting and retaining the highest quality school leaders and staff to RCT;
- working with partners to ensure the quality and sufficiency of supply teachers for schools, particularly in the Welsh medium sector.

Strategic Priority 2:	Supporting educational settings to deliver a transformational
	curriculum, high quality teaching and learning and improved
	outcomes for all

Strategic priority 2 focuses on supporting educational settings to deliver a transformational curriculum, high quality teaching and learning and improved outcomes for all. This will be achieved by:

- ensuring that our commissioned school improvement service reflects our unique local context and supports our schools to continuously improve and deliver improved teaching and learning and improved learner progression for all;
- strengthening the development of a self-improving system, effective school to school support and the sharing of best practice;
- ensuring that the schools with the greatest needs access bespoke support to get Curriculum for Wales ready;

- ensuring a fully integrated cross directorate early years strategic plan for 0-7 year olds that ensures that learners access the right support and right time;
- ensuring that non-maintained and maintained early years settings provide the necessary development of appropriate cognitive, social and emotional skills and the necessary pre-requisite skills for learning and progression;
- ensuring that teaching and learning in all schools and PRUs is improved and aligned with the new requirements of the AOLEs;
- connecting new curriculum developments to innovative projects aimed at supporting the Council's ambitious Climate Change Strategy;
- ensuring that there is synergy between the Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experiences and the Framework for Embedding A Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Well-being;
- strengthening cluster-based approaches to develop and deliver the new curriculum and to share best practice;
- improving evaluation approaches at all levels to understand the progress made by all learners;
- ensuring that schools effectively track learner outcomes, and robustly evaluate targeted strategies and interventions aimed improving learner progression;
- ensuring that schools are supported to be research-informed and apply local, national and international evidence based best practice to their own settings;
- ensuring that schools have a shared understanding of Equity and Excellence in Education;
- ensuring that all learners make progress in literacy, numeracy and ICT; and the attainment gap between the most and least affluent peers is narrowed;
- implementing and evaluating the impact of the Council's literacy project aimed at improving standards in writing in secondary schools;
- developing and evaluating a strategic initiative aimed at improving the development of speech and language skills in the early years; and
- working in partnership with CSC to ensure that schools are supported to develop bilingual competence and the development of Welsh language skills.

Strategic Priority 3: Ensuring equity and support for vulnerable learners and their families

Strategic priority 3 focuses on ensuring the right learning pathway and support for vulnerable learners and their families. This will be achieved by:

- ensuring that all school staff have received appropriate professional learning on the ALNET Act and are fully aware of their statutory duties;
- supporting schools to effectively self-evaluate ALN provision and strategically plan for improvement;

- ensuring that governing bodies receive an annual report on ALN and scrutinise provision;
- establishing sustainable and self-reliant cluster-based approaches to ALNET Act transformation;
- strengthening partnership working with schools, health, social care and FEIs in order to deliver improved outcomes for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged;
- continuing to improve the quality of targeted support so that the educational outcomes of all vulnerable groups, including learners eligible for free school meals, with ALN, ethnic minority groups and children that are looked after are improved;
- ensuring that those most adversely affected by the pandemic are identified and access enhanced support to make measurable progress;
- implementing and evaluating the effectiveness of strategic programmes and interventions aimed at overcoming the barriers to attendance and engagement for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable;
- ensuring that all schools engage in provision mapping for ALN and can demonstrate impact;
- consulting on a different model of additional needs funding (ANF) delegation that is aligned with the ALN reforms and implementing a revised model for delegation;
- o ensuring that parents/carers are well informed about the ALNET Act (2018);
- exploring the viability of establishing a sub-regional sensory service;
- further improving outcomes for children that are looked after by piloting a Virtual School for looked after children;
- o reviewing and remodelling individual and group tuition provision;
- ensuring that elective home education processes, procedures and provision are effective in meeting the needs of learners;
- o ensuring that there is an integrated early years offer for learners with ALN;
- ensuring seamless transition across all phases and ensuring greater continuity in education;
- developing more extensive alternative learning pathways for 14-19 year olds and evaluating the effectiveness of step 4 provision development across key schools:
- providing learners with access to high quality careers information and guidance that enables them to make informed decisions about their future educational path and careers;
- strengthening approaches to Gatsby and preparation for the world of work, training and further education;
- supporting effective family engagement and partnership working across the Resilient Families Service, families and schools; and

further extending and evaluating the effectiveness of the SEREN programme.

Strategic Priority 4:	Enhancing the well-being of our learners and the workforce

Priority 4 focuses on enhancing the well-being of our learners and the workforce. This will be delivered by:

- supporting schools to self-evaluate against the 'Framework on Embedding a Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Well-being' and to deliver effective strategic plans aimed at improving staff and learner well-being;
- developing professional learning to support effective implementation of the Framework, in partnership with our regional school improvement service;
- extending trauma informed practice across all schools, including train the trainer models:
- establishing cluster well-being champions and effective cluster initiatives and practice;
- using evidence based research to inform best practice in the support of vulnerable learners and enquiry based research and intervention;
- further extending family engagement roles across the County Borough and evaluating the impact of funding on outcomes;
- ensuring that the continuum of support for learners with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties is fit for purpose and delivers improved outcomes for learners;
- re-aligning Attendance and Well-being Service to ensure effective support for schools and learners to overcome barriers to attendance;
- ensuring enhanced wellbeing support is in place for learners and staff which is clearly defined and accessible (e.g., counselling services);
- developing integrated well-being pathways for learners in partnership with Children's Services and Youth Services;
- extending PERMA across schools and evaluating impact;
- developing consistent and holistic measures of well-being and data packs;
- capturing learner voice across the system about issues relating to well-being and ensuring that this shapes strategic priorities;
- ensuring that approaches relating to children's rights is embedded across all schools;
- promoting access to breakfast clubs and free school meals for eligible learners;
- ensuring that schools are proactively involved in healthy schools' schemes and actively promote physical activity and lifestyles;
- o promoting opportunities for learners to actively engage in their communities, through active participation in sport, leisure and play activities; and

o implementing an effective anti-bullying strategy.

Strategic Priority 5:	Delivering	safe	21 st	Century	learning	environments	and
	innovative services for our learners and communities						

Strategic Priority 5 focuses on delivering safe 21st Century learning environments and innovative services for our learners and communities. This will be achieved by:

- ensuring effective delivery of our ambitious Band B 21st Century Schools Capital and Mutual Investment Model (MIM) Modernisation Programme;
- ensuring new schools are built to Net Zero Carbon standards wherever possible and are low in carbon emissions and energy efficient;
- delivering on Welsh Government's Early Years Grant and further developing the Childcare Offer:
- creating well designed and accessible schools that deliver the requirements of the ALNET Act;
- further developing effective approaches to outdoor learning and enhancing this external environment and the biodiversity of our school estate;
- supporting schools to deliver on the Council's Climate Change Strategy;
- ensuring that developments are aligned with the Local Development Plan and address the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan;
- developing effective partnership approaches to promoting community cohesion and the Prevent agenda;
- ensuring that schools have robust safeguarding processes and procedures, and consistent information management approaches;
- building on our Community Focused Schools approaches and opportunities for strengthening joint working between schools and communities for the benefit our learners and their families;
- delivering on our Digital Strategy for Schools and our Hwb Transformation Programme so that schools are well placed to deliver on the new Curriculum for Wales;
- developing more effective platforms for sharing digital information, guidance and policy documents for schools, parents/carers and other stakeholders;
- enhancing opportunities for securing stakeholder feedback on all aspects of service design and delivery; and
- establishing an effective multi-agency approach to substance misuse and community safety challenges.

Section 9: How will we achieve our priorities?

Our work across the Education and Inclusion Services Directorate and schools will be underpinned by the four core values of:

Collaboration – Aspiration – Inclusion – Innovation

- Partnership and effective collaboration will be integral to supporting our most vulnerable learners and families so that they have the best chance of achieving success. Strong partnerships will be established across the system in pursuit of excellence and improved outcomes for all learners. Schools will be supported to address under-performance and timely action taken when there is concern about leadership, school performance or educational outcomes. With CSC, we will identify and provide access to the most effective practice in order to build capacity for improvement throughout the system. Headteachers, governors, senior and middle leaders and all practitioners will be supported to make a full and active contribution to system leadership and for building capacity for school to school support across the system.
- All learners will be encouraged, challenged and supported to have high aspirations and expectations of themselves. All learners will have the right to access the highest quality teaching and learning opportunities and support to enable them to achieve their ambitions and the best outcomes of which they are capable. There must be a relentless focus on securing learner engagement, attendance and improvement in the outcomes achieved by all: only the highest level of ambition and expectations will do. We will work in partnership with families and the communities that we serve so that current and future generations of children and young people have the best possible chance of achieving success and prosperity.
- All learners and families face different and unique challenges and will access timely support and/or guidance to overcome potential barriers. Our schools will be supported to ensure they promote inclusion and restorative practices which offer solutions to assist learners to overcome barriers to learning and engagement. The well-being of all learners will be at the core of everything we do, and their rights will be respected and their views on the decisions that affect them will be listened to and given due consideration. All learners will be safeguarded from harm and should feel safe and secure in their schools, homes and communities. All learners will have access to opportunities to develop their Welsh language skills and awareness of their cultural heritage. Difference and diversity will be embraced, and tolerance and equity actively promoted.

• We must ensure that school leaders and all other partners share the belief that all learners are entitled to an education of the highest quality, recognising that their journey through school occurs only once. We will invest in the professional and personal development of our staff so as to maintain a highly skilled, resilient, aspirational workforce that is committed to **innovation** and creative practice. All learners will be educated in calm, purposeful and safe environments that are fit for 21st Century learning. We will take positive steps to protect our natural environment and assets for current and future generations to come. Resources, support and challenge must be targeted intelligently and placed where the need is greatest. There must be clear lines of accountability and rigorous evaluation of impact to ensure value for money from deployed resources: we must all be accountable for the successful deployment of resources for the benefit of our communities.

Section 10: How will our success be measured?

Success in achieving our priorities will result in:

- a highly skilled and trained workforce with the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to deliver on the Curriculum for Wales and ALNET Act (2018);
- strong leadership and professional practice across our schools resulting in the improved educational attainment, attendance, and exclusion rates of learners, particularly in targeted cohorts of disadvantaged and vulnerable learners;
- greater equity between the outcomes of learners from economically and/or disadvantaged families and their more affluent peers, resulting in a narrowing of the attainment gap between different groups of learners;
- improved teaching and learning across our schools, and a curriculum that is both innovative and strongly aligned with the AOLEs;
- more learners achieving their aspirations and securing places in further education, employment, training, and apprenticeships on leaving school;
- improved strategic planning and provision for ALN across all schools, inclusive schools and improved outcomes for learners;
- improved mental and emotional well-being for staff and learners;
- good progress will be made on our Band B 21st Century Schools Programme, with significant developments across the school estate;
- our schools will make a significant and active contribution towards the Council's climate change agenda;
- more learners will be accessing Welsh medium education with progress reported against the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan;
- more learners and parents/carers reporting high levels of satisfaction in relation to the education provided for them;

- more stakeholders valuing the specialist support provided by the local authority;
- more partners actively involved and engaged in the delivery of our strategic plans, working collaboratively for the benefit of our communities; and
- increased uptake and use of our school premises by the wider community, with greater community engagement in cultural, sporting and youth engagement activities.

Section 11: Conclusion

The recent pandemic has presented us all with unprecedented challenges and we have all worked tirelessly to overcome these for the benefit of our learners and communities. As we now progress to the next phase of reform, it is imperative that this momentum is sustained and that we work in partnership to achieve our shared mission, vision, and priorities for improvement across the education system. A clear and cohesive strategy is now essential for ensuring that our learners have the best start in life, access to the right support at the right time so that they become successful lifelong learners. The need to intervene early and effectively is critical so that the inequalities and difficulties that have been compounded by the pandemic are overcome and greater equity is achieved.

Our school leaders and our education workforce need to access the highest quality professional learning so that our next generation of learners are well supported and have well established literacy, numeracy and digital skills so that they are well prepared for the rapidly changing and digitally connected world that we inhabit. The last 18 months have demonstrated to us that our current and future generation of learners and workforce need to be resilient, adaptable, and creative. We cannot be certain what challenges we will be presented with for the duration of this plan. However, we can be confident that by working collaboratively as one team we are stronger and better placed to achieve our mission for equity and excellence in Education, improved well-being for all and a better and brighter future for learners and communities.