



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

20th JULY 2021

WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES (COUNCILLOR MRS JOY ROSSER) AND THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT COMMUNITY SERVICES AND WELSH LANGUAGE (COUNCILLOR GERAINT HOPKINS)

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members with an opportunity to consider the draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and agree to engage and consult with a wide range of stakeholders.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the contents of this report and the draft WESP attached in appendix 1 to the report.
- 2.2 Consider the draft WESP.
- 2.3 Agree for officers to engage and consult with a wide range of stakeholders on the draft WESP.
- 2.4 Agree to review the results of the consultation on the draft WESP at a future meeting of the Cabinet.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 For the Council to increase the percentage of year one learners in Welsh medium education during the ten year lifespan of this WESP by 2032.

4. **BACKGROUND**

4.1 Section 84 of The School Standards and Organisation Act 2013¹ requires Local Authorities 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.

4.2 Since our first WESP was submitted to the Welsh Government 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 Welsh Government legislation, in particular the new Welsh in Education Action Plan and further implementation of the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme.

4.3 The Welsh Government has also updated the regulations regarding WESPs, with the WESP (Wales) Regulations 2019² and the WESP (Wales) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020³ focusing on four key 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 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.

4.4 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.

¹ [School Standards and Organisation \(Wales\) Act 2013](#)

² [The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan \(Wales\) Regulations 2019](#)

³ [The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan \(Wales\) \(Amendment\) \(Coronavirus\) Regulations 2020](#)

- 4.5 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.
- 4.6 The methodology implemented by the Welsh Government for setting this target involves using baseline data from the 2019 Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC). The data from each Local Authority has been compared and Local Authorities have been grouped together based on this and other factors including the models of Welsh medium education provision adopted and the linguistic nature of the Local Authority. This methodology is regarded to be fair, as it acknowledges the different challenges faced by each Local Authority in Wales.
- 4.7 Each group of Local Authorities has a set target by a fixed range of percentage points. The Council is in Group Three alongside:
- Caerphilly,
 - Cardiff,
 - Merthyr Tydfil,
 - Swansea,
 - Vale of Glamorgan and
 - Wrexham.
- 4.8 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. 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.
 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.
- 4.9 Although the statutory responsibility for the WESP sits with Local Authorities, several other external groups and organisations have a

role in contributing to preparing, implementing and evaluating it. These include, but are not limited to:

- Central South Consortium Joint Education Service.
- Coleg y Cymoedd.
- Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board.
- Menter Iaith.
- Mudiad Meithrin.
- RhaG.
- The Urdd.
- University of South Wales.
- Welsh Government.

- 4.10 A WESP Steering Group will be established to provide an effective focus for the Local Authority, in partnership with external groups and organisations, to assist in the formulation, implementation and ongoing evaluation of the new WESP. To ensure effective governance arrangements are in place, members of the Steering Group will be asked to agree to a Terms of Reference.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (with Social-Economic Duty) for the draft WESP is attached as Appendix 2 to the report.

6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 A Welsh Language Impact Assessment for the draft WESP is attached as Appendix 3 to the report.

7. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 The Welsh Language Steering Group will meet on the [19th July](#) to consider the draft WESP and the consultation proposals outlined within this report. Feedback in respect of the comments of the group will be provided verbally at the Cabinet meeting.
- 7.3 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. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

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

- Prosperity for All: The National Strategy and The Programme for Government: Taking Wales Forward which 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, which sets out the Welsh Governments 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, which 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.

10.2 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.

10.3 The delivery of the WESP will contribute to all seven well-being goals within the Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015, in particular:

- A More Prosperous Wales, by developing a skilled and well-educated population.
- A More Equal Wales, by creating a society that 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.

10.4 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 has set an ambitious target to increase the percentage of year one learners in Welsh medium education. The draft WESP sets out the action the Council will take over the forthcoming ten years, by 2032, to make progress towards the achievement of this target.

11.2 In order to meet our 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 wide range of stakeholders to seek their views on the achievement of this ambitious target.

11.3 Cabinet are asked to approve the recommendations of this report so that officers can engage and consult with a wide range of stakeholders on the draft WESP.

Other Information:

1. Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.
2. Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group.

Contact Officer:

Grace Zecca-Hanagan

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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Background Papers

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

Officer to Contact:

Grace Zecca-Hanagan