

WELSH LANGUAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOL

This Welsh Language Impact Assessment (WLIS) tool enables RCT Council to consider the principles and requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015 to ensure compliance with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

Stage 1 – Information Gathering

NOTE: As you complete this tool you will be asked for **evidence to support your views**. Please see Welsh Language Impact Assessment Guidance for more information on data sources.

Proposal Name:	Proposed new Home to School Transport policy.
Department	Integrated transport Unit
Director	Stephen Williams
Officer Completing the WLIA	Geraint Roberts
Email	Geraint.e.roberts@rctcbc.gov.uk
Brief Description	The proposal seeks to introduce a proposed new Home to School Transport Policy, namely providing mainstream English, Welsh and Faith primary school, secondary school and college transport above statutory distance only and implemented from the start of the 2025/2026 academic year. Should the proposed new Home to School Transport Policy be implemented the Council would continue to provide discretionary Home to School Transport provision beyond statutory requirements in a number of areas.
Date	26 February 2024
Please outline who this proposal affects? (Service Users, Employees, Wider Community)	Service Users

<p>What are the aims of the policy, and how do these relate to the Welsh Language?</p>	<p>The aim of the proposal is to implement a new Home to School Transport Policy, namely providing mainstream English, Welsh and Faith primary school, secondary school and college transport in line with relevant statutory distance criteria, which would be implemented from the start of the 2025/2026 academic year. This could potentially impact on the Council's ambitious Welsh in Education Strategic Plan ('WESP') targets to grow the number of learners accessing Welsh medium education.</p>
<p>Who will benefit / Could the policy affect Welsh language groups? If so, list them here.</p>	<p>The proposal, as consulted upon, would affect transport entitlement for learners attending Welsh medium primary and secondary schools that live under the statutory distances from school, although the proposed changes may adversely impact more on learners in Welsh medium settings who are generally more reliant on school transport to access education. This is a potential risk to the Council's target to significantly grow the numbers of learners accessing Welsh medium education in Rhondda Cynon Taf, as specified in the Council's WESP. It should be noted however that under the proposed Home to School Transport Policy the discretionary element of allowing a learner to select their nearest suitable school in accordance with choice of English or Welsh Medium language would continue. This supports the provision in the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 which places a duty on the Council to promote access to Welsh Medium education when exercising its powers thereunder.</p>
<p>Current linguistic profile of the geographical area(s) concerned</p>	<p>The 2021 Census figures regarding the Welsh language show a decrease in the percentage of Welsh speakers across Wales to 17.8%. There was, however, a small increase in RCT – the percentage of the population of the County Borough who can speak Welsh increased from 12.3% to 12.4%. Numerically, RCT saw a 2.8% increase in the number of Welsh speakers in the County Borough, from 27,779 speakers to 28,556 speakers. RCT was also one of only four Local Authorities in Wales to see an increase in the percentage of Welsh speakers – the others were Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil and the Vale of Glamorgan. All of these are neighbouring County Boroughs, which could demonstrate that the region is seeing some positive trends in terms of increases in Welsh speakers, and that there may be a resulting increase in demand for services through the medium of Welsh. As further, more detailed, data from the Census becomes available for RCT (e.g., LSOA data), the Council will need to consider what impact it may have on the services it provides.</p> <p>The table that follows outlines the Welsh language skills of residents living in RCT and Wales and is obtained from the 2011 Census.</p>

Welsh Language Skills of Residents (2011 Census)			
Welsh Language Skill	RCT	Wales	
Can speak, read and write Welsh	9.7%	14.6%	
Can speak and read but cannot write Welsh	0.9%	1.5%	
Can speak but cannot read or write Welsh	1.6%	2.7%	
Can understand spoken Welsh only	4.2%	5.3%	
Other combination of Skills	3.3%	2.5%	
No skills	80.4%	73.3%	
Total	100.0%	100.0%	

The data demonstrates that the Welsh language skills level of residents living in RCT is lower than the all Wales Welsh language skills level.

The table that follows outlines the Welsh language skills of residents living in RCT and Wales and is obtained from the 2021 Census.

Welsh Language Skills of Residents (2021 Census)			
Welsh Language Skill	RCT	Wales	
Can speak, read and write Welsh	9.8%	13.8%	
Can speak and read but cannot write Welsh	0.7%	1.1%	

Can speak but cannot read or write Welsh	1.4%	2.2%
Can understand spoken Welsh only	3.9%	5.0%
Other combination of Skills	5.5%	5.2%
No skills	78.7%	72.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

The data demonstrates that the Welsh language skills level of residents living in RCT is lower than the all Wales Welsh language skills level.

The data demonstrates the Welsh language skills level of residents living in RCT and the all Wales Welsh language skills level are lower in 2021 than 2011.

The Welsh Language Use Survey 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 medium learning classes for adults. In RCT it is considered the majority of Welsh speakers would have learned Welsh in Primary School.

The data demonstrates that the Welsh language skills level of residents living in RCT is lower than the all-Wales Welsh language skills level. In recent years, support has been given to promote and increase pupils use of the Welsh language in primary and secondary schools and in social contexts. This has been done through the Welsh Language Charter (Siarter Iaith), developed by Gwynedd Council, and various other projects, in partnership with the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service (CSCJES) and the Urdd. This activity is designed to contribute towards the Welsh Government's ambitious goal of creating a million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050 and the WESP.

Other relevant data or research

All Local Authorities in Wales must produce a WESP. The WESP is a long-term language planning tool which sets the direction for the strategic planning, delivery and growth in Welsh medium and Welsh language education. Through the WESP, and effective strategic planning and investment, the Council aims to contribute significantly to achieving the vision of one million people in Wales being Welsh speakers by 2050 as set out in Cymraeg 2050. The WESP can be viewed and downloaded from the Council website via:

[Welsh in Education Strategic Plan \(WESP\) 2022 – 2032 | Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council \(rctcbc.gov.uk\)](https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk)

There are seven outcomes within the WESP, these are:

- 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 3: More children continue to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another.
- Outcome 4: More learners study for assessed qualifications in Welsh (as a subject) and subjects through the medium of Welsh.
- Outcome 5: More opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school.
- Outcome 6: An increase in the provision of Welsh medium education for learners with ALN in accordance with the duties imposed by the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018.
- Outcome 7: Increase the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and teach through the medium of Welsh.

During the ten-year lifespan of the Council's WESP (2022-2032), it is seeking to increase the percentage of year one learners in Welsh medium education by between 8.0% to 12.0%. 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. However, the Council has committed to a 10% increase. It is therefore noted that any proposal that would have an impact on the take up of Welsh medium education, would reduce the Council's ability to meet this very ambitious target set by Welsh Government.

Whilst the Council would meet statutory walking distance requirements from a free home to school transport perspective, the proposal, as consulted upon, may potentially impact on the numbers of families wishing to send their children to Welsh medium education as they might opt to send their child to a closer English medium

school. This in turn could impact on the requirement to promote access to Welsh medium education within the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008.

Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

In this section you need to consider the impact, the evidence and any action you are taking for improvement. This is to ensure that the opportunities for people who choose to live their lives and access services through the medium of Welsh are not inferior to what is afforded to those choosing to do so in English, in accordance with the requirement of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

Please note there is a separate impact assessment for Equality and Socio-Economic duty that must also be completed for policy proposals.

Remember that effects that are positive for some groups could be detrimental to others - even among Welsh language groups. Consider the effects on different groups. For example, a proposal may be beneficial to Welsh learners, but not to Welsh speakers.

Will the proposed action affect any or all of the following?

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts?	Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
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<p>Opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language</p> <p>e.g., staff, residents and visitors</p> <p>The rights of Welsh speakers and learners to use Welsh when dealing with the council and for staff to use Welsh at Work</p>	<p>Negative</p>	<p>All consultation correspondence and any correspondence issued in relation to the operation of the Council's Home to School Transport policy would continue to be published in Welsh with the Welsh appearing first.</p> <p>Future recruitment would focus on recruiting Welsh speakers to increase face-to-face Welsh language service provision.</p> <p>As there are currently only 4% of staff within the Service area with Welsh language skills of level 3 or above, (the level at which speakers likely have sufficient skills to use the language more extensively at work), recruiting more Welsh speakers would have a positive impact on the service's Welsh provision, and the Council's attempts to promote the language.</p> <p>The Council has opportunities for internal staff across all services to access free training to improve their Welsh language skills. Welsh Language Services are working to develop technological support for Welsh</p>	<p>Current / ongoing public consultations shows Welsh language appearing first.</p> <p>The percentage of Welsh speakers in RCT according to the 2021 Census was 12.4%, and the Council's Welsh Language Skills Strategy aims to ensure the percentage of staff with Welsh language skills is at a similar level.</p> <p>In line with the Council's Statutory Welsh Language Standards, any Council publications, documentation and correspondence must be bilingual with a message included to state that correspondence in Welsh is welcomed and corresponding with us in Welsh will not lead to a delay. The Council also applies this to any new school builds so that signage in English schools is bilingual. New school builds now also incorporate bilingual braille on school signage providing equal opportunities in terms of the Welsh language and equality.</p>	<p>Ensure that, upon each new order of consultation material and/or materials relating to the operation of the Council's Home to School Transport policy, all correspondence is reviewed, and bilingualism retained.</p> <p>Encourage contact in Welsh by incorporating an appropriate additional line into correspondence, e.g., "we welcome correspondence in Welsh, which will not lead to a delay in responding".</p> <p>Ensure steps are taken for basic relevant Welsh lessons for those who need it with the aim of further upskilling and training as appropriate.</p> <p>Investigate opportunities to ensure there are a number of Welsh-speaking members of staff on the team through advertising some new posts as "Welsh-essential" roles <i>where practical to do so</i>.</p>
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speakers and learners within the Council to be able to deliver services through the medium of Welsh. All newly recruited Council staff are required to undertake Welsh language Level 1 training. By working with the Council's Welsh Language Services, specifically the internal Welsh language tutor, all members of staff will be encouraged to continue to improve their Welsh language skills beyond Level 1. Members of staff who opt to do this will be fully supported. This will support the opportunities available for the Council to create a bilingual workforce with the ability to work and deliver services bilingually.

Moreover, in light of recent guidance from the Welsh Language Commissioner, the Council has a statutory duty not only to mitigate negative impacts, but to maximise any possible positive impacts too.

If there are fewer Welsh medium pupils as an unintended consequence of any revised Home to School transport policy, this might impact on the

Council's ability to provide services in Welsh way into the future. It is acknowledged Welsh Medium Schools are the pool of future workers to ensure the Council can fulfil and comply with the Welsh Language Standards long term and further grow the language.

If, as a result of any revised Home to School transport policy, learners spend less time with peers whilst travelling, their opportunities to use Welsh during this time may decrease.

Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

Will the proposed action affect any or all of the following?

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts?	Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p style="text-align: center;">Numbers and / or percentages of Welsh speakers</p> <p>e.g. Welsh Medium Education / Study Opportunities. Links with the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 Strategy / RCTCBC Five Year Welsh Language Strategy</p>	<p>Negative</p>	<p>Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough has seventeen Welsh medium primary schools, and four Welsh secondary schools located throughout the County Borough. All pupils who attend these schools' study through the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>There is a potential that the additional walking distance from home to school may discourage parents from putting their children into Welsh medium schools, in favour of nearer English medium catchment schools, with a greater risk at the primary school level. Should that happen it may reduce the ability for the Council to achieve certain outcomes in the WESP.</p>	<p>Whilst currently there is little specific data or evidence available to support the overall conclusion the proposal as consulted upon would have a negative impact on the numbers/percentage of Welsh speakers feedback received through the consultation, particularly from key stakeholders such as the Welsh Language Commissioner, suggested this would be the case. The Commissioner expressed a concern the proposal would disproportionately impact learners attending Welsh medium schools and undermine the commitments and targets of the WESP. The Commissioner considers the proposal might lead to the Council incurring increased costs in future if investment is required</p>	<p>Whilst the Council's current Home to School transport policy has a positive impact on access to Welsh medium education it is a component part of the Council's overall ability to meet its targets set out in the WESP. To support achieving the outcomes in the WESP the Council is undertaking a number of schemes/programmes that support the promotion of the Welsh language, and that contribute towards achieving the outcomes within its WESP. These schemes/programmes are as follows:</p>

		<p>However, it should be noted that under the proposal the Council would, as part of its discretionary provision, still allow a learner to select their nearest 'suitable school' in accordance with choice of language. On this basis there might be potential for growth in Welsh Medium demand where pupils live under 2 miles (in the case of primary school pupils) or 3 miles (in the case of secondary school pupils) from their nearest suitable English Medium school but live over 2 miles (in the case of primary school pupils) or 3 miles (in the case of secondary school pupils) from their nearest suitable Welsh Medium school.</p>	<p>to mitigate the negative effects of the proposal on the growth of Welsh medium education in Rhondda Cynon Taf.</p> <p>The Commissioner believes inequalities exist between those accessing English and Welsh medium education on the basis Welsh medium education is less widely available thus access is more costly and difficult as learners on average will live further from such provision. The Commissioner has stated on average people are more likely to live within walking distance to English medium school than to Welsh medium schools, and that is true in Rhondda Cynon Taf.</p> <p>Whilst acknowledging it is the Council's aim to treat Welsh medium learners no less favourably than English medium learner's the Commissioner considers changing the policy would have a disproportionate impact on those wishing to attend Welsh medium education. The Commissioner further states that as a significant number of learners who would otherwise have received free transport to</p>	<p>The Siarter Iaith Cymraeg Campus programme is having a positive impact on the promotion of the Welsh language in schools engaged with the programme through providing increased opportunities for pupils to use the Welsh language in different contexts.</p> <p>The Council adheres to The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 which requires the Council to produce a five-year strategy outlining actions which will facilitate and promote the Welsh language.</p> <p>The Council's Five Year Welsh Language Promotion Strategy (2022 – 2027) along with its supplementary action plan encourages and facilitates long term growth for the Welsh language and Welsh medium education. The strategy is closely aligned to the Council's</p>
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			<p>Welsh medium education would no longer be eligible for such transport it is very likely that a substantial number of these learners would reconsider choosing Welsh medium education, choosing instead to attend an English medium school nearer their home which is easier to access and less costly for them.</p> <p>Should the proposal, as consulted upon., be implemented then as part of its discretionary provision, the Council would allow a learner to select their nearest 'suitable school' in accordance with choice of language should the proposal be implemented.</p> <p>Out of a total of 3,860 pupils attending Welsh primary schools, 1,272 are currently in receipt of school transport (33%). 242 pupils would be affected by this proposal. This represents 19% of all pupils in receipt of transport, and 6% of the overall number in Welsh primary schools.</p> <p>Out of a total of 15,961 pupils attending English primary schools, 162 are currently in</p>	<p>WESP and outlines the Council's commitment to working towards the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 vision of increasing the number of Welsh speakers.</p> <p>This commitment to promoting the Welsh language, increasing the number of Welsh pupils and improving the Welsh language skills of staff and pupils across schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf is reaffirmed in the Education & Inclusion Directorate's Education Strategic Plan for 2022 – 2025.</p> <p>An alternative option has been put forward for Cabinet to consider that would maintain the discretionary element of providing transport for all primary schools, (English, Welsh, and Faith). This option might assist in negating possible negative impacts in relation to</p>
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			<p>receipt of school transport (1%). 0 pupils would be affected by this proposal.</p> <p>Out of a total of 2,526 pupils attending Welsh secondary schools, 1,936 are currently in receipt of school transport (77%). 228 pupils would be affected by this proposal. This represents 12% of all pupils in receipt of transport, and 9% of the overall number in Welsh secondary schools.</p> <p>Out of a total of 11,653 pupils attending English secondary schools, 4,094 are currently in receipt of school transport (35%). 1,174 pupils would be affected by this proposal. This represents 29% of all pupils in receipt of transport, and 10% of the overall number in English secondary schools.</p> <p>Whilst the proposed changes will be applied equally to English medium education provision and Welsh medium education provision, as pupils generally travel further to Welsh Medium schools, only they and primary school pupils attending Faith</p>	<p>outcomes 1 & 2 of the WESP and any consequential effect on the Council's Welsh Language Promotional Strategy.</p> <p>A further option could be considered, which would maintain the Council's current discretionary distance criteria of providing transport for all primary schools, (English, Welsh, and Faith), and Welsh secondary schools (only). Transport provision to English and Faith schools and colleges would change to move in line with the relevant statutory distance criteria as set out in the Welsh Government's Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008. This further option would negate all negative impacts against the WESP outcomes that may arise as a result of implanting the proposal, as consulted upon, and was an option suggested</p>
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			<p>schools are impacted. However, as can be seen from the information above, this is reversed for secondary age pupils, where those attending English medium schools are impacted by a far greater number.</p> <p>In assessing the possible impact of the proposed changes on attendance at Welsh language schools, a comparison of the attendance levels for those learners receiving home to school transport provision was made against those learners who do not use home to school transport to get to school.</p> <p>The current attendance levels at RCTCBC Welsh language schools receiving school transport are as follows:</p> <p>Attendance levels of pupils currently making their own way to Welsh language primary school: 92.96%</p> <p>Attendance levels of pupils who are in receipt of school transport to Welsh language primary school: 92.10%</p>	<p>by the Welsh Language Commissioner.</p> <p>Irrespective of any proposal that is taken forward, as regards a change in the Council's Home to School Transport policy, the Council would, as now, continue to monitor and evaluate the effect of it's Home to School Transport policy in relation to both its duty to promote Welsh medium education under the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 and its impact and effect on the WESP and Welsh Language Promotional Strategy. This would be conducted through the collection and analysis of relevant data, engagement with key stakeholders and reporting through the Council's democratic processes such as scrutiny. Cabinet may wish to request following any change to existing</p>
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			<p>Overall difference: -0.86%</p> <p>Attendance levels of pupils currently making their own way to Welsh language secondary school: 89.06%</p> <p>Attendance levels of pupils who are in receipt of school transport to Welsh language secondary school: 87.91%</p> <p>Overall difference: -1.15%</p> <p>Attendance data at Welsh language schools therefore suggests that the provision of free transport within 1.5-2 miles for primary schools and 2-3 miles for secondary schools (as is currently the case in Rhondda Cynon Taf) has little impact on attendance.</p> <p>Whilst there is little specific evidence or data available at present to enable the Council to effectively assess the impact implementation the proposal as consulted upon would have on enabling the Council to achieve the WESP outcomes the potential for it to have a negative impact is</p>	<p>policy, that officers bring a further report to a future meeting detailing available evidence at the time of the effect of any policy change has had on the numbers of learners accessing Welsh medium education.</p>
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			<p>drawn to Member’s attention and should form a consideration as part of its decision making process.</p> <p>At the same time it should be noted that the Council’s Welsh Language Promotional Strategy is strongly aligned with the WESP, and so any impact on the WESP would have impact on the Welsh Language Promotional Strategy</p> <p>in terms of adherence to the Welsh Language Measure, the Council must treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English. It could therefore treat Welsh language learners more favourably.</p>	
<p>Opportunities to promote the Welsh language e.g. status, use of Welsh language services, use of Welsh in everyday life in work and in the community</p> <p>Actively encourage and promote the use of our services in Welsh to see an increase in demand over time</p>	Neutral	<p>The Welsh language has official status and legislation in place which provides rights for Welsh speakers to receive Welsh language services. The challenge is to expand the opportunities for people to be able to use the Welsh language in their daily life through creating the right conditions for new pupils of all ages to develop and use their skills from early years, through every stage of</p>	<p>As part of its discretionary provision, the Council would, as now, allow a learner to select their nearest ‘suitable school’ in accordance with choice of language should the proposal be implemented – please see data above.</p> <p>The Council’s Five Year Welsh Language Promotion Strategy (2022 – 2027) along with its supplementary action plan has</p>	<p>The Siarter Iaith Cymraeg Campus programme is having a positive impact on the promotion of the Welsh language in schools engaged with the programme through providing increased opportunities for pupils to use the Welsh language in different contexts.</p>

		<p>compulsory education and post-16 provision.</p> <p>As mentioned above, there is a potential that the additional walking distance from home to school may discourage parents from putting their children into Welsh medium schools.</p> <p>The proposal is clear that the Council would, as part of its discretionary provision, still allow a learner to select their nearest 'suitable school' in accordance with choice of language. This is how the Council would meet its duty under the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 to promote Welsh medium education.</p> <p>In addition, the introduction of the proposal may result in potential growth in Welsh Medium demand where pupils live under 2 miles (in the case of primary school pupils) or 3 miles (in the case of secondary school pupils) from their nearest suitable English Medium school but live over 2 miles (in the case of primary school pupils) or 3 miles (in the case of secondary school</p>	<p>been taken into consideration in order to encourage and facilitate long term growth for the Welsh language and Welsh medium education. The strategy outlines the Council's commitment to working towards the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 vision of increasing the number of Welsh speakers, increasing the use of the language in the workplace, via Council services and throughout the community and creating favourable conditions. Rhondda Cynon Taf Welsh Language Services, Youth Services, Leisure Services and Arts and Culture Services and Musical Services are all working proactively towards developing opportunities for pupils and the wider community to use the Welsh language. These include but are not limited to:</p> <p>Welsh Language Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing materials to provide to school-based staff to support with their Welsh language skills. - Exploring the feasibility of Welsh medium learning/support digital applications being placed on 	<p>The Council would continue to adhere to The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 which requires the Council to produce a five year strategy outlining actions which will facilitate and promote the Welsh language.</p> <p>The Council's Five Year Welsh Language Promotion Strategy (2022 – 2027) along with its supplementary action plan has been taken into consideration in order to encourage and facilitate long term growth for the Welsh language and Welsh medium education. The strategy outlines the Council's commitment to working towards the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 vision of increasing the number of Welsh speakers.</p> <p>The Council would continue to ensure a clear alignment with the</p>
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		<p>pupils) from their nearest suitable Welsh Medium school.</p> <p>If these benefits are indeed realised, this would potentially positively impact on our WESP targets and our strategic priorities to increase the number of Welsh language speakers and to growth the number of learners accessing Welsh medium education and opportunities.</p>	<p>every member of staffs' devices to support their linguistic skills and development.</p> <p>Youth Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Running trips for Welsh medium pupils to provide opportunities to use Welsh in different contexts. - Creating promotional materials to be placed in youth clubs throughout the County Borough. - Working in partnership with the Urdd and Menter Iaith to develop Welsh Language Youth Forums in all Welsh and English medium secondary schools along with Coleg y Cymoedd campuses. <p>Leisure Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working with the Urdd to deliver sport activities for Welsh medium schools and exploring extending this to incorporate English medium schools on a bilingual model of delivery. - Working with Menter Iaith to develop opportunities to 	<p>Five Year Welsh Language Promotion Strategy. This commitment to promoting the Welsh language, increasing the number of Welsh pupils and improving the Welsh language skills of staff and pupils across schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf is reaffirmed in the Education & Inclusion Directorate's Education Strategic Plan for 2022 – 2025.</p> <p>In order to achieve the targets of the WESP the Council will continue to ensure the benefits of the Welsh language and Welsh medium education are promoted to parents/carers from the initial early years, through to primary and secondary education and onwards through to higher and further education for all pupils, whatever their learning need. This will be done through ongoing</p>
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			<p>introduce the Welsh language into leisure sessions.</p> <p>Arts and Culture Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaborating with Youth Services on a programme of provision across community and cultural venues to encourage the use of the Welsh language and incorporating the Welsh language into community based events. <p>Musical Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engaging with both Welsh and English medium schools to encourage an uptake in musical services, pupils who show an aptitude for any instruments are being encouraged and supported into taking part in the Eisteddfod. <p>The Council will continue to ensure a clear alignment with the Five Year Welsh Language Promotion Strategy. This commitment to promoting the Welsh language, increasing the number of Welsh pupils and improving the Welsh language</p>	<p>distribution of the Council's Being Bilingual booklets and Welsh Language Immersion leaflets at local events, to health visitors, Welsh medium childcare settings and birth registration services. Wider distribution will include all public Council buildings and Welsh medium schools throughout the County Borough. Social media campaigns are run which specifically targets promoting Welsh medium education along with marketing resources in the form of videos, prepared by Welsh Government and Mudiad Meithrin.</p> <p>The Council recognises the importance of the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 target and how central the education system in Wales is to achieve its vision.</p>
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			<p>skills of staff and pupils across schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf is reaffirmed in the Education & Inclusion Directorate's Education Strategic Plan for 2022 – 2025.</p>	<p>The Council's WESP sets out a ten-year vision for increasing and improving the planning of the provision of Welsh medium education in order to maximise its contribution of achieving the target of one million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050.</p> <p>The Council is aware that Welsh Government are in the process of reviewing its Learner Travel Guidance, however it is unclear what, if any, changes will be made. The Council will review any revisions to the Guidance, as and when issued, and consider accordingly.</p> <p>An alternative option has been put forward for Cabinet to consider that would maintain the discretionary element of providing transport for all primary schools, (English, Welsh, and Faith). This option might</p>
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				<p>assist in negating possible negative impacts in relation to outcomes 1 & 2 of the WESP and any consequential effect on the Council's Welsh Language Promotional Strategy. It should be acknowledged however that any negative impacts in relation to outcomes 1 & 2 could have corresponding negative impacts on outcomes 3-7 also.</p> <p>A further option could be considered, which would maintain the Council's current discretionary distance criteria of providing transport for all primary schools, (English, Welsh, and Faith), and Welsh secondary schools (only). Transport provision to English and Faith schools and colleges would change to move in line with the relevant statutory distance criteria as set out in the Welsh</p>
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				<p>Government's Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008. This further option would negate all negative impacts against the WESP outcomes that may arise as a result of implanting the proposal, as consulted upon, and was an option suggested by the Welsh Language Commissioner.</p> <p>Irrespective of any proposal that is taken forward, as regards a change in the Council's Home to School Transport policy, the Council would, as now, continue to monitor and evaluate the effect of its Home to School Transport policy in relation to both its duty to promote Welsh medium education under the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 and its impact and effect on the WESP and Welsh Language Promotional Strategy. This would be conducted through the</p>
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				<p>collection and analysis of relevant data, engagement with key stakeholders and reporting through the Council's democratic processes such as scrutiny. Cabinet may wish to request following any change to existing policy, that officers bring a further report to a future meeting detailing available evidence at the time of the effect of any policy change has had on the numbers of learners accessing Welsh medium education.</p>
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Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

Will the proposed action affect any or all of the following?

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts?	Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p><u>Compliance with the Council’s Statutory Welsh Language Standards</u> e.g. increasing or reducing the Council’s ability to deliver services through the Medium of Welsh.</p> <p>Consider the rights of Welsh speakers to use Welsh when dealing with the Council and for staff to use Welsh at Work</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>The consultation exercise undertaken on the proposal and production of this Welsh Language Impact Assessment have been completed to achieve and assist with compliance with the Council’s Statutory Welsh Language Standards.</p> <p>With particular reference to Standard 90 (as applicable to the Council), this states: When you (the Council) formulate a new policy, or review or revise an existing policy, you must consider how the policy could be formulated (or how an existing policy could be changed) so that the policy decision would not have adverse effects, or so that it would have decreased adverse effects, on - (a) opportunities for persons to use the Welsh</p>	<p>To assist compliance with Standard 90 this impact assessment has been completed, using feedback from responses received through the consultation exercise and other available data/supporting evidence. That information has also been used to complete the appropriate sections of the cabinet report relating to the proposal. Taken together they have been produced in order to assist Members appropriately consider any direct/indirect effects a change in Home to School Transport policy may have on the Welsh language and have due regard to those considerations. Where available this impact assessment and the Cabinet report suggest mitigating actions that might assist Cabinet when considering a change in Home to</p>	<p>The relevant and required statutory consultation was undertaken bilingually and all public correspondence in relation to the proposal was produced bilingually.</p> <p>All officers involved with these proposals had an awareness of the Council’s Statutory Welsh Language Standards and ensured compliance with these standards.</p> <p>All public consultation announcements were made bilingually.</p> <p>A Welsh Language Impact Assessment has</p>

		<p>language, and (b) treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.</p>	<p>School Transport Policy that might have adverse effects on the Welsh language and opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language and treat the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language,</p> <p>Contractual arrangements would ensure that all consultations are undertaken bilingually and all public correspondence in relation to these proposals would be sent out bilingually with Welsh positioned first.</p>	<p>been produced to aid Cabinet's consideration of the possible effects (indirect and direct) on the Welsh language of a change in the Council's Home to School Transport Policy.</p>
<p>Treating the Welsh language, no less favourably than the English language</p>	<p>Negative.</p>	<p>Whilst the proposed changes would be applied equally to English medium education provision and Welsh medium education provision, it is acknowledged that is not the same as treating Welsh no less favourably than English language.</p>	<p>As part of its discretionary provision, the Council would, as now, allow a learner to select their nearest 'suitable school' in accordance with choice of language should the proposal, as consulted upon, be implemented.</p> <p>Out of a total of 3,860 pupils attending Welsh primary schools, 1,272 are currently in receipt of school transport (33%). 242 pupils would be affected by this proposal. This represents 19% of all pupils in receipt of transport.</p> <p>Out of a total of 15,961 pupils attending English primary</p>	<p>Greater promotion of Welsh medium schools across the County Borough.</p> <p>The proposed new Home to School Transport Policy would not change the discretionary elements of entitlement for pupils with Additional Learning Needs. As such there is no negative impact against outcome 6 of the WESP.</p> <p>The Council is aware that Welsh Government</p>

			<p>schools, 162 are currently in receipt of school transport (1%). 0 pupils would be affected by this proposal.</p> <p>Out of a total of 2,526 pupils attending Welsh secondary schools, 1,936 are currently in receipt of school transport (77%). 228 pupils would be affected by this proposal. This represents 12% of all pupils in receipt of transport.</p> <p>Out of a total of 11,653 pupils attending English secondary schools, 4,094 are currently in receipt of school transport (35%). 1,174 pupils would be affected by this proposal. This represents 29% of all pupils in receipt of transport.</p> <p>Whilst the proposed changes will be applied equally to English medium education provision and Welsh medium education provision, as pupils generally travel further to Welsh Medium schools, only they and primary school pupils attending Faith schools are impacted. However, as can be seen from the information above, this is</p>	<p>are in the process of reviewing its Learner Travel Guidance, however it is unclear what, if any, changes will be made. The Council will review any revisions to the Guidance, as and when issued, and consider accordingly.</p> <p>An alternative option has been put forward for Cabinet to consider that would maintain the discretionary element of providing transport for all primary schools, (English, Welsh, and Faith). This option might assist in negating possible negative impacts in relation to outcomes 1 & 2 of the WESP and any consequential effect on the Council's Welsh Language Promotional Strategy.</p> <p>A further option could be considered, which would maintain the Council's current discretionary</p>
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			<p>reversed for secondary age pupils, where those attending English medium schools are impacted by a far greater number.</p>	<p>distance criteria of providing transport for all primary schools, (English, Welsh, and Faith), and Welsh secondary schools (only). Transport provision to English and Faith schools and colleges would change to move in line with the relevant statutory distance criteria as set out in the Welsh Government's Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008. This further option would negate all negative impacts against the WESP outcomes that may arise as a result of implanting the proposal, as consulted upon, and was an option suggested by the Welsh Language Commissioner.</p> <p>Irrespective of any proposal that is taken forward, as regards a change in the Council's Home to School Transport policy, the Council would, as now, continue to monitor and</p>
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				<p>evaluate the effect of its Home to School Transport policy in relation to both its duty to promote Welsh medium education under the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 and its impact and effect on the WESP and Welsh Language Promotional Strategy. This would be conducted through the collection and analysis of relevant data, engagement with key stakeholders and reporting through the Council's democratic processes such as scrutiny. Cabinet may wish to request following any change to existing policy, that officers bring a further report to a future meeting detailing available evidence at the time of the effect of any policy change has had on the numbers of learners accessing Welsh medium education.</p>
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Stage 3 - Strengthening the proposal

Having listed actions in section 2 which may mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts – please record below which ones you will imbed into the policy proposal and who will be responsible for them.

Also consider is the proposal necessary? Would it be possible to meet demand without any new developments? Could other existing provision be used? Where should the development be?

What are you going to do?	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible?
The Council will continue to adhere to The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, and work towards achieving the goals of Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 vision by promoting the Welsh language.	Ongoing	Transportation and Education & Inclusion Services.
Encourage contact in Welsh by incorporating an appropriate additional line into correspondence, e.g., "we welcome correspondence in Welsh, which would not lead to a delay in responding".	Ongoing	Transportation and Education & Inclusion Services.
The Council is aware that Welsh Government are in the process of reviewing its Learner Travel Guidance, however it is unclear what, if any, changes will be made. The Council would review any revisions to the Guidance, as and when issued, and consider accordingly.	If, as, and when the Welsh Government make any changes to its Learner Travel Guidance.	The Welsh Government (Review) and then the Transportation and Education & Inclusion Services (Implementation)
The Council's WESP Co-ordinator to work collaboratively with partners in developing and implementing strategies in line with the Council's WESP to support the delivery of the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 vision of a million Welsh speakers, and to contribute towards the development of strategies which promote the Welsh language and Welsh medium education across the County Borough.	Ongoing – the WESP is a ten-year plan; the Council will continue to work with partners on developing and implementing strategies in line with the WESP.	RCT WESP Officer.
An alternative option has been put forward for Cabinet that would maintain the discretionary element of providing transport for all primary schools, (English, Welsh, and Faith). This would mean that the 242 pupils impacted highlighted in Stage 2 of this assessment would retain their entitlement, as well as maintain entitlement for future pupils that live within the statutory distance from school. It would also negate the negative impacts against outcomes 1 & 2 of the WESP.	This option has been included within section 14 of the cabinet report.	Cabinet Members.

<p>Whilst transport provision to all secondary schools and colleges (English, Welsh, and Faith) would change to move in line with the relevant statutory distance criteria as set out in the Welsh Government’s Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008, it would nevertheless continue to provide all other areas of its discretionary transport provision in excess of the current minimum Welsh Government statutory requirement.</p>		
<p>A further option could be considered, which would maintain the Council’s current discretionary distance criteria of providing transport for all primary schools, (English, Welsh, and Faith), and Welsh secondary schools (only). Transport provision to English and Faith schools and colleges would change to move in line with the relevant statutory distance criteria as set out in the Welsh Government’s Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008. This further option would negate all negative impacts against the WESP outcomes that may arise as a result of implanting the proposal, as consulted upon, and was an option suggested by the Welsh Language Commissioner.</p>	<p>This option has been included within section 14 of the cabinet report.</p>	<p>Cabinet Members.</p>
<p>Irrespective of any proposal that is taken forward, as regards a change in the Council’s Home to School Transport policy, the Council would, as now, continue to monitor and evaluate the effect of its Home to School Transport policy in relation to both its duty to promote Welsh medium education under the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 and its impact and effect on the WESP and Welsh Language Promotional Strategy. This would be conducted through the collection and analysis of relevant data, engagement with key stakeholders and reporting through the Council’s democratic processes such as scrutiny. Cabinet may wish to request following any change to existing policy, that officers bring a further report to a future meeting detailing available evidence at the time of the effect of any policy change has had on the numbers of learners accessing Welsh medium education.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Transportation and Education & Inclusion Services / Cabinet Members/ Scrutiny/ Key Stakeholders including learners, parents/carers</p>
<p>If ways of reducing the impact have been identified but are not possible to implement, please explain why. Give sufficient detail of data or research that has led to your reasoning.</p>		
<p>What was identified?</p>	<p>Why is it not possible?</p>	

Stage 4 – Review

As part of the Welsh Language, Equalities and Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment Process all proposals that fall within the definition of Significant Key Decision should present at the Officer Review Panel. This panel is made up of officers from across Council Services and acts as a critical friend before your report is finalised and published for SLT/Cabinet approval.

If this proposal is a Key Strategic Decision please forward your impact assessment to CouncilBusiness@rctcbc.gov.uk for an Officer Review Panel to be organised to discuss your proposal. [See our guidance document](#) for more information on what a Significant Key Decision is.

For all policy proposals, whether it is a Significant Key Decision or not you are required to forward this assessment to Welsh Language services in the first instance for some initial guidance and feedback.

It is important to keep a record of this process so that we can demonstrate how we have considered and built in sustainable Welsh language considerations wherever possible. Please ensure you update the relevant sections below

Welsh Language Services Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Welsh Language Services feedback
<p>Welsh Language Services welcome the inclusion of two further options for Cabinet to consider, which exempt the Welsh medium sector from these changes, as per our previous advice. If these options are taken forward by Cabinet, particularly the option to exempt both primary and secondary WM pupils, this would assist in mitigating against the negative impacts identified in the impact assessment. If the decision is made to not take either of these options forward, the reasons for such a decision would need to be explained in detail. In such a case, too, the Welsh Language Service consider there is a very significant risk of a challenge under the Welsh Language Measure.</p> <p>We would also advise that Education and Inclusion Services have sight of the latest version of this assessment and report for comment, as these changes could impact upon their services significantly.</p>	7 th March 2024	Final decision to be made by Cabinet. Additional options for consideration as a result of the review panel and impact assessment process have been included within the Cabinet Report.

Officer Review Panel Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Officer Review Panel considerations
The review panel comments have been incorporated within this assessment.	7 th March 2024	Final decision to be made by Cabinet. Additional options for consideration as a result of the review panel and impact assessment process have been included within the Cabinet Report.
Consultation Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consultation
The consultation comments have been incorporated within this assessment.	7 th March 2024	Final decision to be made by Cabinet. Additional options for consideration as a result of the review panel and impact assessment process have been included within the Cabinet Report.

Stage 5 – Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing

How and who will you monitor the impact and effectiveness of the proposal?

The Council would, as now, continue to monitor and evaluate the effect of its Home to School Transport policy in relation to both its duty to promote Welsh medium education under the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 and its impact and effect on the WESP and Welsh Language Promotional Strategy. This would be conducted through the collection and analysis of relevant data, engagement with key stakeholders and reporting through the Council's democratic processes such as scrutiny. Cabinet may wish to request following any change to existing policy, that officers bring a further report to a future meeting detailing available evidence at the time of the effect of any policy change has had on the numbers of learners accessing Welsh medium education.

Stage 6 – Summary of Impacts for the Proposal



Provide below a summary of the impact assessment. This summary should be included in the Welsh Language Considerations section of the SLT/Cabinet report template. The impact assessment should be published alongside the report.

A Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been completed and the main findings are as follows -

The proposal seeks to introduce a proposed new Home to School Transport Policy, namely providing mainstream English, Welsh and Faith primary school, secondary school and college transport above statutory distance only and implemented from the start of the 2025/2026 academic year. Under the proposed Home to School Transport Policy the discretionary element of allowing a learner to select their nearest suitable school in accordance with choice of English or Welsh Medium language would continue.

Whilst the proposed changes will be applied equally to English medium education provision and Welsh medium education provision, as pupils generally travel further to Welsh Medium schools, a greater number of primary age pupils are impacted. However, this is reversed for secondary age pupils, where those attending English medium schools are impacted by a greater number.

The assessment has identified that there is a possibility of impacts on the Welsh language in respect of the preferred option consulted upon. There is a potential that the additional walking distance from home to school may discourage parents from putting their children into Welsh medium schools, in favour of nearer English medium catchment schools, with a greater risk at the primary school level. These risks could be mitigated by a range of actions as detailed in this assessment and with the alternative options explored in further detail at Section 14 of the Cabinet report

Stage 7 – Sign Off			
Name of Officer completing the WLIA	Geraint Roberts	Director Name:	Stephen Williams
Position	Integrated Transport Manager	I recommend that the proposal: (Highlight decision)	Is implemented with no amendments
			Is implemented taking into account the mitigating actions outlined
			Is rejected due to disproportionate negative impacts on the Welsh language
Signature		Service Director Signature	
Date	12 th March 2024	Date	12 th March 2024