



EDUCATION FOR LIFE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 10TH JANUARY 2017

SUBJECT: WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2020

REPORT BY: CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report on the draft Caerphilly Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2017-20 is seeking the views of scrutiny members during the consultation period prior to its submission to Welsh Government for Ministerial recommendations and the presentation to Cabinet to seek approval to publish by 1st June 2017.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The WESP was developed locally but with a collaborative strategic approach through the Education Achievement Service, allowing for local authority development and accountability. There is a strong local emphasis on outcomes 1, 2 and 6 with outcomes 3, 4, 5 and 7 being more regionally directed.
- 2.2 The WESP fulfils the local authority's duty to monitor and improve standards of Welsh language, educational attainment, and it directs the appropriate use of the Welsh Education Grant funding, which is regionally administered.
- 2.3 Individual WESPs must be submitted to fulfil the legal duty of each local authority. However, regional collaboration must be identified within individual plans.
- 2.4 The WESP is updated and monitored termly by the Caerphilly WESP Forum (Appendix 1), as well as through the South East Wales Consortium Strategic WESP Forum.(Appendix 2).
- 2.5 Statutory consultation was undertaken between 21st October and 13th December 2016 and responses were taken into account when finalising the plan.
- 2.6 The WESP contains an analysis of the current provision, highlights best practice and includes targets for continuing improvement and provision. The local authority remains committed to supporting parental choice through equitable support in both Welsh and English medium schools.
- 2.7 We have received many responses to the draft WESP, some of which have been responded to within the draft WESP attached prepared for submission to Welsh Government. Many respondents complimented Caerphilly CBC on their proactive approach to Welsh medium provision and that we are building on our existing solid foundations of strategies, activities and partnerships. The main concerns raised were in relation to the Welsh Government's target of 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050 and the need to increase the amount of Welsh medium education provision available. While recognising this need, we have also identified that many of our students lose some of their Welsh language skills when they leave formal education and so our focus will also be on working with our community based partners who support social opportunities to continue to use conversational Welsh.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Caerphilly WESP contributes to the following Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2016:
- *A prosperous Wales* – The WESP aims to support children and young people to develop their Welsh language skills and improve standards of achievement, which will create a bilingual population able to support and grow our economy.
 - *A resilient Wales* – Although schools will build eco schools into their curriculum, this is not specifically mentioned in the WESP which is the strategic overview.
 - *A healthier Wales* – The Healthy Early Years scheme and the Healthy Schools scheme are both embedded into practice across Flying Start, childcare settings, Primary and Secondary schools.
 - *A more equal Wales* – The WESP has an objective to reduce the impact of poverty on children and young people through various closing the gap initiatives throughout the age ranges from Flying Start Welsh medium provision to Cylchoedd Meithrin to Primary school and Secondary school attainment. Outcome 6 focuses on the needs of learners with Additional Needs and how we will meet those needs in Welsh medium provision.
 - *A Wales of cohesive communities* – Outcome 5 aims to support the use of Welsh and increase the standards in Welsh language delivering social activities and meeting spaces in communities.
 - *A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language* – Improving use of Welsh language and supporting the development of a bilingual workforce in the future is a key aim of the WESP. Arts and recreation activities also feature in Outcome 5 through the work of Urdd Gobaith Cymru and Menter Iaith.
 - *A globally responsible Wales* – Although not specifically mentioned in the WESP, wellbeing is embedded through practice across Flying Start, childcare settings, Primary and Secondary schools.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 This WESP is aspirational but clearly depends on Welsh Government funding to deliver the First Minister's programme for Government 2016-2021 Taking Wales Forward, working towards one million people speaking the Welsh language by 2050. Funding will enable delivery towards the aspirations for the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act for a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language, and the The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 from which we must now comply with a set of national Welsh Language Standards. One of the key standards is a requirement to develop a 5 year Welsh language strategy, with the aim of increasing the number of Welsh speakers and which will enable us to facilitate the use of the Welsh Language within the Caerphilly county borough.
- 4.2 Our aim is to secure equality of access by promoting and supporting the development of inclusive education and giving a commitment to providing the best possible quality of education and services within available resources.
- 4.3 We will work strategically together as a region with South East Wales Education Achievement Service to equip schools and education providers across age ranges and linguistic sectors with the capacity and sustainability to increase standards in Welsh and promote the use of the Welsh language within families, communities and workplaces.
- 4.4 We will aim to stimulate and provide local, accessible, sustainable, community-focused provision to meet the growing demand for Welsh medium education.
- 4.5 The objectives are that by 2020 we will:
- Improve standards of attainment particularly in Key Stage 4 at the Level 2+ threshold
 - Raise levels of attendance

- Reduce the impact of poverty on children and young people
- Continue to proactively promote early years provision to stimulate parental demand
- Increase the number of children accessing Welsh medium education in line with parental demand surveys equating to 18% in primary by 2018 (an increase from 9.19% in 1996) and 20% in secondary by 2023 (an increase from 7.30% in 1996).
- Proactively manage Welsh medium places to ensure excess surplus places are minimised.
- Work with 21st century schools team in Welsh Government to identify funding in Band B of 21st century schools programme, for the development of sufficient Welsh medium places in areas where they are coming under pressure, in particular Bedwas Trethomas Machen area, and the Islwyn East area.

4.6 Within the action plan there are targets to continuously improve standards, under the 7 outcomes as identified in the Welsh Government guidance:

Outcome 1: More seven-year-old children being taught through the medium of Welsh

Outcome 2: More learners continuing to improve their language skills on transfer from primary school to secondary school

Outcome 3: More learners aged 14-16 studying for qualifications through the medium of Welsh

Outcome 4: More learners aged 16-19 studying subjects through the medium of Welsh in schools, colleges and work-based learning

Outcome 5: More learners with higher skills in Welsh

Outcome 6: Welsh-medium provision for learners Additional Learning Needs

Outcome 7: Workforce planning and Continuous Professional Development

4.7 The data is laid out in Annex 1 and the parental survey as required by the legislation was completed in 2015 attached in Annex 2, which will be repeated in 2018 as per the legislation.

4.8 We have received many responses to the draft WESP, some of which have been responded to within the draft WESP attached prepared for submission to Welsh Government. Many respondents complimented Caerphilly CBC on their proactive approach to Welsh medium provision and that we are building on our existing solid foundations of strategies, activities and partnerships. The main concerns raised were in relation to the Welsh Government's target of 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050 and the need to increase the amount of Welsh medium education provision available. While recognising this need, we have also identified that many of our students lose some of their Welsh language skills when they leave formal education and so our focus will also be on working with our community based partners who support social opportunities to continue to use conversational Welsh.

5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

5.1 This report contributes to the Well-being Goals as set out in Links to Strategy above. The WESP aims over the long term to raise standards and increase the number of Welsh speakers through increasing the numbers accessing Welsh medium education, thereby developing the bilingual workforce as well as contributing to the Welsh Government 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050 pledge.

5.2 It is consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act in that school places are planned in the long term and capital bids submitted to increase provision in line with parental demand increases.

5.3 A focus on closing the gap in communities' aids and improving educational attainment standards aims to prevent the cycle of poverty being repeated.

5.4 The WESP has a regional approach where integration of provision where reasonable and feasible is endorsed. Integrating Flying Start provision or Cylchoedd Meithrin with their local Primary School and clustering Primary school provision with the Secondary school as well as

linking with the voluntary sector through Mudiad Meithrin, Menter Iaith and Urdd Gobaith Cymru, aids integration of provision and maximises resources available.

- 5.5 The WESP encourages a collaborative approach across services as well as regional collaboration including scoping for potential development of a regional Welsh Language ALN Professional Forum to enable improved support to our most vulnerable learners.
- 5.6 Involvement is intrinsic to the WESP development and delivery as the stakeholders are diverse and seek opinions across the borough from families, children, young people, professionals, both public bodies and voluntary sector. Stakeholders inform the content of the WESP and bring a range of views across the sector which is monitored for delivery through the local WESP forum.

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The WESP has positive equality implications linked to provision of sufficient places, access to resources and sharing of best practice to deliver the vision outlined in 4.1. The focus is on the development of Welsh language and improving standards across Welsh provision both in Welsh medium and where it is delivered as Welsh second language. Outcome 1 and 2 focuses on supporting and encouraging development of the Welsh language in early years and improving positive transition to Foundation Phase and throughout transition periods to KS4. Outcome 3, 4, and 5 focuses on improving standards in KS4 and KS5 as well as access to social contextual use of Welsh language to improve their language skills. Outcome 6 specifically focusses on support for children with Additional Needs including provision for specialist provision and a range of interventions. Outcome 7 focuses on the need for training and development of the workforce to ensure good quality language acquisition skills.
- 6.2 The Council's Equalities and Welsh Language Team, together with Mudiad Meithrin, Menter Iaith and Urdd Gobaith Cymru (voluntary sector Welsh Language organisations) are members of the Caerphilly WESP forum and have contributed to its production.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 This plan will be implemented through the Regional Welsh Education Grant, Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG) and Early Years PDG, Flying Start grant as well as additional funding to support Early Years childcare settings to improve Welsh language provision delivered through Menter Iaith £36,500.

8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no personnel implications in this report.

9. CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 There are no consultations that have not been reflected within this report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 Members are requested to give opinions on the draft WESP and recommend it to Cabinet for approval to publish the final WESP following Ministerial recommendations.

11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 To seek views and enable full consultation on the WESP strategic direction and targets.

12. STATUTORY POWER

12.1 Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013
Government of Wales Act 2006 (Section 78)
Welsh Language Standards Measure 2011
Welsh-medium Education Strategy 2016.

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Appendices:
Appendix 1 Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2017-2020