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The following report is an Information Item for the Education Scrutiny Committee.

1   Welsh in Education Strategic Plan Annual Update.

EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – INFORMATION ITEM

SUBJECT: WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN ANNUAL UPDATE

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To report to Members the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan annual update.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 The draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032 was publicised for consultation during the Autumn term. The plan aims to meet the new regulations and the target of 26-32% by 2032. While there was a relatively low individual response rate, there was a good response from key organisational stakeholders to support the development of future action plans.

2.2 Of the 15 responses, 13 were broadly supportive of our information and actions in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, with 2 against the proposals. However, 2 who were broadly supportive, also noted that they felt it would be better to organically grow and encourage the take up of Welsh medium provision and increase the use of Welsh language and that the target forcing an increase in provision may negatively impact the Welsh language.

2.3 One of the key areas to strengthen is the promotional work in the communication plan. While we have not included additional specific actions in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, we have committed to these actions being detailed in a more specific communication plan which will sit under the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and be delivered through two sub-groups under the Welsh Education Forum: one from an organisational perspective and one from the people's voice. The 10year communication plan will need to consider annual milestones to support increasing take up of provision on a localised basis, responsive data and case studies to understand the current picture as well as news updates on all projects under the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan that clearly show how they support the ambitious target of 26-32% by 2032.

2.4 Another key area to strengthen was the use of data. There was a need for clarity on different data from different data sources, as well as more localised data to

understand supply and demand and enable development work to be identified.

2.5   The latecomer Welsh language immersion policy needs to be developed following the scoping research currently underway with Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni and its cluster Primary Schools. The research will support policy development through appropriate governance processes during 2022 and implementation of latecomer immersion provision in the future.

2.6   There needs to be more detailed steps to improve transition rates both from Cylchoedd Meithrin to School Nursery and KS4 to Sixth Form. Both are critical and need to understand choices and support decision making with attractive options that remove perceived barriers.

2.7   There is a need to support Welsh learners. Increase opportunities to learn Welsh in adult learner classes in their communities and online and lead to qualifications to support our move along the linguistic continuum. There is a need to understand our Welsh learners' journey in English medium schools and how we support this with the relevant dataset. Innovative suggestions were put forward to bring Welsh A level students from English medium secondary schools into Welsh primary school classrooms to improve their use of Welsh in context and also act as a catalyst to increase the number of Welsh speakers into the Education workforce.

2.8   It is recognised that the development of Welsh speaking workforce is one of the most challenging areas for urgent priority. There is a need to and work at both national and local level to support the development of accessible, innovative career pathways into the Education workforce across all partners including Coleg Cymraeg. The work will need to identify how we also work with our English medium schools to develop our workforce to become confident Welsh leaners moving along the linguistic continuum. This outcome area will require a specific task group to take the work forward and meet our ambitious target.

2.9   The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032 will be submitted to Welsh Government in January 2022. The ambitious targets will be strengthened through the detailed delivery plans which will have interim targets including the consultation responses and suggestions, and will sit underneath the 10year plan. The 10year communication plan will also support the promotion required to meet each of the interim targets.

3.   RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1   Members note the collated consultation responses and agree the subsequent actions required to achieve the ambitions in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032.

4.   REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1   To improve the implementation of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032.

5.   THE REPORT

5.1   The draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032 was publicised for consultation during the Autumn term. The plan aims to meet the new regulations and

the target of 26-32% by 2032. We received 15 responses in total (13 prior to closing date and 2 just afterwards), 9 English, 5 Welsh and 1 bilingual. All consultation responses were analysed, and themes collated and contained within the body of this report.

5.2   13 responses were broadly supportive that our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan had sufficient information and actions towards achieving our ambition, although two respondents felt it would be better to focus on foreign languages. There were a number of respondents who suggested strengthening our plan in specific outcome areas with detail to achieve the target. 2 respondents were not in agreement that there was sufficient information and targets and felt there were 'bigger problems like mental health, behaviour and more specifically catching up…' However, 2 who were broadly supportive, also noted that it would be better to organically grow and encourage the take up of Welsh medium provision and increase the use of Welsh language and that the target forcing an increase in provision may negatively impact the Welsh language.

5.3   Organisation respondents:
•   RhAG
•   Welsh Language Commissioner
•   Estyn
•   Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol
•   Mudiad Meithrin

5.4   A number of respondents suggested strengthening of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan through more detail for plans to promote the Welsh Language including linking with the 5year Welsh Language Strategy and shared work between the Welsh Language Forum and Welsh in Education Forum. While we have not included additional specific actions in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, we have committed to these actions being detailed in a more specific communication plan which will sit under the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. Two sub-groups have since been established with members from both main fora: one from an organisational perspective and one to represent the voice of the people. Both groups have been set up to start the scoping work of current publicity and information material and how we ensure the Welsh language is promoted and not treated less favourably. The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan has high level actions which are being translated into annual and local milestones to reflect the needs of the borough. While there is an initial remit to scope and enhance existing information for families, children and young people, we aim to continue this with focus on informing parent choices, case studies, social media messages, and targeted promotional work to coincide with local school / provision development or expansion. We recognise this as a substantive area of work and as such the two groups will remain a sub-group of the Welsh in Education Forum and not be a specific task and finish group. This group is anticipated to inform delivery over the duration of the 10 years and have a more detailed plan of work with annual milestones in the 10year communication plan. One of the key links between the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and Welsh Language Strategy as well as a regional approach will be through the new regional Welsh Language promotion officer.

5.5   A second shared theme is more localised data sets to understand both demand and supply enabling a more local responsive approach to development of provision. This local fluctuating data set should be developed to hold live updated published data and in formats needed to support our many partner organisations to develop responsive provision. This more localised detailed dataset has been highlighted as

needed on our Welsh in Education web page and will be part of the sub-groups initial scoping exercise to understand what is available, useful, and how to present that data in a meaningful way for all stakeholders. We are likely to need information locally by type of provision, transition rates, availability, surplus places, take up, and the sub-group will need to inform how we define the data and analyse demographic needs. We will also need to define which data sets are complete and therefore to be relied upon. Some datasets contain partial information and when completed by provisions contain language inaccuracies that can make data a challenge to use reliably. There are differences currently in datasets published by Care Inspectorate Wales where there are datasets compiled from the annual assessment (SAS) which have had less than 100% return rates and also have inaccurate language descriptions due to human error. However, Childcare teams within the local authority hold data on all registered childcare provisions with the details of their language of setting and how many places they are registered for by the different type of provision. Umbrella organisations also hold details of their members but not all childcare settings are required to be a member of an organisation, so this raises an additional incomplete dataset. While there are useful datasets that can enhance the picture, this is a complex landscape and so local supply data may be preferable to the use of borough wide compiled datasets.

5.6   The capital programme and development of provision was welcomed but there needs to be easily accessible updates on our webpage to show how the additional places created are being taken up in conjunction with the 10year communication plan and local promotional strategy for that area. The webpage should contain news and progression updates and also update the availability of places and the subsequent take up to show the local position.

5.7   Development of a formal latecomer policy has been noted by some respondents. The initial scoping work is underway in a project with Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni and the Primary Schools in its cluster. Following the scoping work we will understand what would be needed in order to develop latecomer Welsh immersion provision across our borough. The research will form the basis of proposals for latecomer immersion provision to take to Education Senior Management Team and through appropriate governance structures to be able to invest in this moving forward.

5.8   There needs to be more detailed steps to improve transition rates both from Cylchoedd Meithrin to School Nursery and KS4 to Sixth Form. Both are critical and need to understand choices and support decision making with attractive options that remove perceived barriers.

5.9   One of the areas needing to be strengthened is how we ensure children, young people and adults are supported to learn Welsh. There were comments on adult Welsh learner classes in local communities or online and leading to qualifications that would support our move towards the linguistic continuum. There were also suggestions for consolidating the use of Welsh language of A level students in English medium secondary schools to have opportunities to use it in Welsh medium Primary Schools, which may be an innovative way to offer future workplace / career opportunities and increase the number of Welsh speakers entering the teaching workforce. There is a need to understand the data available for those studying Welsh at GCSE in English medium secondary schools with the changing landscape in datasets.

5.10   The development of workforce was the strongest area of concern for all respondents. There was an understanding that much of this work needs to happen on a national development platform using all levers available and working with all partners

including Coleg Cymraeg, our local colleges, sixth form and universities. However, there is also the need to promote and strengthen the pathway for learners to move towards entering the teaching workforce. This is a particular area of concern and there is a need to embrace all innovative ideas to progress the move to bringing more Welsh speakers or Welsh learners into the workforce and support them to feel confident to use their language in an Education context. In addition, work will need to be undertaken to identify how we work with our English medium schools to develop our workforce to become confident Welsh leaners moving along the linguistic continuum. The development of our Welsh speaking workforce is a cross cutting theme that will need a specific task and finish group to explore what is possible, where we need to strengthen the connections to relevant organisations or institutions, as well as how they link to the promotional groups to ensure the pathway for students and mature leaners is clear and accessible.

5.11 **Conclusion**

The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032 will be submitted to Welsh Government in January 2022. The ambitious targets will be strengthened through the detailed delivery plans which will have interim targets including the consultation responses and suggestions and will sit underneath the 10year plan. The 10year communication plan will also support the promotion required to meet each of the interim targets.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 There are no assumptions in this report.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 As this report is for information only there is no updated Integrated Impact assessment required. However, an Integrated Impact Assessment was completed for the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan previously.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no specific financial implications arising as a result of this report.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no specific personnel implications arising as a result of this report.

10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1 There are no consultation responses that have not been included in this report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Welsh in Education Strategic Plans Regulations (Wales) 2019

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