

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET

18 JANUARY 2022

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT

WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of the outcome of the consultation with stakeholders on the draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP).

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives / other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:
- **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focussed on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.
 - **Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient** - taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.
 - **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

3. Background

- 3.1 Section 84 of The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (“the 2013 Act”) requires a local authority to prepare a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (“the Plan”) and outlines that a plan must contain:
- a. A local authority's proposals on how it will carry out its education functions to:
 - i. improve the planning of the provision of education through the medium of Welsh (“Welsh-medium education”) in its area; and
 - ii. improve the standards of Welsh-medium education and of the teaching of Welsh in its area.

- b. The local authority's targets for improving the planning of the provision of Welsh-medium education in its area and for improving the standards of that education and of the teaching of Welsh in its area;
 - c. Report on the progress made to meet the targets contained in the previous Plan or previous revised Plan.
- 3.2 Cabinet first approved the Bridgend Local Authority WESP in March 2014 and it was subsequently approved by Welsh Government Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in June 2014. The Plan has been reviewed and updated annually prior to seeking approval from Welsh Government.
- 3.3 Following the rapid review commissioned by Welsh Government the timescales for publication of the WESP documents have been reviewed, as reported in Cabinet report (5 September 2017).
- 3.4 The Welsh in Education Strategic Plans and Assessing the Demand (Wales) Regulations 2013 ("the 2013 Regulations"), were the first regulations made under the section 87 powers. The Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) Regulations 2019 ("The 2019 Regulations") replace those regulations and make provision for a local authority to prepare a ten-year Plan, the first to have effect from 1 September 2022, subject to the Welsh Ministers' approval.
- 3.5 The purpose of these regulations is to improve opportunities for local authorities to plan Welsh-medium education provision in order to support the current and future expectation for growth in Welsh-medium education. Improving the planning of Welsh-medium education will also support Welsh Government's long-term national ambition for the Welsh language as set out in Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh speakers strategy, your strategy for promoting the Welsh language in accordance with the Promotion Standards under the Welsh Language Standards (No. 1) Regulations 2015 and also the introduction of a new curriculum for Wales.

4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 A consultation exercise on the draft WESP was undertaken with stakeholders between 27 September and 19 December 2021.

A copy of the consultation document was also made available during this time on the Council's website: www.bridgend.gov.uk/consultation

- 4.2 The outcome of the consultation has been analysed and a consultation report has been written (**Appendix 1**). The local authority has considered the responses received during the period of the consultation and has amended the draft WESP accordingly (**Appendix 2**).
- 4.3 In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales Regulations 2019) were amended. The Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020 ("the 2020 Regulations") came into force on 1 December 2020 and make changes to the start date of the next WESP cycle being moved from 1 September 2021 to a year later (to September

2022). The plan has to be submitted to Welsh Government for approval by the 31 January 2022.

- 4.4 The first ten-year Plan will commence on 1 September 2022 and expire on 31 August 2032. Each further Plan will commence on 1 September in the year during which the previous ten-year Plan will come to an end (ie 1 September 2032 to 31 August 2042). The Plan must include a target outlining the expected increase in the number of Year 1 learners taught through the medium of Welsh in the local authority area during the lifespan of the Plan.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

- 5.1 There is no effect upon the policy framework or procedure rules.

6. Equality Act 2010 implications

- 6.1 The WESP is designed to deliver the key principles of equality, choice and opportunity for all. An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has been undertaken on the draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plan which indicates that a full EIA will be required over the next 12 months which will provide monitoring data on which to base further decisions regarding the detail of the WESP.

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

- 7.1 The report contributes to the following goals within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:

- a prosperous Wales
- a resilient Wales
- a Wales of cohesive communities
- a globally responsive Wales

- 7.2 The five ways of working have been considered in the preparation of this report and are summarised below:

Long term Supports the statutory duty to provide sufficient pupil places and support the Welsh language.

Prevention The Council has a statutory duty to promote the Welsh language. The plan will ensure that children and young people will be able to follow a Welsh-medium education.

Integration The plan supports the promotion of Welsh education in the communities in which the children and young people live.

Collaboration The local authority will continue to work in collaboration to ensure that it achieves its vision as set out in the draft WESP plan.

Involvement Key stakeholders have been involved in drafting the WESP ten-year plan. Further engagement will occur with the consultation.

8. Financial implications

8.1 Local authorities are expected to work with their regional consortium to demonstrate how the Education Improvement Grant administered by Central South Consortium will support the implementation of the WESP.

8.2 With the exception of staff time there is no other financial impact on the Authority.

9. Recommendations

9.1 Cabinet is recommended to:

- note the outcome of the consultation with interested parties as detailed in the attached Consultation Report; and
- approve the changes to the draft WESP.

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18 January 2022

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Background documents

None

Attachments

Appendix 1 Consultation Report Draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2022-2032

Appendix 2 Draft WESP 2022-2032