

Meeting of Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1

11 April 2024

Recommendations / Information requested

	Recommendations / Information Requested:	Response:
<p><b>Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) (2022-32)</b></p>		
<p><u>Recommendations:</u></p>		
<p>1</p>	<p>Whilst acknowledging that the WESP Annual report 2022-23 predated the recent approval of the MTFs 2024-25 to 2027-28, the Committee expressed strong concern over the significant financial implications that now faced the Local Authority, which could potentially compromise the delivery of the ambitions and commitments contained in the WESP.</p> <p>An example of this relates to the proposal to increase capacity at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr and Ysgol Y Ferch o'r Sgêr as well as the development of a seedling school in Porthcawl, given the proposal in the current MTFs to reduce nursery provision to the statutory minimum from 2025-26. There was further concern relating to the Welsh medium childcare hubs and the fact that two hubs already built in Bettws and Blackmill still lay vacant and if providers could not be sought, would remain vacant. Not only was there a reputational risk to the Local Authority but also a financial risk to the Capital expenditure for further nursery provision and Welsh childcare provision, the latter of which also had ongoing revenue implications for the Local Authority.</p> <p>The Committee therefore recommended that:</p>	<p>A) The Welsh Government's 'Guidance on Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (2021) states that '<i>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 (that is, 1 September 2032 to 31 August 2042).</i></p> <p>Each sub-group has a sub-group development that breaks down the targets set within the WESP and have allocated timelines set against each action. These are working documents which captures all updates.</p> <p>If there are changes to Nursery and School Transport provision, actions and updates within the sub-group development plans will reflect these changes. These plans are attached.</p> <p>B) The updates for Bettws and Blackmill Welsh-medium childcare hubs are captured within the sub-group development plan.</p> <p>C) The Cabinet Member for Education is a member of the WEF and receives termly updates within sub-group meetings and</p>

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	<p>a) The Five and Ten Year WESP plan be amended and updated (if possible), to reflect the recent financial implications including the impact of any proposed changes to Nursery provision and Home to School Transport provision, which was also highlighted within the future MTFS budget reductions;</p> <p>b) That both plans be amended to reflect the current situation of the childcare hubs, as the plan implies that those in Bettws and Blackmill are already open.</p> <p>c) That the concerns of the Committee relating to the reputational risk of having vacant Welsh childcare hubs as well as the ongoing financial risk of revenue funding required for this provision, be brought to the attention of the Cabinet Secretary for Education.</p>	<p>is aware of the progress of the Welsh language childcare hubs.</p>
<b>2</b>	<p>The Committee considered the timescales of the Annual WESP report and recommended that they receive an update containing the draft Annual WESP report 2023-24, before it is approved by Cabinet in September 2024, in order that they can undertake pre-decision scrutiny and have a greater impact.</p>	<p>While we agree with the recommendation regarding the scheduling of future WESP Annual Review reports, due to timing issues, we propose that this recommendation actioned from 2025.</p>
<b>3</b>	<p>Whilst appreciating that the individual sub-group reports contain the latest updates, the Committee recommend that the larger five-year WESP Plan needed to contain those updates so that a full picture could be provided to the Scrutiny Committee alongside the Annual Report. If this was not possible, the Committee requested that they receive the subgroup plans with these updates.</p>	<p>To work effectively and efficiently with partners, the sub-group development plans contain all the relevant information and updates.</p> <p>The updates in the sub-group development plans are collated to form the WESP Annual Review Report.</p> <p>The sub-group development plans are therefore attached.</p>

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<b>4</b>	The Committee recommended that the Annual report contain figures and information relating to the work being undertaken with English speaking nurseries to encourage the use of Welsh language.	The WESP Annual Review Report will contain data and information relating to the work being undertaken with English-medium nurseries to encourage the use of the Welsh language. This data will be gathered and added to the next annual report and is also a target within Outcome 1.
<b>5</b>	Members discussed the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and through the medium of Welsh in regard to the school workforce annual census, which showed teachers skills across the board from basic to proficiency. The Committee noted that the statistics were in isolation and recommended that a comparison be undertaken with other Local Authorities of similar characteristics to assist Members in understanding the level of skills for teachers.	The WESP Annual Review Report template provided by Welsh Government requests data for Bridgend County Borough Council.  Due to the time of the data becoming available each year, it is unlikely that it could be contained in the same year annual report however it can be included in the report for the following year.
<u>Information Requested:</u>		
<b>6</b>	The Committee requested clarification on the four new funding streams that have been agreed by Welsh Government as priorities in relation to Welsh Language.	The Cymraeg 2050 element of the Local Authority Education Grant consists of 4 funding streams:  <b>Welsh Immersion Grant (£113,078)</b>  To maintain, expand or establish late immersion provision in each local authority area, so that it supports commitments made in local authority WESPs. A clear focus should be on increasing the number of learners accessing Welsh-medium education following late immersion support and thereby contributing to the Welsh Government's target of one million Welsh speakers by 2050.  <b>Siarter Iaith (£22,125)</b>  To bring all members of the school community together (the school council, learners, workforce, parents, carers, governors and the

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		<p>wider community) to increase the social use of Welsh by children and young people.</p> <p><b>Welsh in Education Grant (£159,482)</b></p> <p>To support latecomers' centres, professional learning to improve teaching through the medium of Welsh and help English-medium schools to improve the teaching of Welsh.</p> <p><b>Welsh Professional Learning (£119,187)</b></p> <p>To develop and deliver national programmes of professional learning to support the teaching of Welsh and through the medium of Welsh.</p>
7	<p>Members discussed the subject of parental support as well as the decisions behind parents choosing to send their children to an English medium or Welsh medium school. The Corporate Director of Education and Family Support advised he would confer with the School's Admission Team as to what information was available or could potentially be gathered.</p>	<p>There are many decisions behind parents choosing Welsh-medium education and the Welsh in Education Forum (WEF) plays an active role the role of promoting Welsh-medium education and benefits of being bilingual.</p> <p>The Childcare Team has created a booklet to support parents making the choice of Welsh-medium education. 'Why Choose Welsh-medium education?' booklet. The booklets have been distributed across the local authority and a poster with a QR code to the online booklet has also been produced.</p> <p><a href="https://www.bridgend.gov.uk/media/vf1dnh5p/bcbc-welsh-medium-booklet-1122.pdf">https://www.bridgend.gov.uk/media/vf1dnh5p/bcbc-welsh-medium-booklet-1122.pdf</a></p> <p>As part of the work of the sub-groups, promotion of Welsh-medium education is the golden thread. The WEF, along with partners, created a video to showcase the Welsh-medium journey in</p>

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		<p>Bridgend County Borough Council. The video was launched in October 2023. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Smxg5Fyq9gc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Smxg5Fyq9gc</a></p> <p>The WEF has also created an 'annual calendar overview' to promote the advantages of being bilingual using resources from our partners such as Mudiad Meithrin, school, RhAG, Welsh Government, Menter and Urdd.</p> <p>Learn Welsh has been successful in a 'Cymraeg yn y Cartref / Welsh in the Home' grant application to provide a part-time tutor to provide free Welsh language lessons for parents attending Welsh-medium schools.</p>
8	<p>The Committee supported the work being undertaken and support provided to pupils with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) in Welsh Medium education and felt that Members would benefit from receiving anonymous case studies where children with ALN have really excelled and achieved high educational attainment.</p>	<p>This recommendation will be considered by the WEF sub-group for outcomes 6 and 7 and the WEF sub-group for Promotion, marketing and celebrating. However, as every pupil and additional learning need is unique, we would have to identify a criteria for 'high educational attainment' or consider an alternative measure for significant progress made from individual baseline assessment.</p>
9	<p>The Committee requested further information on what incentive schemes were currently being run by Welsh Government to encourage and increase the number of Welsh-medium teachers.</p>	<p>Welsh Government offers the 'Welsh-medium education workforce capacity building grant' to all schools. The Welsh-medium cluster have applied for a grant. The closing date was 5 May 2024.</p> <p>Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol offer 'Dysgu'r Dyfodol' which is a scheme that provides mentoring sessions and work experience to university students who may be interested in a career as a schoolteacher (every subject except BA Education).</p>

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		Central South Consortium offers Welsh Government's 'Welsh language Sabbatical Scheme' which has a central role in developing practitioners' Welsh-language skills and ability to teach through the medium of Welsh. The Scheme provides methodology and Welsh language training for teachers and classroom assistants from primary and secondary schools throughout Wales. Since 2018, 27 teachers across 15 schools have utilised this offer.
<b>Annual Local Authority Scrutiny Report Central South Consortium 2022-23</b>		
<u>Recommendations</u>		
<b>10</b>	Members discussed their consideration of the last annual report brought to the Committee from the Central South Consortium (CSC) and recommended that pre decision scrutiny of the 2025-2028 Business Plan be built into the CSC planning process to enable the Committee to provide some value into the process.	It was agreed that the scrutiny committee would have an opportunity to review the priorities identified within the next cycle of business planning during the development phase, and prior to ratification by Central South Consortium Joint Committee. A proposal to extend the current business planning cycle until 2026 (due to the current ongoing review of school improvement models) will be considered by members of the Joint Committee in June 2024, and if approved, the development of the next cycle of business planning will not begin until 2025.
<b>11</b>	The Committee recognise the restrictions that Welsh Government has placed on the sharing and publishing of performance data in the public domain. It was however recommended, and agreed by representatives from the Central South Consortium, that it would be useful to include further detail of some of the ALPs performance analysis, such as the number of 'A' level entries, in future reports, as this would provide a more informed picture.	As agreed in the April meeting, more detailed information will be able to be provided on the number of entries for public examinations. This information would provide an opportunity to review the trends of number of pupils being entered for the different examinations (for example, GCSE, AS and A level). The provision of this information is permissible and is not within the restrictions

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		that Welsh Government have placed on the sharing and publishing of performance data in the public domain.
<u>Information Requested</u>		
12	Members requested additional information on CSC grant funding; how it is divided up and allocated, as well as clarification on the associated funding formula.	With the introduction of the Local Authority Education Grant (LAEG) for the financial year 2024/25, Central South Consortium is no longer in receipt of grant funding directly from Welsh Government. However, the terms and conditions of the grant for this period continue to expect local authorities to fund current regional arrangements in respect of some areas of the grant.