

Report of the Cabinet Member for Learning & Skills

Council – 14 April 2014

WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-17

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| Purpose: | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Council adopts the final Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2014-172. Council gives permission to submit the final statutory Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2014-17 to Welsh Government for its approval |
| Policy Framework: | The draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) Regulations 2013 as part of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013. The Welsh Medium Education Strategy. |
| Reason for Decision: | New statutory requirement from Welsh Government. |
| Consultation: | Legal, Finance |
| Recommendation(s): | It is recommended that: - <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Council adopts the final Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2014-172) Council permits the submission of the final Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2014-17 to Welsh Government for its approval |
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1. Background

The requirement to produce a voluntary WESP began in 2011 when the national Welsh Medium Education Strategy was published. This is the Welsh Government's vision for an education and training system that will respond in a planned way to the growing demand for Welsh-medium education.

The City and County of Swansea consulted on and published its first WESP for the period 2012-15 in autumn 2011 and updated it in autumn 2012. The two documents have been well received by Welsh Government. These documents can be found at www.swansea.gov.uk/wesp.

Publication of a WESP has now become statutory. The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 became law in March 2013. It requires local authorities to prepare and submit a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan for approval by Welsh Ministers and then to publish a final version.

2 Requirements

A WESP must detail how the local authority will aim to achieve the Welsh Government's outcomes and targets outlined in the national Welsh Medium Education Strategy (WMES). The aim of the WMES is to facilitate an increase in the number of people of all ages able to use the Welsh language with their families, in their communities and in the workplace. The WESPs is the key strategic document for creating an improved planning system for Welsh-medium education.

A WESP must show how the authority will carry out its education functions and set targets for improving the planning of provision of education through the medium of Welsh, the standards in Welsh-medium education and the teaching of Welsh

Statutory guidance is provided and this is prescriptive in terms of content. The WESPs must focus on how the authority contributes to the targets in the WMES. These are:

- more seven-year-old children being taught through the medium of Welsh as a percentage of the Year 2 cohort;
- more learners continuing to improve their language skills on transfer from primary school to secondary school;
- more learners studying for qualifications through the medium of Welsh;
- more learners aged 16-19 studying Welsh and subjects through the medium of Welsh; and
- more learners with improved skills in Welsh.

The following areas also need to be included, in both quantitative and qualitative terms

- Standards of attainment in Welsh and Welsh Second Language;
- Welsh-medium provision for learners with additional learning needs (ALN); and
- Workforce planning and continuing professional development (CPD).

Consultation Requirements

An authority is expected to consult key stakeholders on its draft WESP. In the draft regulations, Welsh Government specifies a list of consultees and has subsequently agreed an amended consultation period of 8 weeks. City & County of Swansea held a consultation from December 9th 2013 – February 14th 2014. The consultation met the requirements of Welsh Government. The responses are listed below in Section 3.

Approval Process and Annual Monitoring

The WESPs will provide the means for the Welsh Government to monitor the way in which local authorities respond and contribute to the implementation of the WMES objectives by:

- ensuring that every step of local authority education processes includes full consideration of Welsh-medium education;
- extending provision where a need is identified on the basis of improved planning;
- moving Welsh-language support services gradually away from the traditional roles of *athrawon bro* towards a new training and mentoring service;
- ensuring the delivery of Welsh-medium support services on the basis of consortia in the near future;
- improving standards and extending the use of Welsh by children and young people, and
- demonstrating progress against the specific targets in the WMES.

The WESP, or its annual monitoring report, are due for submission to Welsh Government by around December 20th each year. The WESP or report will then be considered and approved by the Welsh Ministers. If Welsh Government determines that the WESP requires further consideration, discussion between Welsh Government officials and the local authority will take place during the period January-March.

The final draft WESP 2014-17 will need to be adopted by Council in April 2014 in order that it can become policy.

The WESP will become operational from 1 April 2014 and must be published by each authority by June 1st 2014. Subsequent annual progress reports will be published alongside the original WESP at www.swansea.gov.uk/wesp.

3. City and County of Swansea Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2014-17

Preparation of the final WESP for adoption by Council and submission to Welsh Government

Swansea has benefitted from a partnership approach to support and challenge for Welsh language issues in education, bar those which form part of the Qed 2020 programme. *Partneriaeth Addysg Cymraeg Abertawe* (Swansea Welsh in Education Partnership) has been guiding Welsh in Education since 2008. It is a sub-group of the School Improvement Partnership. PACA consists of headteacher representatives from primary and secondary phases from both Welsh-medium and English-medium schools, authority and school senior officers and central staff who support schools. Operating such a partnership has become a requirement for all local authorities within the new WESP. PACA and other key stakeholders contributed to the draft and have agreed the changes in the final version.

The final WESP 2014-17 for adoption by Council and submission to Welsh Government is at Appendix A.

Consultation responses

The consultation which ran from December 9th 2013 to February 14th 2014 produced seven responses. Respondents are listed below. The full list and a summary of comments appears in Appendix B.

The main points raised are listed below. All points raised will be discussed with the appropriate services, providers and colleagues.

The Final version of the WESP has been amended and updated from the draft version. This does not constitute a major revision.

| Respondent | Main Points | WESP amended |
|--------------------------------------|--|--------------|
| Welsh Government (informal comments) | Additional information and targets sought throughout WESP | YES |
| Welsh Language Commissioner | Clarification of several points sought | SOME |
| Rhieni dros Addysg Gymraeg (RhAG) | The need for increased provision of school places | NO |
| Mudiad Meithrin | Pre-school | SOME |
| Cllr P Meara | Special educational needs | NO |
| Robin Campbell | The need for increased provision of school places | NO |
| School Councils | Responses to a questionnaire about all aspects of learning and using Welsh | NO |

4. Finance

Funding for activities in the WESP is provided through the Welsh in Education Grant. This grant is now allocated to the four regions in Wales, not directly to authorities. The grant must be directed to need.

The match funding requirement for the Welsh in Education Grant remains with each authority and is 33%.

The exact quantum for 2014-15 will not be known until a grant offer is made to the region and apportioned to each authority. The match funding requirement going forward is within the current budgetary provision and, following the budget principle of considering funding only at a level necessary to match fund and fully access grant funding, a substantial contribution is to be made to the Sustainable Swansea Fit for the Future budget strategy.

The approval and decision to proceed with the spending plan and acceptance or otherwise of funding offered will be subject to agreement annually. Ongoing service level provision will be dependent on the level of funding available and in line with regional and local strategic priorities.

5. Equality and Engagement Implications

An EIA Screening Form was completed with the agreed outcome that a full EIA report was required as this is a new policy. The full EIA report is attached as a background paper (Appendix 3). It was finalised after the consultation responses had been considered and does not identify any adverse equality impacts.

6. Legal

The statutory requirements are set out in the report. There are no additional legal implications associated with this report.

Background papers:

Previous years' WESPs can be found at www.swansea.gov.uk/wesp

Welsh Medium Education Strategy and its first monitoring report

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/welshmededstrat/?lang=en>

Welsh in Education Strategic Plans guidance 2011-12 - new Guidance for 2014-15 is not yet published online

<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/110805strategicplansen.doc>

School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2013/1/contents/enacted>

EIA Report

Appendices:

Appendix A: the Final Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2014-17

Appendix B: Responses from the consultation