

Consultation – Summary of Responses

Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2017-2020

Introduction

The consultation period began on 9 December 2016 and ended on 17 February 2017.

The consultation was published alongside the draft WESP 2017-2020 at www.swansea.gov.uk/wespstrategicplan. In addition to this, the vision statement of the WESP was discussed at the Pupil Voice Forum on 25 January 2017. The Pupil Voice Forum is a county-wide mechanism which enables elected pupil representatives from Year 6, secondary school and sixth form pupils to directly engage with the Chief Education Officer and have a say in decisions that affect them, specifically around education.

The total number of respondents to the consultation was 13. They are listed at the end of this document. Two further responses were received after the closing date of the consultation. Although their responses have not been included in the summary below, their views were also taken into consideration.

Eight questions were asked in the consultation document, one on the WESP's vision statement and one for each of the outcomes listed in the plan. The majority of respondents used the online response form or an official response paper form. Some responses were sent without using the form. Those responses were added to the others. An overview of the main themes arising in the comments and the results of the questions asked are noted below. In creating a final version of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2017-2020, all of the consultation responses in their entirety were considered.

Prior to finalising the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2017-2020, the consultation responses were shared with the City & County of Swansea's Welsh in Education forum, Partneriaeth Addysg Cymraeg Abertawe (PACA).

Summary of Responses

Question 1

The local authority has a key role in facilitating the growth in, and addressing the demand for, the access to the Welsh language and Welsh-medium education.

In the City and County of Swansea we want to provide high-quality education in the national language of choice, according to demand, and to a high standard.

Are the aims and objectives set out in the draft strategic plan sufficient to enable us to realise this vision?

Total Respondents	Yes	No	No response/form not used
13	1	5	7

There was a range of responses to this question. Some responses covered other outcomes, which have been reported under those headings.

Some respondents agreed that the aims and objectives were sufficient.

“A clear vision is proposed in section 1 of this plan to increase and improve the Welsh-medium education provision in the City and County of Swansea and this section responds to the requirements of the guidelines. A clear overview is given of Swansea's vision for facilitating the growth of the Welsh language and Welsh-medium education and a wide range of appropriate objectives is provided. The specific emphasis within the objectives on training and improving the skills of the education workforce is welcomed. There's a clear discussion regarding the responsibilities of the Welsh-medium Education Partnership in Swansea and discussion of how this strategic plan follows national policies and priorities.” – Welsh Language Commissioner

Where respondents disagreed that the aims and objectives were sufficient, this was due to a number of factors. These included the following:

Some respondents felt that the plan was not ambitious enough. This was often linked to outcome 1, with respondents commenting that they would wish to see an increase in the number of Welsh-medium primary schools and a reduction in how far children would need to travel to attend their nearest Welsh-medium primary school.

“In general, I am disappointed that Swansea City Council's plan is not ambitious enough. I strongly recommend that the city reconsiders the impression and the contribution that this strategic plan could have in contributing towards the growth of the language, both nationally and locally.” – name not supplied

Another respondent commented that the plan did not mention the Welsh Government's strategy to see a million Welsh speakers by 2050. Although the plan did state that it had considered the new Welsh Language Strategy consultation document, it did not specifically state the name of the strategy, which has been included in the final WESP.

The Pupil Voice Forum gave feedback that there should be a summary version of the WESP. This will be created and published alongside the full version of the WESP. For future versions of the WESP, the summary version will be developed at the same time.

One respondent commented that free transport for every pupil aged 16 and over is crucial in order to maintain 16+ Welsh-medium education. This has been noted.

Question 2

To what extent do you agree with the ways in which the local authority will respond to the following outcomes?

Outcome 1

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

Total Respondents	Agree Strongly	Agree	Do not agree or disagree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	No response/form not used
13	2	1	1	1	3	5

The question for outcome 1 received the most responses in the consultation.

There were responses that showed concern that the percentages of seven-year-old children being taught through the medium of Welsh did not show an increase during the period of the WESP. The actual number of pupils and cohort sizes have been added to the plan to demonstrate that the actual number of pupils being taught through the medium of Welsh is increasing.

There were a number of responses that requested additional Welsh-medium primary schools in the City & County of Swansea, for reasons for both travel and for capacity issues within specific schools. All of these responses have been considered. Outcome 1 has been updated to show that work has begun to inform the planning of future provision of Welsh-medium education in Swansea, including the development of priorities for Band B, which begins in April 2019.

Some respondents felt that there should be more long-term goals and an acknowledgement that this could be provided due to the three-year nature of the plan not being long enough to deliver a significant change in numbers. One respondent that the plan needed to state how the county intends to see a growth in Welsh-medium education and referring to growth in the past would provide a basis for planning for the future. Growth information since 2008 has been added to the data section.

There were queries around how Welsh-medium education will be promoted over the next three years. Welsh Government are developing promotional material to be distributed nationally and the WESP has been updated to reflect that this will be supported.

Where respondents agreed, they acknowledged that the outcome focuses on increasing investment and provision and the commitment to increase provision in the Early Years.

There were some responses that included the pre-school survey. One respondent felt that the Welsh Government's guidance was not being followed. All of the mandatory questions set out in the regulations are included in the survey; however, the City & County

of Swansea surveys the demand for all types of education. One respondent commented that there was a lack of detail on how the authority intends on planning on the basis of the findings of these proposed activities.

A comment on that the City & County of Swansea needs to ensure that enough Welsh-medium schools in Swansea respond to the demand for Welsh-medium education was noted.

The plan was amended in response to a comment that Mudiad Meithrin is commissioned to support and develop child care opportunities by receiving specific funds towards the Support Officer's additional hours.

Question 3

To what extent do you agree with the ways in which the Local Authority will respond to the following outcomes?

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

Total Respondents	Agree Strongly	Agree	Do not agree or disagree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	No response/form not used
13	1	3	2	0	2	5

There were responses that recognised the high transfer rates from primary to secondary school in Swansea. One respondent commented that there was a need to thank the school's Head teachers and teachers for this, as they have ensured this success through an effective bridging process which has been in practice for some time.

Some respondents requested further information on how secondary provision is promoted to primary schools and how to ensure the progress in the rates between pre-school placements and the Foundation Phase.

Some respondents felt that encouragement is key, including the local authority being supportive of initiatives and communities being supportive of events to give the language the opportunity to be used throughout the city. This has been noted.

Question 4

To what extent do you agree with the ways in which the Local Authority will respond to the following outcomes

Outcome 3 More 14-16 year old students studying for qualifications through the medium of Welsh

Total Respondents	Agree Strongly	Agree	Do not agree or disagree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	No response/form not used
13	1	3	2	0	2	5

Responses were received about encouraging students to study through the medium of Welsh, which would boost the language but also the economy/increase the number of Welsh speakers in the public sector to meet the needs of citizens.

Respondents felt that this would be dependent on/a result of the provision to primary and secondary age pupils.

Question 5

To what extent do you agree with the ways in which the Local Authority will respond to the following outcomes

Outcome 4

More 16-19 year old students studying subjects through the medium of Welsh in schools, colleges and work based learning

Total Respondents	Agree Strongly	Agree	Do not agree or disagree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	No response/form not used
13	2	1	3	0	2	5

Responses to outcome 4 were similar to those of outcome 3.

One respondent commented that it would be good if the plan detailed how it would develop public service subjects through the medium of Welsh in further education colleges, instead of describing current provision.

The importance of education prior to further education was included in a number of comments.

One respondent commented regarding the further education college and their offer of Welsh-medium courses being lower than that of Welsh-medium secondary schools. The respondent felt there should be some more specific and developmental targets and that public service subjects should be taught through the medium of Welsh to Welsh speaking pupils. This comment was noted, and consideration will be given to this through the ongoing development within the college.

Question 6

To what extent do you agree with the ways in which the Local Authority will respond to the following outcomes

Outcome 5

More learners with higher skills in Welsh

Total Respondents	Agree Strongly	Agree	Do not agree or disagree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	No response/form not used
13	1	3	2	0	1	6

There were responses that welcomed the launch of Tafod Tawe Welsh Charter and using the language naturally was important. However, one respondent noted that there are less second language students studying A level Welsh than 30 years ago, which would not help second language learners improve their skills to those of a fluent speaker.

Responses were received that identified that work within this outcome related to the work undertaken by individual schools and not leadership, projects or campaigns led by the authority. One response noted the lack of an overview of how learners prepare for the workplace.

The contribution from Menter Iaith was highlighted and that its future work may be dependent on funding. Amendments to the plan have been made.

One respondent commented that more schemes could be suggested to improve standards and achievement of Welsh First Language in secondary schools under Outcome 5, instead of wholly focussing on opportunities to use the language.

One respondent commented that definite targets aren't proposed in some areas under this outcome and targets could be presented in a more consistent way. This has been noted with some amendment to the plan.

Question 7

To what extent do you agree with the ways in which the Local Authority will respond to the following outcomes

Outcome 6

Welsh-medium provision for Additional Learning Needs

Total Respondents	Agree Strongly	Agree	Do not agree or disagree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	No response/form not used
13	0	4	2	0	1	6

Responses to this outcome included that the plan could note how the local authority intends to develop its services and ensure impact, e.g. Outcome 6, objectives are proposed regarding reviewing the provision and providing support as opposed to objectives, which propose a vision of achieving higher standards regarding ALN provision.

Question 8

To what extent do you agree with the ways in which the Local Authority will respond to the following outcomes

Outcome 7

Workforce planning and continuous professional development

Total Respondents	Agree Strongly	Agree	Do not agree or disagree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	No response/form not used
13	0	4	2	0	1	6

Responses to this outcome included that there needed to be plans to respond to the recruitment challenges and the need for strategic use of the Sabbatical Scheme.

Some respondents emphasised the importance of investing in the workforce and the development of a Welsh ethos. One respondent felt that some schools were not interested in receiving Welsh language training.

One respondent noted that the Authority lacked sufficient Welsh speaking education officers and highlighted that the National Centre for Learning Welsh has funding available for Welsh in the workplace. The plan has been updated to reflect the progress that has been made in this area and ongoing activity.

Consultation Responses

List of respondents who submitted during the consultation period

Responses on the consultation online or paper form

Individual responses (no name) x 8

Mudiad Meithrin

Freehand responses

Parents for Welsh Medium Education (RhAG) Swansea

Merched Y Wawr

Dafydd Jenkins

The Welsh Language Commissioner

Pupil Voice Forum

Pupil representatives from Year 6, secondary school and sixth form pupils

Responses received after the consultation ended

22/02/17 x 1

28/02/17 x 1