

City & County of Swansea

Consultation – Summary of Responses

Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2017-2020

Introduction

The consultation period began on 26 September 2017 and ended on 10 October 2017 and requested views to the amendments to the original WESP submitted to Welsh Government.

The consultation was published alongside the amended WESP 2017-2020 at www.swansea.gov.uk/wespstrategicplan.

The total number of respondents to the consultation was 27. They are listed at the end of this document. All responses were received within the consultation period. In addition, a specific petition was received relating the option to relocate YGG Tirdeunaw.

An overview of the main points raised in the consultation responses 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.

Summary of Responses

Outcome 1

The majority of responses were in relation to the additional information provided about increasing Welsh-medium provision in the County. Of the 27 responses, 24 were specifically in relation to the option to re-locate YGG Tirdeunaw to the Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Bryn Tawe site. The remaining three responses provided feedback on the WESP as a whole.

Two responses welcomed the ambition to increase the percentage of pupils in Welsh-medium education. One response stated: “There is an obvious attempt to identify a short-term, medium-term and long-term strategy (specifically in relation to the Welsh Government’s 21st Century Schools Programme) to satisfy the demand for Welsh-medium education, particularly in the wake of economic developments and proposed housing in the area.” Extra clarification was requested on how the additional number of Welsh-medium places would be achieved. One response felt that a table detailing locations/possible locations and numbers would aid understanding.

However, respondents felt there should be a greater focus on how to encourage, promote and create demand rather than just responding to demand. The issue of overcrowding/managing pressure in some schools was of a concern, as they felt it limited the potential for growth.

One response disputed the number of pupils attending one school. The figures are taken from the annual school census (PLASC), which is undertaken in January each year. The PLASC data is used to detail numbers in all schools for consistency across the plan. When the WESP is next updated, this will be done using the following year’s PLASC data.

One respondent described the impact of Welsh-medium education in Swansea communities: “There has been a growth in Welsh-medium education in Swansea as schools develop in their communities. There is clear evidence of this: where there is a Welsh-medium primary school in a community, between 15% and 25% of the community’s children attend Welsh-medium education; where there is no Welsh-medium school in a community, the percentage falls to between 4% and 8%.”

One respondent welcomed the review of catchment areas, however did not foresee a significant reduction on pressures at existing Welsh-medium schools.

One respondent welcomed the idea of a third Welsh-medium comprehensive school and encouraged the idea for discussion be included in this WESP. This respondent also felt that projection of secondary school numbers from now until 2023 would be useful.

Two respondents highlighted the role of early education to increase demand for Welsh-medium education and the need to further emphasise this. One stated “...there is superb detail on childcare in the outcome 1 section, and the importance of the pre-school period for producing new Welsh speakers should be further emphasised, therefore increasing the demand for Welsh-medium primary education. It needs to be made more explicit that increasing the proportion of children who receive care and early education through the medium of Welsh is a crucial strategy to encourage and increase the demand for Welsh-medium education in the area.”

Promotional material was circulated alongside letters inviting parents to complete the Welsh-medium Education Assessment, however further work to develop local promotional material, support Welsh Government's promotional material publicised in October 2017 and signposting of support for parents will be undertaken over the current academic year.

Summary of responses regarding the option to re-locate YGG Tirdeunaw

Two were supportive of the option and 22 were against this option. One wider response also noted an objection to this option.

Those supportive of the option cited the following reasons:

1. Co-location would ease the burden on parents having to take children to both sites currently.
2. Traffic/parking issues at the current school.
3. Shared use of leisure facilities at a new site.

Those against the option cited the following reasons:

1. Established as a community school in the area.
2. Growth since it was established proves that it is in the right location.
3. Success of the school in the journey towards the target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050.
4. Swansea Education policy opposes the idea of all-age provision.
5. Makes it more difficult for people from Clase to access Welsh Medium education, long distance for parents to travel twice a day.
6. Treboeth is the cultural home of the Welsh hymn Calon Lân and is a perfect location for a Welsh school.
7. The Bryn Tawe site would put the school in an isolated location.
8. Increased traffic at the Bryn Tawe site.
9. It would destroy the Welsh language in Clase and Treboeth
10. Relocation would lead to parents choosing an English medium school that is closer
11. Moving the school will not provide the additional Welsh medium places required in Swansea.
12. New school needed in Cwmdu, Manselton, Fforestfach or Portmead.
13. The school provides Welsh medium education for some of the most deprived areas in Swansea – moving the school would damage the school's brand and successes.
14. The school already has ample facilities on its current site.
15. Building an English medium school on the site would damage Welsh medium education in the area.
16. The move would increase demand in the Penderry ward but reduce demand in its current (and surrounding) wards.

A request was made to remove this option from the WESP.

A petition was received titled 'DIM SYMUD – YGG Tirdeunaw should be rebuilt on its present site'. The petition headline stated: 'We, the undersigned, parents, family, friends and supporters of YGG Tirdeunaw, feel strongly that YGG Tirdeunaw should be built on its present site and not be relocated at the Bryntawe site and that this becomes official policy under the Council's Band B Proposals (WESP 2017-2020).

Outcome 2

One response was received regarding outcome 2. It noted that the progression rates are very good, although in addition to the importance of transfer rates, increasing the numbers who receive childcare and early education through the medium of Welsh is just as important.

Outcome 3/4

One response wanted to see an increase in the use of Welsh across the County and believed that increasing the Welsh language offer in Gower College Swansea would facilitate this.

Outcome 5

One response noted that "...no definite targets are proposed for increasing the number of candidates who gain Welsh First Language qualifications under outcome 5, and it is not clear why it is necessary to refer to the appendix for these targets (which is inconsistent with the rest of the outcomes)."

The data has been presented according to the template received from Welsh Government, however in future revisions of the WESP the presentation of the data will be reviewed.

Outcome 6

No responses received.

Outcome 7

One response felt that a previous consultation response they made around providing information around more definite plans had been constructively responded to, particularly the detail of the Sabbatical Scheme. The respondent also felt that if such data exists, more information about the impact of the plans being discussed would further strengthen this section.

Consultation Respondents

Parents for Welsh Medium Education (RhAG) Swansea
The Welsh Language Commissioner
Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Bryn Tawe Governing Body
24 individual members of the public