

EDUCATION & YOUTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday 31st January 2019
Report Subject	Welsh in Education Strategic Plan
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Education
Report Author	Chief Officer (Education & Youth)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an overview of the requirements upon local authorities to produce and implement a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) to demonstrate how they will meet the Welsh Government's outcomes and targets outlined in the Welsh Medium Education Strategy (WMES). The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act (2013) placed a statutory requirement on local authorities to prepare and introduce a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, implemented from 1st April 2014 to cover a period of three years to March 2017, reviewing it on an annual basis. The Act enabled Welsh Ministers to approve the Plan as submitted, approve the Plan with modifications or reject the plan and require local authorities to prepare another Plan.

The implementation of the WESP is driven and monitored by the Flintshire Welsh Strategic Forum made up of officers, elected members, school representatives and other organisations linked to the development of the Welsh language and Welsh medium education. It is known locally as the WESP Forum. Representatives from Welsh Government regularly attend meetings of the Forum.

The Flintshire WESP for 2017-2020 was accepted by the Welsh Government in April 2018 and an Implementation Plan adopted by Forum. The operational action plans for each of the three key focus areas (Standards, Provision and Workforce) were agreed by the Forum over summer 2018 and the current WESP was signed off on 11th September 2018.

This report provides specific details about Flintshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan - how the Council meets its obligations in promoting Welsh-medium education, assesses the demand for Welsh-medium education, increases the number of pupils accessing their education through the medium of Welsh and improves standards of pupil attainment in both Welsh first and second language.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That members consider the progress made by the Council against the targets in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.
2	That members note the effective, multi-agency, partnership working within the Welsh in Education Strategic Forum which creates and monitors the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN
1.01	The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) has been in place since April 2014 and since then has been updated on an annual basis, in line with Welsh Government (WG) guidelines. The latest updated WESP 2017-2020 was approved by WG in April 2018 and was published on the Council's website in November 2018.
1.02	<p>The responsibility for producing the WESP sits with the Chief Officer for Education & Youth supported by an Operational Lead Officer for the WESP. The Plan is produced, however, by a very effective partnership approach between officers of the local authority, representatives from Welsh and English medium schools and other key organisations with an interest in promoting Welsh-medium education and the Welsh language. This wide ranging group is known as the Welsh in Education Strategic Forum. The remit of this forum is to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Agree, implement and review a co-ordinated approach that best delivers the requirement of the Welsh Government's Welsh medium Education Strategy within Flintshire.- Be responsible for the delivery of the action plan incorporating seven key outcomes.- Monitor, evaluate and consider the impact of the delivery of the action plan in raising standards in Welsh first and second language.- Forum representatives are expected to consult with and feedback to their respective associate stakeholders. <p>The Forum is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Education and Youth, and meets four times a year. Sub-groups related to each of the key priority areas meet regularly during the autumn, spring and summer terms to monitor the action plan and to review the strategic plan for submission to WG.</p> <p>The present membership of the Forum is as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Cabinet Member- Chief Officer- Senior Managers for School Improvement, Inclusion & Progression and Integrated Youth Services- Pupil Services Manager- Welsh in Education Team Manager- Headteacher representatives from Welsh-medium primary and

	<p>secondary schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Headteacher representatives from English-medium primary and secondary schools - Menter Iaith Sir y Fflint - Mudiad Methrin - Urdd Gobaith Cymru - Coleg Cambria - Parent Representative – RHAG/Syfflag - Governor Representative <p>The Forum works very effectively as a multi-agency platform for delivering and monitoring the WESP. All members bring high levels of knowledge and expertise to the Forum which are freely shared to achieve the common vision of promoting Welsh-medium education and the Welsh language. Most members of the Forum sit on one or more of three sub-committees – Provision, Standards and Workforce. These meet at least once a term to work on their specific targets and then feedback their progress in the following termly Forum meeting. These sub-groups have each produced a highly focused action plan to support the overall WESP.</p> <p>The Forum is also very robust in holding the local authority to account in its delivery of the Plan and achieving the targets contained within it. The forum membership is regularly reviewed.</p>
1.03	<p>The WESP has to begin with a vision statement by the local authority on its aims for Welsh-medium education. Flintshire’s vision, agreed by the Forum, is as follows:-</p> <p>“Flintshire County Council endeavours to increase the number of fluent Welsh speakers within its boundaries, with the aim of creating an increasingly bilingual county and country.</p> <p>Flintshire County Council is committed to supporting, expanding and promoting Welsh-medium education within the whole community, increasing the number and percentage of pupils receiving Welsh-medium education in compliance with the Welsh Government’s Welsh-medium Education Strategy of developing learners who are fully bilingual (i.e. fluent in both English and Welsh.)”</p> <p>The WESP contains an Action Plan outlining the 7 key outcomes/targets in the government’s Welsh-medium Education Strategy. The Plan contains information in relation to each outcome demonstrating the local authority’s current position, the policies in place, the processes and activities designed to achieve the targets and the progress expected. The Plan is updated every year to show the actual progress made.</p> <p>The outcomes/targets are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More seven-year old children being taught through the medium of Welsh. 2. More learners continuing to improve their language skills on transfer from primary to secondary school. 3. More learners aged 14-16 studying for qualifications through the medium of Welsh.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. More learners aged 16-19 studying subjects through the medium of Welsh. 5. More learners with advanced skills in Welsh. 6. Welsh-medium provision for learners with additional learning needs. 7. Workforce planning and continuing professional development. <p>The Plan contains a variety of appendices which provide performance data, details of the membership of the Forum and the range of statutory consultees.</p>
1.04	<p>One of the statutory requirements placed on the Council is to regularly assess the demand for Welsh-medium education. In accordance with the 2013 Act, the Council undertakes a detailed survey every three years and uses the information from this to plan for future provision. The first assessment was undertaken in 2009 and repeated in 2013 and 2016.</p> <p>As a direct result of the response to the 2013 survey the Council was able to expand Welsh-medium provision in Deeside. Parents indicated in the survey that having Welsh-medium provision in the local community, rather than having to travel longer distances to either Flint or Mold, would make it more likely that they would choose to educate their children through the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>The Shotton Infants building is now known as Ysgol Croes Atti Glannau Dyfrdwy. This is a satellite of Ysgol Croes Atti, Flint and is under the leadership and management of the Headteacher and Governing Body of this school in a joint arrangement with the local authority. This new Welsh-medium provision opened in September 2014 for nursery and reception aged pupils with the plan to grow it from ‘the bottom up’ and ensure its sustainability. It has now reached junior pupils and provides a KS2 curriculum. This satellite provides facilities for Welsh-medium education to the communities of Connah’s Quay, Shotton, Queensferry and Garden City, easing the pressure on Ysgol Croes Atti (Flint) and Ysgol Glanrafon (Mold). The local authority continues to support this venture in Deeside and is entering discussions on how the Band B funding from the 21st Century Schools programme can be most effectively used to further develop the Glannau Dyfrdwy site.</p> <p>In conjunction with Mudiad Meithrin, (the Welsh-medium pre-school association), a Cylch (Welsh-medium playgroup) has also been established on this site which provides early education and wrap around care for pupils. There is also a parent and toddler group which meets on the site. Providing a range of Early Year’s services to support child development and improve Welsh language skills is a critical factor in encouraging parents to choose Welsh-medium education, particularly if they are not Welsh speaking themselves.</p> <p>This approach of jointly located services is a core element of the Council’s strategy to encourage more parents to choose Welsh medium education in order to meet Outcome 1 of the WESP (to increase the number of 7 year olds in Welsh-medium education).</p> <p>The 2016 survey also confirmed that there is also a potential demand in the Buckley area. Pupils in Buckley currently access primary provision</p>

	<p>through the medium of Welsh at Ysgol Glanrafon, Mold. Future proposals for school organisational change could create the potential to establish Welsh medium primary provision in the Buckley area.</p> <p>The Council's Strategic Outline Programme (SOP) was submitted to WG at the end of July 2017 in accordance with their timetable. This is the Council's 'statement of intent' for the Band B investment programme. This included a number of Welsh medium school investment projects, including a new build for Ysgol Croes Atti and refurbishment and expansion of Ysgol Glanrafon.</p> <p>Over the summer of 2018 Councils were asked to submit financial bids to a specific capital funding stream for Welsh medium schools to contribute to meeting the WG aim of one million Welsh speakers by 2050. The intervention rate for this funding stream is 100% from WG. The bids needed to meet very specific criteria in relation to increasing capacity for Welsh medium education. The School Modernisation Team submitted a bid in June 2018 for investment for Ysgol Glanrafon for £3,049,608 and received confirmation that the bid had been successful in October 2018.</p> <p>Work is now underway to move this project forward which will include increased capacity at Ysgol Glanrafon and also integrated childcare and early years' provision to encourage parents to choose Welsh medium education for their children.</p>
1.05	<p>Key successes in meeting the targets in the Plan for 2018-19 recently submitted to Welsh government include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The increase of pupil numbers at Ysgol Croes Atti Glannau Dyfdrwy to 44 (September 2018), the first cohort are now in Key Stage 2 from their original start in nursery. - The expansion of Welsh-medium early education approved providers from 5 to 7 settings. - A new Cylch in Buckley is on target to open Easter 2019 with staff appointed and a high level of interest being shown locally. The interest in Welsh medium education in Buckley is growing. - The capital investment programme at Ysgol Glanrafon which will increase capacity and resolve building suitability issues. The creation of a continuum of wrap around Welsh medium provision on the site will make the school a major hub of Welsh medium provision. - An increase in the number of learners from English-medium primary schools choosing to access Welsh-medium secondary education through the 'Trochi' programme at Ysgol Maes Garmon : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> September 2016 - 8 September 2017 - 6 September 2018 - 16 - National Awards. All Flintshire primary schools have achieved the Bronze level award of the Siarter Iaith (Welsh Language Charter). By December 2018 one Flintshire school has achieved the Gold Siarter Iaith award and another has received the Silver Siarter Iaith award. - Cymraeg Campus programme. This is an approach for English medium schools where Welsh is taught as a second language,

	<p>similar to the Siarter Iaith programme for Welsh medium schools, to encourage children to value and extend their Welsh language skills. The number of Flintshire schools engaging with this project has increased significantly and now virtually all are signed up with the last remaining three having expressed an interest to join.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A highly successful Bilingualism Conference organised by GwE, was held in Flintshire on 22.11.18. A teacher from the Welsh Sabbatical course was interviewed about her experience on national radio following the conference. - 5 teachers are attending the Welsh Sabbatical course in conjunction with Bangor University (Canolfan Bedwyr) 2018-19, matching the same numbers as in 2017-18. Flintshire consistently sends more staff on these sabbatical courses than other North Wales authorities. These teachers are making significant improvement in the Welsh ethos of their schools on their return. A number of headteachers and classroom support staff, from schools both primary and secondary schools, are also attending Welsh sabbatical courses. The local authority acknowledges the WG funding in supporting this further professional development. - 3 schools have participated in a series of Skype training sessions in Welsh language skills for Teaching Assistants (in conjunction with Coleg Cambria) and another 3 will participate in Spring 2019. - High levels of participation in professional development opportunities delivered through the Welsh in Education Team locally and through the joint arrangement with Wrexham.
1.06	<p>Targets for improvement in future plans include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuing to increase the number of pupils in Welsh-medium education at all phases. - Progress the 21st Century Schools programme in relation to Welsh medium provision and the Welsh medium Capital Programme. - Continuing to raise standards of pupil attainment in both Welsh first and second language, particularly at transition from KS2 to KS3. - Improving the rates of transition from Welsh-medium and English medium primary school to Welsh-medium secondary school. - Increasing number of pupils from Cylch Garden City choosing Welsh-medium education at Ysgol Croes Atti Glannau Dyfdrwy. To deliver investment to improve facilities at Glannau Dyfdrwy as part of the Band B funding. - Updating the demand survey for Welsh-medium education to inform future strategic planning. - Reviewing the provision for support for pupils with ALN in the Welsh medium sector and consider future approaches through the ALN Transformation Bill. - Carrying out a survey of Welsh language skills of teachers and support staff working with pupils with ALN and targeting then with training. - Exploring the possibility of dual stream provision within the local authority through looking at examples of good practice in other authorities. - Continuing to support the development of federations if suitable models emerge which support Welsh medium education. - To include the WESP as part of Flintshire local authority statutory

	governor training. A presentation to be provided by Wrexham & Denbighshire Education Officers.
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	None as a result of this report.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Publication of this report constitutes consultation.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	None as a result of this report.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2017 - 2020

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None. Contact Officer: Claire Homard – Chief Officer, Education & Youth Telephone: 01352 704190 E-mail: claire.homard@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	<p>Welsh-medium education – where pupils are taught all subjects (except English) in Welsh and Welsh is the main language of the school.</p> <p>English-medium education – where pupils are taught all subjects in English, are taught Welsh as a second language and English is the main language of the school.</p> <p>Federation - The federation of schools is a legal process which enables schools to work together through a formal structured process by sharing a governing body that will make decisions in the best interest of all the schools, staff and pupils in that federation.</p>