

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

**CABINET EXECUTIVE
21st September 2021**

**REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Phyl Davies
Portfolio Holder for Education and Property**

REPORT TITLE: Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2022-2032

REPORT FOR: Decision

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to request Cabinet approval to carry out consultation on the authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) for 2022-2032.

The report is supported by the following appendices:

Appendix A – Welsh in Education Strategic Plan for 2022-2032

Appendix B – Draft Impact Assessment

2. Background

Statutory Background

- 2.1 The *School Standards and Organisation Wales Act 2013* requires local authorities to prepare a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) to set out how it will improve the planning of Welsh-medium education. Initially, the requirement was for local authorities to prepare three yearly WESPs. The Council has previously prepared two three-year WESPs, for 2014-17 and 2017-2020. These two WESPs were prepared in accordance with the *Welsh in Education Strategic Plans and Assessing the Demand (Wales) Regulations 2013*.
- 2.2 In 2019, the *Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) Regulations 2019* were made, which replace the 2013 Regulations. The 2019 Regulations require local authorities to prepare a ten-year Welsh in Education Strategic Plan instead of the previous three-year plans. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the 2019 Regulations were amended by the *Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020*, which make changes to the start date of the next WESP – in accordance with the amended Regulations, all local authorities are required to prepare a new ten-year WESP which will be operational from 1 September 2022.

Preparation of the new ten-year WESP

- 2.3 In December 2020, the Council's Cabinet approved a new Strategy for Developing Welsh-medium Education in Powys. This Strategy, along with the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys, have provided the basis for the Council's new ten-year WESP.
- 2.4 Discussions have also taken place with stakeholders when developing the new WESP, including a workshop with headteachers and discussions with members of the Council's Welsh-medium Education Forum.
- 2.5 The *Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) Regulations 2019* requires local authorities to set a ten year target outlining the expected increase in Year 1 children taught through the medium of Welsh in the local authority's area during the lifespan of the Plan. Welsh Government have set out an expectation that Powys achieve an increase of 10-14+% in the percentage of Year 1 children taught through the medium of Welsh by 2030/31. This would require an increase from 22.2% of Year 1 pupils taught through the medium of Welsh in 2019/20 to between 32% and 36% pupils taught through the medium of Welsh in 2030/31. The content of the WESP has been developed in order to contribute towards achieving this target.
- 2.6 The Plan is arranged based on 7 Outcomes which reflect a learner's education journey, and which are consistent with the policy areas of Cymraeg 2050 and Education in Wales: Our National Mission. These are as follows:

Outcome 1: More nursery children / three year olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh

Outcome 2: More reception class children / five year olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh

Outcome 3: More children continue to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another

Outcome 4: More learners study for assessed qualifications in Welsh (as a subject) and subjects through the medium of Welsh

Outcome 5: More opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school

Outcome 6: An increase in the provision of Welsh-medium education for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) in accordance with the duties imposed by the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018

Outcome 7: Increase the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and teach through the medium of Welsh

Consultation

- 2.7 The Regulations include a requirement for local authorities to consult for no less than 8 weeks with the following:
- Neighbouring local authorities
 - Heads of all schools maintained by the authority
 - The governing bodies of all schools maintained by the authority
 - All further education sector institutions within the area
 - In respect of any foundation school or voluntary school in the area:
 - a. The person responsible for appointing governors
 - b. If the school has a religious character, the relevant religious body
 - The Welsh Language Commissioner
 - The Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership
 - Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales
 - Providers of initial school teacher training
 - Such organisations providing services to children and young people as the local authority considers appropriate
 - Such other persons or bodies as appear to the local authority to be appropriate.
- 2.8 If approved by Cabinet, it is anticipated that consultation for a period of 8 weeks will commence before the end of September.

Next steps

- 2.9 Following consultation, the WESP will be reviewed and updated as required to reflect feedback received during the consultation period, and a post-consultation WESP will be considered by Cabinet in January 2022.
- 2.10 Following approval by Cabinet, the Council's WESP for 2021-2032 will be submitted to Welsh Government, by no later than 31 January 2022.
- 2.11 Following submission of the plan to Welsh Government, it is expected that the following steps will be undertaken before the WESP becomes operational from 1 September 2022:

February 2022 – May 2022	WESP consideration stage by Welsh Government, to include further discussions with local authorities as required
June 2022 – August 2022	Welsh Ministers to approve the WESP

1 September 2022	New WESP comes into force.
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- 2.12 After the new WESP comes into force, local authorities will be required to submit a review report to the Welsh Government by no later than 31 July each year.

3. **Advice**

- 3.1 It is advised that Cabinet approve the commencement of consultation on the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan for 2022-2032.
- 3.2 If approved, it is anticipated that consultation on the draft plan would commence before the end of September 2021 and would continue for a period of 8 weeks, and a post-consultation version of the WESP will be considered by the Cabinet in January 2022 before being submitted to Welsh Government by the end of January 2022.

4. **Resource Implications**

- 4.1 There are additional costs associated with implementation of the WESP, in particular start-up costs for new Welsh-medium provision, mostly related to staffing, rolling out the 'Trochi' programme, and capital expenditure for new Welsh-medium schools. Recent start up costs for new Welsh-medium Reception class in an English-medium primary school is approximately £60,000 p.a. The 'Trochi' Programme costs approximately £90,000, for staffing. These are being funded from a variety of sources including the Corporate Transformation budget and 21st C Schools Grant. Once new provision is embedded, the costs would need to be included within the Schools Service's core budget.

Any new capital developments would need to be costed on a case-for-case basis, and subject to business case approval.

5. **Legal implications**

(State here any legal implications and confirmation that the report has been approved by the Monitoring Officer)

5.1

6. **Comment from local member(s)**

6.1 N/A

7. **Integrated Impact Assessment**

(State that Impact Assessment is attached or if not, explain why an assessment is not required)

7.1 (To follow)

8. Recommendation

- To approve the commencement of consultation on the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan for 2022-2032.

Contact Officer:	Marianne Evans
Tel:	01597 826155
Email:	Marianne.evans@powys.gov.uk
Head of Service:	Emma Palmer – Head of Transformation & Communications Lynette Lovell – Interim Chief Education Officer
Corporate Director:	Dr Caroline Turner