

Formal responses to consultation:

- Mark Drakeford AM
- Estyn
- Ysgol Gynradd Gwaelod Y Garth Primary School
- Future Generations Commissioner for Wales
- Rhieni dros Addysg Gymraeg (RhAG)
- Cymdeithas yr Iaith
- Mudiad Meithrin
- Cylch Meithrin Creigiau



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*Cc: Cllr Sarah Merry, Deputy Leader and Education
Cllr Caro Wild, Transport and Strategic Planning*

16 September 2019

Consultation response: New primary school in North-West Cardiff (Plasdŵr)

We are very pleased to see a proposal and consultation for the first new primary school planned as part of the Plasdŵr development in North-West Cardiff. We are writing to respond to the consultation as the constituency representatives for Cardiff West in the National Assembly and the House of Commons.

We have always argued that the pace of housebuilding should not outstrip the pace of infrastructure development. It is therefore essential, with the first new residents having already moved in, that additional primary school provision is available as soon as possible. We are pleased to see this new school now being proposed, with an ambitious opening date of September 2021. We would not wish to see any delay to this date.

The proposed location for the school near the centre of the North-West Cardiff strategic site will make it convenient for families in many parts of the surrounding area, including new residents at Parc Plymouth and Cae St Fagans (the first of the new housing estates). However, alternative access to this location should be provided, with active travel options prioritised, so that the school-run traffic does not add to the already overburdened Llantrisant Road and Heol Isaf. Alternative travel options must be provided no later than the school's opening date.

Over a number of decades, we have both argued strongly that all parents in Cardiff West should have the choice of whether to educate their children through the medium of Welsh or English. We are pleased that this proposal will offer this choice, using a dual-stream system. Dual-stream schools have the added advantage of increased exposure to both

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languages for all pupils, promoting a culture of bilingualism. This of course fits well with Cardiff Council's continued support for Welsh-language education and the Welsh Government's target of reaching one million Welsh speakers by 2050. There are also challenges associated with the implementation of dual-stream education, meaning that governance arrangements and monitoring of progress at the school will be particularly important.

The current masterplan for the Plasdŵr site indicates that five new schools (four primary and one secondary) will eventually be built, as the local community grows over the next decade and beyond. We will be delighted to see the first of these schools built, and look forward to the momentum being carried forwards into the coming years with proposals for further schools, so that the whole community will receive proper education provision.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Drakeford
Assembly Member for Cardiff West

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Estyn's response to the proposal to establish primary school provision for the early stages of the development in Plasdŵr

Introduction

The proposal is by Cardiff County Council.

The proposal is as follows

- To establish a new dual-stream primary school with two entry classes (60 places) to serve the Plasdŵr housing development in north west Cardiff. There will be one entry class offering Welsh-medium education and one entry class offering mainly English-medium education but with significant use of the Welsh language. There will be a total of 420 places.
- To provide 48 part-time nursery places for the Welsh-medium stream and 48 nursery places for the English-medium stream.
- The proposed changes will be implemented from September 2021.

Summary/Conclusion

The proposal is in line with the Welsh Government's objective of achieving the target of one million Welsh speakers by 2050 (Cymraeg 2050: One Million Welsh Speakers), by increasing the use of the Welsh language in education in Cardiff.

The proposal is reasonable in addressing the need to provide more English and Welsh medium places by building a new school for the new Plasdŵr housing development.

The Council has considered a range of options appropriately and has selected the above proposal.

Estyn is of the opinion that this proposal is at least likely to maintain current educational standards.

Description and Benefits

The proposer provides a clear and detailed rationale for the reasoning behind the proposal. It states fairly that this proposal is in line with Welsh Government objectives to increase the number of Welsh speakers. It states validly that there is a need to increase the number of children receiving Welsh-medium education and, in addition, there is a need to increase the number of children who are fluent in Welsh who receive English-medium education. The proposer states clearly that targets in Cardiff will not be achieved solely by establishing new Welsh-medium schools. It asserts powerfully that significant change must be achieved in the way that children in English-medium schools are enabled to become more fluent in Welsh and to have the confidence to use the language.

The proposer has given valid consideration to other options. These include doing nothing; establishing a Welsh-medium school with two reception classes; establishing an English-medium school with two reception classes; and establishing two schools, each with one reception class. It identifies clearly the benefits, disadvantages and risks associated with the proposal and with the various options. The proposer makes an appropriate statement regarding preference for the proposal and makes a positive reference to its benefits. These include ensuring that provision is available to meet the

demand from the new housing development for nursery and primary school places. It states fairly that pupils would be taught in modern, high-quality buildings that would benefit pupils and comply with the Equality Act 2010.

The proposer has given sufficient consideration to the effect of the proposals on learners' travel arrangements and on the accessibility of provision. It states clearly that establishing a school with two language streams will mean that fewer families in the area will need to travel to another area in order to receive education for their children through the medium of their preferred language.

The proposer addresses in detail the numbers on the rolls of other nearby schools, the total number of surplus places and the projected demand for English and Welsh medium education. It states clearly that the new school will ensure sufficient places for the number of pupils that are expected to live in the new housing development. Balanced consideration is given to the implications of the proposal and other housing developments in Cardiff in terms of English and Welsh medium places in the secondary sector.

The proposer has given suitable consideration to the effect of the proposal on Welsh-medium provision within the authority. It asserts firmly that the proposal will have a positive effect on the number of places available within Welsh-medium education in the Cardiff area. In addition, it asserts robustly that it will benefit those learning the Welsh language within English-medium education.

The proposal's educational aspects

The proposer gives detailed consideration to the effect of the proposals on the quality of outcomes, provision and leadership in the school.

It refers validly to the outcomes of the most recent Estyn inspection reports on Welsh and English medium schools in the areas in question, and their categories and support bands.

The proposer comes to the reasonable conclusion that it does not anticipate any negative effects on the quality of standards of education, wellbeing, learning experiences or leadership. It asserts firmly that larger schools can provide greater stability at all levels of leadership and offer the opportunity to employ more staff with curricular expertise. In addition, relevant reference is made to the fact that a dual-stream school would provide greater financial security and stability than two separate smaller primary schools.

It claims strongly that the proposal will have a positive effect on pupils' education. This is because buildings on the site will include appropriate resources for delivering the new curriculum for all types of pupils including pupils with additional learning needs.

The proposer has conducted an equality impact assessment and asserts reasonably that the proposal should not have an adverse effect on any specific groups.

The proposer asserts fairly that the inclusion of nursery provision within the new primary school will offer a consistent approach to teaching and planning, providing continuity and progression in children's learning from the age of three.

The proposer has given appropriate consideration to disruption to other pupils and other nearby schools.

(By email)

Dear All,

On behalf of the Governors of Ysgol Gwaelod y Garth I would like to welcome the Council's intention to provide more Welsh medium education in the area. We would, however, as Governors appreciate more information on the potential impact the new school could have on the number of pupils attending Ysgol Gwaelod y Garth.

Many thanks,

Rhian Jardine,

Chair of the Governing Body of Ysgol Gwaelod y Garth

By email

18/09/2019

RE: Public Consultation

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for sending us a consultation for the construction of a primary school for the Plasdŵr development.

The Future Generations Commissioner for Wales has a very wide remit and only a limited capacity and resources. She receives a large amount of consultation requests and is, unfortunately, unable to provide a detailed response to all of them.

Having said that, Planning is one of the areas of focus for our office and we have been working with Welsh Government to change the national planning policy to align with the Well-being of Future Generations Act. You might like to know that our office was involved in the recast Planning Policy Wales to ensure that this fully embeds the Act. We are also currently involved in the work on the new Local Development Plan Manual and the National Development Framework.

As the Commissioner is keen to empower communities, public bodies, and other organisations to understand and use the Act directly, she has published Future Generations Frameworks. I attach some of these frameworks as they may be useful for your work. The frameworks set prompts to guide public bodies (and others) in formulating policies and taking decisions, but also to scrutinise such decisions or policies.

It is important that well-being objectives (of both public bodies and public services boards), the wellbeing assessments and plans, the statutory goals and the sustainable development principle (including the 5 ways of working) are considered throughout the process.

As you will see the prompts set out in the frameworks will be relevant to your consultation exercise (its substance and the way you use the five ways of working) and should, therefore, guide your work.

I hope that you will find these frameworks useful.



As I would like to create documents that are of great use for people and public bodies, I will continue developing my frameworks. Therefore, I would be grateful if you could provide us with any feedback on your experience of using them as part of your work.

Thank you in advance.

Yours sincerely,

Petranka Malcheva
Public Correspondence and Legal Officer



By email

Comments on

21st Century Schools: Consultation Document 2019

The proposal to establish primary provision for the early phases of the Plasdŵr development

Cardiff Council

October 2019

RhAG

RhAG is an organisation that represents parents of pupils in Welsh medium schools that want to see growth in the Welsh medium schools and Welsh medium education sector. RhAG believes, as does Welsh Government, that Welsh medium schools are the best school model for giving full skills in both languages to every pupil.

Background

The following comments are based on our opinion paper *Response to Cardiff Council Papers 18/4/19 on opening of a new Two Stream School (Welsh medium and bilingual medium) to provide a New Primary School in Plasdŵr area*, that was presented to the council for attention in May of this year.

We note the details of the proposal, being:

The new school in Plasdŵr will be a two form of entry primary school, with two language streams, arranged as follows:

- **One Welsh medium form of entry (30 places each year group)**
- **One mainly English medium form of entry with extensive use of Welsh (30 places each year group)**

This means that there would be a total of 420 places.

There will also be 48 part time places in the nursery for the Welsh medium stream and 48 nursery places for the English stream.

The proposed changes would be enacted from September 2021.

RhAG (Rhieni Dros Addysg Gymraeg) are completely supportive of opening:

Option 1: A Welsh medium school sharing a site with an English medium school, with a federal Headteacher if the Head is a fluent Welsh speaker. This has worked effectively on a number of sites in Cardiff in recent years as it has ensured smooth running of both schools on a day to day basis, ensuring their independence. In time, the school could develop into a two stream Welsh medium school on that

site or a nearby site as demand for Welsh medium education develops and as Plasdŵr grows. If this is not practicably possible, we would support Option 2.

Option 2: Independent Welsh stream in a Two Stream School, sharing a Headteacher if the Head is a fluent Welsh speaker. It is imperative to protect the independence of the Welsh medium stream to be able to provide conditions for immersive education. This would provide for the growth of Welsh medium education locally as the development grows during its first phase. The Stream could grow and develop into a two stream Welsh medium school on that site, or a nearby site, as demand for Welsh medium education increases and as Plasdŵr grows.

The Welsh Medium Stream

It is positive to see that the council wants to expand Welsh medium education in this area, by establishing new Welsh medium provision. We are completely supportive of this and welcome all new Welsh medium developments. As new housing estates are built it's crucial that linguistic considerations are central to those plans. This will ensure that parents that establish homes in the area can choose Welsh medium education that is convenient and local.

We know that it is this model of immersive education that has been recognized internationally and also by Welsh Government as the only model that works to create completely bilingual citizens, in areas where over 90% of pupils come from non-Welsh speaking homes. RhAG has over 40 years' experience of researching and observing different models in non-Welsh speaking areas.

Therefore, while we welcome the plans, we are calling for the safeguarding of this immersive education model in any development.

That is why **immersive education** is so successful in an area where the majority of pupils are from a non-Welsh speaking background.

1. It is internationally recognised that immersive education affords a child the best possible chance to acquire a language, and to become fluent in it. It is common, for instance, in Canada.
2. Immersive education means the language of instruction and also:
 1. whole of school activities; assemblies and so on
 - ii. wider activities in the curriculum; sports and so on
 - iii. language of out of school activities: visits and so on
 - iv. the informal language children use amongst themselves: on the yard, during breaks and lunchtime
3. generally speaking, with regards to the child and his language, the second language (Welsh in this instance) has to have a completely solid role in one 'domain' of his life in order to become completely fluent. Today around 95% of children who attend Welsh medium schools come from English speaking families, where English is the main or only language of all domains, e.g. the home, entertainment, wider family, leisure activities, media. Welsh needs to be the main

language of at least one domain, and Welsh medium immersive education is a way of safeguarding this.

4. Welsh medium schools contribute culturally to a child's development, as well as educationally, as these schools introduce the culture of Wales in its entirety, e.g. folk and contemporary songs, competing, literature, history and drama.
5. The linguistic success of Welsh medium schools are dependent on the Headteacher and all the staff being Welsh speakers and use the language with pupils at all times.
6. Welsh medium schools depend on the co-operation of parents, who wish for their children to be able to master Welsh and English, and accept that Welsh will be the medium of instruction. This co-operation is a crucial part of the success of Welsh medium schools.

In considering the Welsh medium stream, this is what needs to be safeguarded with any two stream model in a non-Welsh speaking area:

1. In considering opening a two stream school **in a non-Welsh speaking area** (which is different to other areas of Wales where Welsh is used naturally outside of school), it is imperative to protect the linguistic development of pupils that attend the most efficient model of learning Welsh, ie immersive education, to become completely bilingual citizens. **The success of the other model shouldn't be at the expense of this success, and the numbers of this model still need to be increased and recognise that this is the only completely successful model, whatever the other stream that is considered alongside it.**
2. In a two stream situation in a non-Welsh speaking area, the (English medium or partly English medium) streams must remain independent in order to ensure the continued success of Immersive Welsh medium education. They must be run independently, separate services, play-time, extra-curricular activities, sports and clubs. (They can share the same Head, if the Head is a fluent Welsh speaker, as is the situation in Ysgol Creigiau).
3. In the Welsh stream, it has to be ensured that Welsh is essential as the mode of communication in order to ensure complete language sphere experiences. In linguistic situations where there is a choice between two languages, the minority language will lose out, and the majority language (English in this situation) will prevail. English will always prevail, Welsh will always lose. As a result the language grasp will weaken.
4. It has to be ensured that the 'partnership' between the streams doesn't undermine the work of immersive education, which is the proven model. We refer to the section **'How will children in the Welsh medium stream learn? (p.8)** The consultation document says that English will be introduced as a subject in KS2; this has proved to be completely successful in Welsh medium schools in non-Welsh speaking areas and in all Welsh medium primary schools in Cardiff, and children leave primary school having the same level of English and Welsh linguistic skills. This therefore is a model that works.

BUT the document says that English '**would be introduced as ... medium of instruction for some elements of the curriculum**'. This is not the definition of an immersive Welsh medium education. This goes against the principles of immersive education, and turns the clock backwards decades, after research and experience has discovered and proven which model is more efficient with **a minority language in non-Welsh speaking areas**. This does not ensure immersive education and will mean that English will become the language of communication and education in lessons/practice between pupils, thereby braking the good practices of immersive education. (e.g. the experience of Ysgol Gynradd Login Fach in Swansea that's referred to bellow, the experience of the 80s generation in non-Welsh speaking areas of south Wales, where teachers had to speak English with pupils in lessons because of the medium of the subject, thereby compromising the immersive education and a number of pupils going on to English medium secondary education. The Welsh medium schools in non-Welsh speaking areas of south Wales have learnt since then and that is why this current model is a success. This stream is not a new or experimental model and does not break new ground. In areas of Wales where Welsh is a naturally spoken language and therefore secure this has been more commonplace, but in non-Welsh speaking areas it has been proven that **this does not ensure that non-Welsh speaking pupils have adequate language spheres**, and doesn't ensure that Welsh is the language of communication. It will weaken the grasp of Welsh that pupils from non-Welsh speaking backgrounds have.

In addition, this goes against the grain of all Welsh medium school in Cardiff and nearby counties, and against the grain of Secondary Welsh medium schools in Cardiff that this school will feed into. All subjects apart from English are taught through the medium of Welsh. **As a result the most likely result will be not to strengthen the language in any way, but to weaken it, and so these pupils will be disadvantaged on arriving at a Welsh medium secondary school as their co-pupils will have higher language skills.** This could have a detrimental effect on the numbers that transfer to Welsh medium secondary schools, where all subjects are taught through the medium of Welsh, a matter that the government has been keen to see being increased across Wales.

The idea of introducing the curriculum and teaching bilingually in a Welsh medium stream goes against all the government's emphasis of trying to grow teaching through the medium of Welsh in primary schools, secondary schools, further education and with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol. The growth of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol in universities in Wales, the growth of Further Education and Welsh medium qualifications are completely dependent on the success of Welsh medium primary and secondary education, where there is opportunity to learn all subjects through the medium of Welsh. This is what has allowed the development of Welsh medium subjects to university level during the last two decades. So on the one hand the government does its best to increase Welsh medium education, but this plan cuts across that success by offering subject in English in the Welsh medium stream. This turns the clock backwards, not forwards. We are concerned that your desire to reach a target of a million Welsh speakers is in danger of endangering Welsh medium education. By introducing more Welsh into the English medium stream, which is valid, the model that has proven to be the most successful in creating bilingual citizens in non-Welsh speaking areas shouldn't be messed with.

This is the model that has ensured the growth of Welsh in non-Welsh speaking areas over the past few decades. It works, so why turn the clock back?

Dangers of streams mixing

If following a two stream model (Welsh medium and English medium) learning together, and using the language in whole of school activities, the emphasis will be on English, as that is the establishment's common language – its lingua franca. In our experience of two stream schools, English is the language used mainly on the yard, on visits, during sports etc. In a mixed two stream school it is likely that Welsh would only be the main language when used as a medium of instruction in the Welsh medium stream, and this is very different to the whole linguistic experience of Welsh medium education. With regards to the idea of a two stream school in Cardiff, parents brought to our attention recently that the language of communication on school trips/concerts changes to English as the streams mix, as the language of the trip changes to English and then English becomes the language amongst the pupils. Parents are concerned about this.

Consideration of financial implications and sustainability

It is often the experience of dual stream schools (but not always) of creating a competition, whereby the parents choose the most popular stream and one stream becomes unsustainable and costly. It is not often that numbers are equal. In a rural area it can be difficult to avoid two streams, but in an urban area there is an opportunity to do that. But we don't want to endanger the opening of a Welsh medium stream – we know from years of experience that this stream will grow over time.

Conclusion

We don't want to lose the opportunity of an extra Welsh medium stream. If proposed, **the unquestioned immersive conditions in the Welsh medium stream must be guaranteed.**

The English Medium Stream

The county needs to consider carefully the ramifications of the experimental English medium stream that is proposed.

In considering the English medium stream, increasing the pupils' grasp of Welsh is positive in all respects. Nobody doubts this. But **knowledgeable decisions** need to be made regarding the type of stream, and not to deceive ourselves of the likely attainment with regards to language skills. The consultation document states that 'Welsh would be used as medium of teaching or learning for up to 50% of the curriculum...'. This is an ambiguous and unclear statement, the percentage could vary greatly in reality and the linguistic effect of that could be substantial. And RhAG's opinion is that this shouldn't be at the expense of developing Welsh medium education, which is the only model that creates completely bilingual citizens in all reality.

1. Any Head of a Welsh medium school can attest that a wholly Welsh medium education is required in order to give pupils the necessary linguistic patterns to become fluent speakers. The immersive spheres are required for a pupil to become fluent. (Ysgol Bro Pedr 3-18, Lampeter, for instance, have just decided to turn the foundation phase to be completely Welsh medium, rather than providing two streams Welsh medium and English medium. A similar model didn't succeed in Ysgol Login Fach, Swansea. This followed an experiment offering Welsh medium in the morning and English medium in the afternoon. **In a non-Welsh speaking area** the pupils' Welsh was way behind those in Welsh medium schools, and pupils failed to cope with Welsh medium secondary education. Following this, Swansea council changed Login Fach into a Welsh medium school, at the request of the school's governing body.
2. It is expected that 50% of pupils in the English stream will be able to say that they are able to speak Welsh in non-Welsh speaking schools. Does this mean that 50% are expected to fail? What is 'speaking' Welsh must be defined. (A definition of fluency is needed). It is likely that the rate of success in a Welsh medium school would be 95%, and the success of other models between 5-10% if looking at similar previous models. If speaking Welsh at a basic level is the definition of 'speaking Welsh' we will have deceived ourselves, and the million speakers will be nothing more than an accounting exercise, rather than increasing the real number and fluency of Welsh speakers. Welsh medium pupils will reach the highest levels on the new language continuum, while the rest will be at the lowest levels. So we should not deceive ourselves that this model will solve our problems.
3. Teachers with fluent Welsh language skills need to be appointed to work in the English medium stream. The best teachers will choose to work in the Welsh medium stream as they are Welsh medium teachers and see a value in that and will have been trained accordingly. There is a shortage of teachers, and a huge shortage of Welsh medium teachers. To support Welsh in the English medium stream, staff with good Welsh language skills would have to be appointed, but they will not be able to offer a role model of using Welsh informally, as it will always be easier for pupils to communicate in English and it won't be a communicating requirement. It is clearly possible to see it failing as a model and that the pupils will not have enough language patterns, and that Welsh will not be used either formally or informally. The effect of this will be either to turn it over time into a Welsh medium stream or to turn it into an English medium stream with staff unable to speak Welsh.
4. How would the teacher operate from day to day linguistically? By not making Welsh an essential requirement, pupils will use English naturally. It is highly unlikely to create fluent Welsh speakers. Do not expect this to be a magic wand for the council.
5. We note with some concern the following claim in the consultation paper:
"In this new school the expectation is that pupils in the mainly English stream will have gained the confidence and skills to be able to transfer to the language of their choice."

“One of the aims of the proposed model is to give parents confidence that their child would succeed to the same degree in either medium at the school. Pupils would receive adequate support to transfer, with suitable immersive opportunities allowing them to reach the necessary fluency to be able to go on to a full curriculum through the medium of Welsh.” (p.9)

This statement is made, but on what evidence with regards to pedagogy or academic research is it based? What exactly is meant with ‘adequate support to be able to transfer’ and ‘suitable immersion opportunities’? There is too much ambiguity and we know that reality and experience are vastly different. It gives a basic false impression that you can compare a Welsh language immersion model with the experimental English medium model concerned here. That is not a fair nor meaningful offer to pupils or parents and misleads with regards to likely linguistic outcomes. It is completely misleading to assert that pupils would gain the same linguistic skills in both streams; it undermines the work of the Welsh medium stream and creates a false perception with regards to the outcomes of the experimental model, while also placing great strain on the English medium stream to reach the same linguistic standards while having different conditions.

Which secondary schools will the pupils attend? There is no planning to deal with this? The continuous paths are not clear, and the experience of the majority will be a step back when progressing to secondary education unless a similar linguistic provision will have been planned by the council, which is an educational failure that a body like *Estyn* should measure. It is possible to foresee that their linguistic skills will not be able to cope with a Welsh medium school, history has proven that. We recognize the tremendous work that the Immersion Unit does for Latecomers, but making good the shortcomings of the English medium stream is not its purpose, if that happens then this ‘experiment’ will have failed because they don’t have the requisite linguistic skills. The Unit’s capacity is small. What plans would there be to expand and develop the Unit to accept more pupils if needed? It wouldn’t be possible for them to cope with a substantial increase in their service without a large injection of cash to adequately develop the service.

6. We are concerned to see the reference to this sentence. **‘ this innovative approach has the potential to serve as a model of linguistic excellence, that will be able to support new practice in other schools in Cardiff.’** (p.8) We are concerned that this could set a confusing precedent with regards to the capital’s schools’ linguistic models. We note that other counties, including Rhondda Cynon Taf, intend to turn their dual stream parallel schools into Welsh medium schools over the next few years. This is a development that we welcome very much and which reflects Welsh Government’s policy that Welsh medium schools are the most efficient with regards to creating speakers equally capable in both languages.

Early Years Provision

We welcome the intention to establish 48 part time nursery places for the Welsh medium stream. Once again that stream’s independence needs to be maintained with regards to language acquisition.

What discussions have there been with Mudiad Meithrin with regards to establishing a Cylch Meithrin on the site? That would create an earlier entry point for Welsh medium education, and would strengthen the language continuum and would establish a clear pathway for parents as they make their decisions on their children's education.

Secondary Provision

We know that there is tremendous pressure on Welsh medium secondary school places in Cardiff, especially in the west of the city.

We recognise and welcome the county's intention to increase the number of pupils accepted to Ysgol Plasmawr from 180 to 210 from September 2020 onwards. But it has to be emphasised that this is only a short term answer.

In expanding primary provision it is inevitable that this will have an effect on the demand for secondary places. The housing developments in the west of the city also mean that imminent action is needed to review the current provision and catchments in order to react to the increase in demand.

We note the intention to present proposals in a timely manner to ensure that there will be enough places to meet demand and avoid a situation where pupils will be refused. We strongly insist the council must act immediately in order to present proposals to address the situation. Planning needs to start now to ensure that the provision will be there and on time.

Catchment Areas

The consultation paper notes that if the proposal to establish the school were to go ahead, that further consultation would be needed to review catchment arrangements.

We recommend that this happens as soon as possible in order to give assurance and clarity to parents in the area and to provide assurance and stability to nearby Welsh medium schools. There have been a number of examples over the last few years where the county's slowness in completing important work has hampered the growth of new schools e.g. Ysgol Glan Ceubal. Furthermore, it is a continuous cause of concern for us that Ysgol Hamadryad, as the latest Welsh medium school to open back in 2016 still hasn't got an official catchment area.

Conclusion

The 'bilingual attempt' is a numbers exercise, because the Government somehow has to get a million speakers by 2050. That has to happen through the English medium sector as the document mentions in order to reach the required numbers. We are of course supportive of developing Welsh in English medium schools, but **it has to be accepted at the same time that this will not succeed without a huge investment. It is easy to call for a million Welsh speakers but it is impossible to make that real without a financial and educational revolution.** See a quote from a recent article ('Welsh For All – The Dangers' in *Barn* of April 2019 by RhAG's researcher:

*There are 1261 primary schools in Wales (WG statistics, 2018 are the number of schools and staff in this paragraph), and around 400 of these are Welsh medium schools. Let us think for a second about the scale of any comprehensive programme to teach Welsh in English medium schools. There are around 26,000 teachers in Wales and a further 27,000 support staff. If we take that around a quarter of these are in Welsh medium education, and that already there are a few thousand competent Welsh language skills teachers amongst those in the English system, language training would be needed for around 17,000 teaching staff and the same amount of support staff. **Is the Government willing to finance this, over say a ten year period? This is a suggestion of the type of effort that will be required: the language would have to be taught or language training given to 3,000 a year, and employ 300 full-time staff to provide this training. Including admin costs, I estimate that an investment of £10million a year is needed for this.***

*But it will not be as easy as that either. Where will the training staff come from in the first instance?... The truth is that it is completely fanciful to think it possible to succeed with the continuum without transforming the education establishment. **The greatest resource needs to be placed where success is guaranteed – namely in Welsh medium education...***

We have seen already in the Rhondda, as Treorchy Comprehensive trialled the introduction of Welsh medium education for some pupils, that pupils were attracted there rather than continuing with their Welsh medium school education. Even with the best will in the world, it is difficult to see how pupils in any English medium school will be able to have any sphere of their life as a Welsh sphere – an element that's part and parcel of the lives of Welsh medium pupils. We need to be extremely cautious.

If a million Welsh speakers is to be a realistic target, and accepting that the target will in the main be reached through schools, the target needs to be treated intelligently. Only Welsh medium schools can give every pupil complete Welsh language skills. There is nothing wrong in teaching Welsh more effectively in English medium schools, in the hope that they'll be able to ask for a cup of coffee in Welsh, but pretending to reach the target of a million by saying that 200,000 English medium pupils are 'Welsh speakers' instead of 'Welsh second language' speakers would be a deceit.

Additional comments

I would like to draw attention to a discrepancy between the Welsh and English versions of the consultation paper:

- Table 4 and 5 – different pupil data. We note that the correct version is the English version.
- The section that refers to lack of places in the Welsh and English sector varies. Once again, the English is correct.

Dear Cardiff Council

This is the Cardiff Branch of Cymdeithas yr Iaith's response to your consultation on opening a new school at Plasdŵr.

Yours sincerely,

Cardiff Branch

Cymdeithas yr Iaith

Plasdŵr School Consultation

Response of Cardiff branch of Cymdeithas yr Iaith

1. Cymdeithas yr Iaith is an organisation that campaigns for the Welsh language using non-violent means as well as campaigning for all the communities in Wales. The Cardiff Branch is the local branch of the Cymdeithas in the capital.
2. **We can summarize the main points of our response to the consultation as follows:**
 - We believe that the new school at Plasdŵr should be a designated Welsh medium school with two Welsh streams, not a bilingual school.
 - We welcome the proposal to establish nursery provision on the site along with the school, but we believe that this should be a Welsh medium nursery only.
 - We welcome the proposal to provide services and activities at the site, such as breakfast clubs and holiday clubs, and we believe that these should be Welsh medium services.
 - Furthermore, we believe that all the new schools that will be opened as part of the Plasdŵr development should be Welsh medium schools only, in order to ensure that all young people in the Community can grow up speaking Welsh.
 - In order for Cardiff to make the necessary contribution needed towards the national aim of a million Welsh speakers, the city has to make a dramatic and rapid increase in the percentage of children in Welsh medium education in the city, therefore a Welsh medium school is what is needed at Plasdŵr.
3. Opening a brand new school for this housing development presents a golden opportunity to rapidly increase Welsh medium education provision in the area and start normalising Welsh language education in the city. By not utilising the financial capital that comes with this gigantic housing development to open a designated Welsh medium school, the council would be preventing the growth of Welsh in the area and the wishes of most of the people of the area to restore the Welsh language and to see our young people fluent in it.
4. In a tweet in September 2018, the Cardiff Council leader, Councillor Huw Thomas said “to be clear – Welsh medium schools will be a central part of the Plasdŵr development”. It is unclear to us therefore, why the Council Cabinet decided to consult on the proposal to establish a bilingual school, and to break this public promise made by the leader.
5. In comments made to the BBC², the leader tried to justify the decision by saying that the Council “didn’t want to expand [Welsh medium education] too rapidly and destabilize some of the local Welsh medium primary schools near the new school

and that will be the danger of opening two Welsh medium only streams.” However, this argument doesn’t stand up to scrutiny.

6. Especially in a context where the local population is growing rapidly because of a massive new development, the argument that opening a designated Welsh medium school here would be detrimental to other Welsh medium schools is illogical. The population is going to grow substantially, and the tendencies of most people moving to live in the area will be to send their children to the nearest school, whatever the medium. This is therefore a golden opportunity to make Welsh medium education the norm in this new community by opening a designated Welsh medium school as the first school, and the schools that are to follow as well.
7. We also don’t accept the Council’s logic regarding the linguistic skills of pupils attending the proposed bilingual school. Only by establishing a designated Welsh medium school will the Council ensure that every pupil leaving school is a fluent Welsh speaker. Bilingual schools do not ensure that children achieve fluency in the same way. With this proposal, the Council would at the same time be denying fluency in Welsh to pupils in the English stream, as well as endangering the linguistic environment and use of Welsh in the Welsh medium stream.
8. In response to this consultation, the Cardiff Branch have presented a petition to the Council with the signatures of 876 people who support the call to open a designated two stream Welsh medium school, rather than a bilingual school. We have had hundreds of conversations with residents in Cardiff of all social and linguistic backgrounds, and the majority of them support the call for a designated Welsh medium school. The Council’s proposal doesn’t reflect the strong and wide support amongst the people of Cardiff to see the Welsh language prosper, and for all children to be fluent Welsh speakers when leaving school.
9. In order to reach the goal of a million Welsh speakers by 2050, it is imperative that county councils increase their Welsh medium education provision now, and as Wales’ largest city, Cardiff has a key role to play if we are to reach the target.
10. A statistical analysis commissioned by Cymdeithas yr Iaith³ has shown that Cardiff has to ensure a dramatic and rapid increase in the number of pupils that attend Welsh medium schools, in order to contribute to creating a million Welsh speakers by 2050. The analysis shows how many of Cardiff’s seven year olds should be in Welsh medium education in order to make the contribution that’s required of Cardiff to reach the target.

Year	2025	2030	2035	2040
% of 7 year olds in Welsh medium education	32.8%	43%	56.4%	71.8%

11. In 2014, only 15.1% of seven year olds in Cardiff were receiving Welsh medium education. It is therefore clear that a number of new Welsh medium schools need to be opened, as well as increasing Welsh language in the city’s current schools, which is essential so that Cardiff can reach its targets to contribute to the national aim.

12. Opening a designated Welsh medium school as the first school in this massive development would be a tremendous boost to the language in the area and Cardiff as a whole – setting a precedent to opening designated Welsh medium schools in other new developments and normalising Welsh medium education in all communities – and not only in the capital itself, but as an example to be followed by other counties in Wales that are experiencing population growth and similar new housing developments. This is a chance for Cardiff to lead the way.
13. In our opinion, cases such as these show the need for a Welsh Education for All Act, which would ensure that Welsh medium education is the norm in our education system throughout the country
<https://cymdeithas.cymru/sites/default/files/Targedau%20Addysg%20Lleol2.pdf>
by replacing the current system of Welsh in Education Strategic Plans with statutory, irreversible local and national targets. It is not right that we continue with the current system that deprives most young people of their right to speak Welsh due to the arbitrary decisions of county councils.
14. We believe that every child in Cardiff should have the right to speak Welsh, whatever their background. Cardiff Council needs to show ambition and fulfil this right for every young person in Wales' capital by opening designated Welsh medium schools at Plasdŵr, and across all the city's communities in the years to come.
15. Further information:
- Ten Welsh schools for Cardiff: briefing paper (2017)
cymdeithas.cymru/10ysgolcaerdydd
 - Local education targets in order to reach a million Welsh speakers –
 - Interim statistical analysis (2017)
cymdeithas.cymru/sites/default/files/Targedau%20Addysg%20Lleol2.pdf
 - The case for a Welsh education act for all (2019)
cymdeithas.cymru/achosdeddfaddysg
16. If you have any questions concerning this consultation response and matters arising, please contact post@cymdeithas.cymru or 02920 486469.

Cardiff Branch, Cymdeithas yr Iaith
October 2019

Mudiad Meithrin's Response to the Plasdŵr Consultation

The Proposal from September 2021:

- Establish a new two stream, two form of entry primary school (60 places) that will service the Plasdŵr development in the North-east (sic) of Cardiff. There will be one Welsh medium form of entry and one mainly English form of entry but with considerable use of Welsh.

- There will also be 48 part time places in the nursery for the Welsh medium stream and 48 nursery places for the English stream.

Mudiad Meithrin's Background

Mudiad Meithrin is a national voluntary organisation of Nursery groups (cylchoedd), Ti a Fi groups, wrap around care and Welsh medium day care. The Mudiad is the largest provider of Welsh medium early years education and care in the voluntary sector in Wales.

The Mudiad was established in 1971 with around 50 'cylchoedd'. By today, after tremendous growth, there are around 1000 Meithrin groups, Ti a fi groups, 'Welsh for Children' groups and nurseries under Mudiad Meithrin's banner. These provide early years experiences to around 22,000 children each week. In addition, Mudiad works very closely with parents in order to provide help and advice to allow them to develop and support the work of cylchoedd at home.

In order to achieve this, Mudiad Meithrin is a registered charity that employs over 200 people nationally, with another 2000 working in the groups themselves. The Groups (Cylchoedd) are supported by a national network of professional staff that advise on a wide range of matters such as fostering good practice, staff training and contact with local Authorities.

As a result, we work with children and families from various socio-economic backgrounds. We work with the Flying Start agency to develop opportunities in the most deprived areas, and with local authorities to offer part-time education places for 3 year old children in their local communities.

In addition we have a subsidiary company that provides Welsh medium training to achieve early years qualifications. This is done in conjunction with secondary schools to provide courses to school pupils, and through the national training schemes. Training courses are provided based on learning in the workplace with a network of tutors, assessors and internal validators across Wales.

Mudiad Meithrin in Cardiff

Currently we support a network of **12** Cylch Meithrin, **10** Ti a Fi groups and **3** Day Nurseries in Cardiff.

As well as these permanent services, we also hold sessions on a variety of programmes in the area. Currently (October 2019), we are holding 4 sessions of the *Clwb Cwtsh* in Cardiff.

The county's *Cymraeg i Blant* Officers have also been holding 5 sessions on a weekly basis over the last few months.

Response to the Consultation Questions

1. In what capacity are you answering:

Member of the Public (National Child Care Organisation)

2. Do you support the idea of establishing a new two form of entry multi stream school to serve parts of the Plasdŵr development in north-west Cardiff? If you support or are against the proposal please give your reasons.

We welcome the council's wish to expand Welsh medium education in this area. We are totally supportive of this expansion. The *Cardiff WESP 2017-2021* states that Cardiff Council is committed to developing a bilingual Cardiff and that the WESP will develop the Council's vision and will improve the growth and provision of Welsh medium education throughout the city.

We agree that establishing a new school that will accept 60 children a year from reception class onwards will ensure provision for the new housing that is occurring in north-west Cardiff, and as a result the greater number of children who will require school places in the area. However, we are concerned that developing a two stream school will undermine the *Cymraeg 2050* strategy of Welsh Government that has provided a clear vision of reaching a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

In addition, we note that Table 3 *Cardiff WESP 2017-2020* shows projected reception numbers and % that are lower than the target number and %. We also note that Table 4 *Cardiff WESP 2017-2021* also clearly shows the need for greater capacity in the Welsh medium sector in order to reach the targets (% and numbers) for the number of 7 year old children that receive a Welsh medium education. Establishing the school at Plasdŵr as a designated Welsh medium school would be a way of contributing towards minimising the gap between the projected numbers and the target numbers mentioned in this document.

The consultation document itself states that 6% of the places in the larger area of the development (Welsh and English) are surplus places. Nevertheless, this refers to 205 English medium places and only 42 Welsh medium places. The consultation document also states that there's a surplus of 31 primary places in the current supply in English medium for Reception age in the area, and a deficiency of an average of 10 places in the current supply of Welsh medium places.

Welsh Government's national target is that 40% of children in Wales, in each year group, should receive a Welsh medium education, with all pupils able to state that they are fluent. We suggest therefore that an adequate supply of Welsh medium school places is required, in order to encourage parents to make that choice and to create growth for Welsh medium education across Wales.

We are of the opinion that the education regime is the main mode of ensuring that children can develop their Welsh language skills and to create new Welsh speakers of the future, and that Welsh medium education from the earliest age possible is the best way of realising that vision. We believe that language immersion in Welsh medium schools is the best model of ensuring both English and Welsh language acquisition amongst pupils. Research worldwide acknowledges that through immersion in the second language the child masters fluency (in this context, fluency in Welsh)

The consultation document states that Welsh would be the language of communication with pupils in the Welsh stream, with the language of communication in the English medium stream dependent on the curriculum and the pupils' learning phase. As the document also emphasises prioritising the creation of a Welsh language ethos throughout the whole school this would mean that fluency and ability to teach in Welsh would be essential for all members of staff – the Head, the teachers, classroom assistants and lunchtime supervisors – that are employed to work there by the school. It should also be ensured that Welsh is not only confined to being the language of the classroom. Time must be guaranteed for playtime, lunch, school trips / visits, after school clubs and so on to be through the medium of Welsh. This shouldn't be compromised on as English would drown Welsh and would affect the childrens' language acquisition.

In addition, I would like to receive confirmation of the arrangements as to what would happen if a two stream school was established (rather than a designated Welsh medium school), and the Welsh medium stream were to become full. Would Cardiff Council guarantee that all parents in Plasdŵr school catchment area could take advantage of a Welsh medium education, ensuring that all of the 60 places offered at reception onwards would be available for the Welsh stream if that was appropriate?

3. Are you in favour of the idea of offering nursery provision in the new school?

4. If you support or are against the proposal please give your reasons.

We note the intention to create 96 part-time nursery places in the plan. If the intention is to create a dual stream school with substantial use of Welsh in the English stream, then it

would be better for all 96 part-time nursery places to be Welsh medium only giving the children an opportunity to be immersed in the language and to normalise the language for them before they opt for 'derbyn' or 'reception'. Also, establishing a Cylch Meithrin on site would encourage parents to choose a Welsh medium education for their children, and allow the parents a chance to become used to Welsh and attend the site themselves for provision of care and early years education for children 2 years old and onwards. This would encourage continuity for Welsh medium nursery provision at 3 years of age, and then on to full time Welsh medium education from reception class onwards.

5. If you would like to suggest changes or if you have any other suggestions, please state them below:

I would like to state the importance of including the Child Care, early Years and Play Work in its widest sense, and Mudiad Meithrin specifically, in any discussions regarding nursery provision at the Plasdŵr school so that cylchoedd meithrin development plans, and the pre-school provision in the area coincide with this local vision in the long term. Following this, we will look forward to co-operating on developing and enacting plans and provisions with the aim of promoting the value of bilingualism and the importance of Welsh in enabling children and young people to have a good understanding of the cultural life of modern Wales.

Cardiff Council has already stated (WESP 2017-2021) that it recognizes that Cylchoedd Meithrin that partner with a Welsh medium primary school offer a natural continuum in moving on to the statutory education system. Co-operating on specific plans such as Cymraeg i Blant, as well as the provision of Ti a Fi groups and Cylchoedd meithrin run with the grain of the aims stated in Professor Donaldson's report on ensuring a successful future for the Welsh language, and also encourages families to take the first steps on the Welsh education journey.

6. Are there any other services that you believe would help with the numbers that would be accepted in the new school that you would like us to consider? (e.g. option to buy wrap around care, breakfast club, school holiday club etc).

I would like to emphasise the importance of considering implications of ensuring an adequate level of provision that runs alongside part-time nursery education for 3 year olds. In order to satisfy the requirements of the 30 hours of Care Offer, utilising the expertise of Mudiad, and other partners of CWLWM to establish a range of other services that would assist working parents



extra time.

7. . This would include providing before and after school clubs to facilitate commuting to and from work for parents, and provide a wrap around service for parents of 2 and 4 year old children in part-time education in the nursery class, and who could transfer to the Cylch meithrin provision on site for the

Cylch Meithrin Creigiau,
Neuadd y Sgowtiaid,
Castle Close,
Creigiau,

Dear Sirs

Following the recent developments and release of the Plasdŵr Consultation (please see the link below, if you have not already done so) we have come to consider the potential impact on pre-school childcare provision in the area local to Creigiau and would like to ask how we might all be best positioned to proceed in providing the best possible service of care and learning to new and future clients - further, might this be an excellent opportunity to work together to further and share in this aim?

Should the proposed school open in 2021, with entry into reception, year 1 and year 2, in both English and Welsh streams (and 48 nursery places in each stream) there will be a need to expand from the currently available provision - not just in terms of childcare places (each of which would likely be entitled to the government-sponsored 30 hours funding), but also for lunchtime wraparound services. As the experienced and established local Cylch Meithrin, with very low staff turnover (with one member having been with us for over 10 years), we would be keen to work with you in examining how we could play a role in caring and adequately providing for this expanding community.

Currently, our facilities limit us to working at our capacity of 18 per session, for which we run into a waiting list. Prior discussion with both Cardiff County Council and Mudiad Meithrin have included questions of expanding our current premises or moving to a new one - however, they have not considered the opportunity before us at Plasdŵr.

Might Mudiad Meithrin and Cardiff County Council be interested in joining with us in embracing the widening community and bringing the provision of the best Welsh language and bilingual pre-school services to the new site?

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours Sincerely,



Richard T.C. Nelmes
(Chairman of Cylch Meithrin Creigiau)

P.S.

Here is the link to the aforementioned consultation:
<https://www.cardiff.gov.uk/ENG/resident/Schools-and-learning/Schools/21st-Century-Schools/Keep-up-to-date-and-contact-us/Publications/plasdwr-school/Documents/Plasdwr%20Consultation%20English.pdf>

