
**SCHOOL ORGANISATION PLANNING: CARDIFF WELSH IN EDUCATION
STRATEGIC PLAN (WESP) 2022-2032**

Purpose of the Report

1. This report provides Members with a briefing on the process for developing the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2022-2032 for Cardiff, and to give Members the opportunity to have an input into the development of the plan.

2. The detail set out in this report has been provided by Education & Lifelong Learning, and the following issues are highlighted throughout:
 - Overview of WESP – national policy, outcomes and target set by Welsh Government (*points 3 – 17*)
 - Cardiff Context (*points 18 – 26*)
 - Growing Welsh-medium education in Cardiff, building on success (*points 27 – 39*)
 - Potential Challenges (*points 40 & 41*)
 - Draft WESP priorities for inclusion in Cardiff's WESP 2022-2032 (*points 42 – 43*)
 - Consultation & Engagement – engagement to draft with stakeholders, public consultation and involving local Members (*points 44 – 62*)

In addition, a presentation will be made at this meeting. Members may wish to consider and provide feedback on the content of this report, the presentation and any issues arising from the Q&A session.

Background

3. The Welsh Government published its Cymraeg 2050 strategy in 2017 which sets out a vision of reaching one million Welsh speakers by 2050.

4. By 2050, the aim is for 40 per cent of children (in each year group) to be in Welsh-medium education. Of those in English-medium education, the assumption is that half of those leaving school will report that they are able to speak Welsh.
5. The strategy assumes that, nationally, 70 per cent of 15 year olds will be able to speak Welsh by 2050, made up of 40 per cent in Welsh-medium schools and 30 per cent in English-medium schools.
6. The Cymraeg 2050 strategy also sets out transformational changes which include:
 - Expand Welsh-medium early years provision to facilitate a seamless transition into Welsh-medium education.
 - Increase the proportion of each school year group receiving Welsh-medium education from 22 per cent nationally in 2015/16 to 25-29 per cent by 2031, and then to 40 per cent by 2050.
7. Local Authorities in Wales are required to prepare a WESP under Section 84 of The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.
8. The Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) Regulations 2019 make provision for a local authority to prepare a ten-year Plan, the first to have effect from 1 September 2022, subject to the Welsh Ministers' approval.
9. The decision to move away from a 3-year plan to encompass a ten year period for the forthcoming plans allows for a longer term strategic view of how to support Welsh in Education in Cardiff at a time of significant change in the education landscape.

Purpose of the WESP

10. The purpose of the WESP is to improve opportunities for local authorities to plan Welsh-medium education provision in order to support the current and future expectation for growth in Welsh-medium education.
11. Improving the planning of Welsh-medium education also supports Cardiff Council's contribution to the Welsh Government's long-term national ambition for the Welsh language as set out in the Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh Speakers Strategy.

WESP Outcomes

12. The Welsh Government issued its Guidance on Welsh in Education Strategic Plans in January 2021.

13. To support the planning process, the Welsh Government guidance requests that Plans are arranged around seven outcomes which reflect a learner's education journey and are consistent with the policy areas of Cymraeg 2050 and Education in Wales: Our National mission. The outcomes are:

- **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

WESP National Target

14. The national target is to:

Increase the proportion of each school year group receiving Welsh-medium education from 22 per cent (based on 7,700 seven-year-old learners in 2015/16) to 30 per cent (about 10,500 in each year group) by 2031, and then 40 per cent (about 14,000 in each year group) by 2050.

15. In order to achieve this overall national target, each local authority must set its own target for growth in line with the range provided by the Welsh Government. This target must be supported by a statement setting out how a Local Authority would achieve the expected increase in the number of Year 1 learners taught through the medium of Welsh during the lifespan of the Plan. This is the overarching ten year target for the 2022 - 2032 WESP.
16. Local Authorities have been grouped into different categories reflecting the differences (and recognising similar elements) between the 22 authorities. The factors considered when grouping included the percentage of learners taught in Welsh in each area, the models of Welsh-medium education provision adopted by Local Authorities, and the linguistic nature of an area.
17. The target set for Cardiff by the Welsh Government is to deliver growth of between 25% and 29% of Year 1 learners educated through the medium of Welsh by the end of the ten year period.

Cardiff Context

18. In Cardiff, the number and percentage of children entering Welsh-medium primary education citywide has fluctuated between 2009/10 to 2016/17. Consistent with the overall population, the number of children entering Welsh-medium education was on an upward trend.
19. The most recent school census data from January 2021 (PLASC) confirms that c18% of Cardiff children entering primary education in Reception were educated in Welsh-medium schools or classes.
20. City-wide intakes to primary education in September 2021 to September 2024 are projected to reduce significantly year on year as a consequence of a falling birth rate and changes to migration patterns. These are evidenced in data published by the Office of National Statistics and the most recent NHS GP registration data sets. Whilst there is an overall drop projected in the number entering our schools for the foreseeable future, changes to populations are not consistent in all parts of the city.
21. Birth rate data for children entering primary education from September 2025 to the end of the WESP period in 2032, is not yet available. However, birth rate and population data currently available indicates a cyclic pattern in Cardiff, and nationally.

22. Cardiff Council has already declared its commitment to increasing the number of Welsh speakers in the city and enhancing the amount of Welsh used throughout all of our schools and education provisions.
23. In addition to enhancing Welsh spoken and enjoyed throughout our local education provision, Cardiff will need to carefully balance the numbers of Welsh places in the city to ensure strategic and sustainable growth of Welsh-medium places to support the stimulation of demand and take up in a period of falling birth rates. This will include how we progress plans for the increased number of Welsh-medium places already set out within Band B, together with maximising the Welsh capital grants, Band C and potential of the LDP to achieve maximum benefit and effective join up across all SOP proposals going forward.
24. As a local authority, Cardiff continues to have the recommended amount of surplus in the Welsh-medium primary sector, although there is variance of take up rates across the city with pockets of insufficiency along with a handful of schools that struggle to attract a consistent number of pupils to support viability.
25. In the context of falling intakes to primary education, the Council's existing school provision projections indicate that existing school provision and that already planned will provide a relatively high level of surplus places in Welsh-medium primary schools city-wide to support sustainable growth in the early stages of the plan period.
26. At secondary, demand for places at transition to Year 7 is high and places have been increased to take account of this as the larger cohorts promote from the primary sector. In those primary and secondary schools, action has or is currently being taken to address any foreseeable short term temporary bulges to ensure sufficiency, whilst progressing with the strategic consideration of appropriate growth and large scale capital investment in the latter half of this WESP.

Growing Welsh-medium education in Cardiff, building on success

27. Cardiff has invested significantly in the growth of Welsh-medium both through delivering additional places at entry to primary education and at transfer into secondary education along with establishment of the highly successful immersion provision which has supported and increased number of in-year transfers.

28. Since 2010, Cardiff has increased the Welsh-medium capacity available at entrance to the primary sector by approximately 6 forms of entry (FE) and intakes at reception have grown by an average of approximately 0.25% per year between Sep 2015 and Sep 2020.
29. In the same period, at secondary the authority has established Cardiff's third Welsh-medium school along with adding capacity at one of the established schools resulting in an overall increase of 7FE at entry to Yr 7.
30. Cardiff has also established its highly successful Welsh Immersion provision. Initially established at primary to facilitate transfer to Welsh-medium education, during the recent WESP period, the provision has grown to welcome pupils at KS3 and 4 with pupils from Cardiff and neighbouring authorities experiencing effective transition from English-medium into Welsh-medium schools with pupils going on to enjoy their education journey as fully bilingual students experiencing success at key milestones.
31. Whilst it is appropriate to celebrate Cardiff's successes and positive outcomes specific to increasing the amount of high quality provision and take up of Welsh-medium places to date, it is also important to acknowledge the challenges associated with continued growth in the current climate as we look forward to what we need to prioritise in the future. From recent experience it is known that when planning for further growth, providing additional Welsh-medium capacity is only part of the solution particularly when this is considered against a backdrop of falling birth rates overall. Creating additional capacity must run in parallel with a strategy to engage an increased number of pupils choosing Welsh-medium.
32. Cardiff has some more unusual challenges to understand further and seek to overcome, in order to ensure every part of our diverse city has an awareness of what is on offer and the positive benefits of embracing the Welsh language. These relate to how to promote and engage with communities that may not traditionally have considered Welsh-medium education for their children and how the Council and its partners work to ensure take up of places in Cardiff schools is more diverse and representative of local area contexts.

33. In addition to increasing intake of Welsh-medium provision from the early years and at the beginning of statutory education, there is also a need to further consider the potential role of the Welsh Immersion provision as part of a proactive strategy for growth in the future.
34. There is a need to ensure that families feel confident that should they opt for Welsh-medium provision, there is a clear support network available in and around the formal school offer that is on a par with that offered in the English-medium sector.
35. The recent pandemic has demonstrated the need for and explicit promotion of robust support for intensive language acquisition as required and in addition to this, a reassurance that as a local authority there is an appropriate number and range of specialist places for children that have ALN to progress in line with their potential within the Welsh-medium sector.
36. Further to achieving a more granular understanding the different reasons that families may not have chosen Welsh for their children to date, there is a need to explore why some of Cardiff's young people that have accessed and experienced success in Welsh-medium during their statutory education have then opted out of continuing to study in Welsh for their further and higher education. Consistent with the Council's aim to become a Child Friendly City, it is also essential that young people are consulted as to why they may later lack the confidence to utilise their acquired language in their adult careers and what they think we could do to change this.
37. Benefiting from hearing, speaking and enjoying learning in Welsh is not confined to those that opt for a Welsh-medium education. It is important that that the Council set high expectations of how the new curriculum for Wales is to be delivered in terms of providing greater opportunities for language acquisition through learning and using an enhanced amount of Welsh within our English-medium schools. Prioritising the development of our new dual language model to ensure it is implemented success that other wish to emulate and move towards as well as providing a template for the establishment of other new schools in the future.

38. Clearly, as the capital of Wales it is important target set for growth of Welsh-medium education is ambitious. However, there is also a need to ensure a pragmatic approach given current birth rates and largely unpredictable outcome of the pandemic in terms of where families may choose to school apply for admission in the younger age groups at this current time.

39. Given the established trend of declining birth rates, the achievement of this target will require a multidimensional approach and the Council will need to make every effort to build and maintain constructive working relationships with all relevant groups and organisations who can contribute towards it. This will apply to all growth from the early years through statutory education, and on into higher and further education opportunities.

Potential Challenges

40. Consistent with many other Welsh local authorities, in order to achieve the ambitious targets set nationally and to successfully meet the stated objectives for Cardiff, there will be a dependence upon a significant uplift in the fluent Welsh speaking teaching and learning workforce. At present this represents a level of risk to the successful achievement of the ambitious targets set and robust action is required nationally and locally to address this.

41. In order to achieve the upscaling of the Welsh speaking and Welsh-medium teaching/learning workforce through a variety of routes, it will be critical close to work together with the Welsh Government (WG) and the Central South Consortium (CSC) at a regional level.

WESP Priorities for Cardiff

42. The final agreed WESP will set out Cardiff Council's ten year plan for increasing and improving the planning of the provision of Welsh-medium and Welsh language education. It will build on our achievements realised from our previous WESP and set out the actions we plan to take in order for Cardiff to achieve its ten year vision and to ensuring that being confident to speak Welsh is a welcome choice for the many not the few.

43. The priorities identified to meet the assigned outcomes are as set out below:

- Develop additional capacity and improved distribution of Welsh-medium and dual language places in nursery, primary and secondary across Cardiff which supports towards the goals of Cymraeg 2050 increasing the percentage of places offered in Welsh-medium and schools offering enhanced level of teaching and learning delivered through Welsh through the development and implementation of the dual language education model.
- Develop further Welsh-medium wraparound child care options to support parents accessing the 30 hour offer along with enhanced Welsh-medium after school places to support working parents in conjunction with our partners including Mudiad Meithrin, Clybiau Plant Cymru and Menter Caerdydd.
- Secure and carefully target capital and revenue investment grants to increase capacity and improve distribution of Welsh-medium provision and establishment of the dual language model across the city at primary, secondary and ALN along with increasing Welsh immersion provision to support latecomers to Welsh-medium education.
- Establish at least 50% of all new LDP primary provision as Welsh-medium alongside development and implementation of the dual language model where Welsh and English are taught up to 50:50 to start in Plasdwr and be upscaled in other new LDP areas.
- Elicit interest amongst the English-medium sector, schools and staff with regard to which schools and/or professionals would be interested to work in partnership to progress with moving along the bilingual continuum to a different linguistic category with a greater amount of teaching and learning offered through the medium of Welsh.

- Continue to support and carefully plan a move to a strategy that proactively promotes our Immersion provision for those that move into Cardiff and/or opt to switch from English-medium schools to learn in Welsh from within Cardiff to ensure that the option is available to families who wish to choose Welsh-medium for their child beyond year 1.
- Explore ways in which to increase the scope of the immersion provision and make the offer scalable not only to respond to new starters but also to support language acquisition for those pupils where extra intensive 'catch up' support is considered beneficial and will support both higher confidence, pupils' achievement and retention in the sector.
- Invigorate and enhance the promotion of education opportunities through Welsh (from early years through maintained education and into further and higher education) with Welsh-medium education the prime option promoted to families seeking an education place in Cardiff by our admissions service and in our admissions guidance literature.
- Undertake focussed research within less represented communities and in areas of low take up to support increased improved bespoke promotion in order to both support growth across Cardiff and improve diversity within Welsh-medium – ensuring that all families in Cardiff are aware it is a genuine, available and welcomed choice for their child and see their local school as an inclusive reflection of their community and the city.
- Identify and provide focussed support to schools where transition rates may be a cause of concern and publish resources to increase confidence in pupils, along with supporting and reassuring parents/carers regarding transition between phases to encourage retention.

- Provide advice, professional learning and resources to English-medium schools to increase the percentage of the curriculum taught through the medium of Welsh and to implement Welsh Across the Curriculum, including initiatives such as Siarter Iaith and Cymraeg Campus to ensure every pupil in Cardiff can engage in Welsh and has the opportunity to develop their linguistic skills and language acquisition.
- Explore scope to make more strategic use of existing Welsh-medium e-learning options to provide a greater range of more niche subjects to expand the offer of potential qualifications and learning experiences across Cardiff Welsh-medium education along with supporting the development of skills in digital learning.
- Work with WEF¹ partners such as Menter Iaith and Urdd along with our school-based staff, local businesses and volunteers to provide and promote an enhanced range of opportunities for young people to develop and use their Welsh skills beyond the classroom including in sporting and cultural, STEM and other interest activities throughout the city.
- Work with WEF partners in schools, further education and higher education to highlight the benefits of gaining qualifications in Welsh and support institutions to advocate for young people to have continued access to an array of qualifications through the medium of Welsh that excite and motivate students to encourage desire to continue further study through the medium of Welsh.
- Improve and extend facilities during the period of the plan to have the capacity to support more children with ALN within Welsh-medium provision to ensure opportunities in Welsh-medium are on a par with other sectors.
- Work with partners across the WEF and Cardiff Commitment to highlight the benefits of Welsh into adulthood along with developing and expanding the illustration of the and opportunities to experience careers where Welsh is

¹ Welsh Education Forum

used thereby stimulating greater take up by young people further into their learning career and encourage a broader use of Welsh beyond the curriculum and qualifications.

- Work with partners to address workforce concerns including close work with the Welsh-government to achieve greater scale of change at a national level to provide appropriate resources and range of opportunities to support the further development of the workforce to achieve our ambitions.

- Work to identify opportunities to develop the current scope within our existing workforce alongside identifying gaps to support strategic workforce planning along with facilitating upskilling of existing teaching workforce to improve Welsh acquisition and linguistic competence and confidence with a view to teaching Welsh and in Welsh-medium schools.

- Ensure school leadership and governing bodies are fully aware of the WESP and their roles in terms of supporting its implementation and the growth of the Welsh speaking and teaching workforce.

- Support the development of workforce in Welsh-medium schools to ensure appropriate pipeline of talent for future senior roles and leadership positions.

- Support promotion and the training and recruitment of new entrants to the Welsh speaking teaching and learning workforce.

Engagement and Consultation

44. Regulation 9 of Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) Regulations 2019 sets out the bodies with whom the Local Authority must consult with on the draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plan ahead of submission to Ministers. Public consultation will be undertaken on the draft WESP between with a wide range of stakeholders including elected Members, schools, parents, pupils, the relevant partner organisations and interested parties.

45. Following consultation, Officers will report to Cabinet for consideration prior to submission to the Welsh Government by 31 January 2022.

Engagement with stakeholders to prepare the draft

46. The Council works closely and constructively with partners on its Welsh Education Forum (WEF), which includes representatives of nursery, primary, secondary and further education, childcare, RhAG and the Welsh Government. The Forum actively informs the planning of Welsh-medium places, to continue to drive the Council's plan to sustainably increase the number of learners within Welsh-medium schools and those learning Welsh in English-medium schools.

47. The Council, and its partners on the Welsh Education Forum, are committed to driving the increase in number of pupils educated through the medium of Welsh, to meet the targets within Cardiff's WESPs, and to meet the targets set out in the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 strategy.

48. Ahead of guidance being published on the WESP, the Welsh Education Forum established a number of working groups to consider factors that support the growth of Welsh-medium education, including Promotion and Marketing, Parent and Family Support, and Careers and Workforce Planning.

49. In order to inform the draft WESP 2022-31 document, a range of fully bilingual informal stakeholder engagement sessions were held in July 2021. These supported the further input of our active Welsh Education Forum membership along with an extended range of other key stakeholders intended to bolster awareness of the current position in Cardiff, and to achieve the broader ownership and input of stakeholders that would be directly responsible for delivering the actions agreed.

50. Attendees included Cardiff Council Elected Members including the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education; school governing body representatives; Cardiff & Vale UHB; the Director of Education for Cardiff Council; Welsh Government representatives and Council Officers from Cardiff Commitment, Bilingual Cardiff, Communications, Flying Start, HR People Services, Inclusion Service and School Transport. These sessions built on the information gathered in recent months through working with the Welsh Education Forum members and drawing on their experience and knowledge of the sector in Cardiff and further afield.

51. The sessions were facilitated by an external expert in the field of Welsh-language education planning and supported an interactive consideration and challenge of the priorities identified to date centred on the seven outcomes stipulated by the Welsh Government. They were well received and supported the identification of the key actions that partners felt would be essential to ensure Cardiff is able to fulfil its ambitions for the growth of the Welsh language in Cardiff.

52. Further engagement with elected members has been built in ahead of going out to the formal public engagement. This is intended to allow for both Cabinet and cross party consideration of priorities identified and enable them to input into the draft through presentation at the Children and Young People's Scrutiny and the Council's Cabinet ahead of publication of the consultation document and engagement activities in the autumn.

53. The draft WESP for Cardiff will therefore be developed with input from a broad range of internal and external stakeholders ahead of formal consultation with the Welsh Education Forum members keen to benefit from the public insight to further hone and shape the plan to support the final version submitted.

Public Consultation

54. The Welsh Government has set out that a consultation on the proposed plan must be undertaken for no less than 8 weeks. In order to meet the statutory submission date 31 January 2022, Cardiff will need to conclude its consultation by no later than 13 December 2021.

55. The public consultation will largely be conducted online with a webpage to host the draft plan and an online survey to capture the views of interested parties.

56. This model will seek to ensure that all necessary information is easily accessible in one place and residents have a single place to refer to ensure that they have all information to make a considered response.

57. Alongside the online survey, officers will monitor response levels and seek to engage groups who are underrepresented within Welsh-medium provision currently to ensure the plan reflects the Council's ambition to move away from the status quo and ensure that Welsh is a language for all of its citizens.

58. The consultation will be heavily promoted through the Council's communications team with targeted and frequent social media prompts to encourage engagement.

59. Links to the plan and survey webpage will also be circulated to stakeholders named in the guidance including all elected members, schools, WEF² member organisations and the Cardiff Youth Panel.

60. Following the deadline, responses will be summarised and used to inform the final draft proposed to Cabinet in January 2022.

61. When content is agreed and finalised it will be sent to the Welsh Government for by no later than the 31 January 2022 submission date.

Local Member consultation

62. The WESP is a strategic policy document and elected members will be consulted as part of the public consultation.

² Welsh Education Forum

Way Forward

63. A presentation will be given to Members on this issue, followed by a Q&A. The following witnesses will be in attendance at this meeting to answer any questions:

- Councillor Sarah Merry, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member Education, Employment & Skills;
- Melanie Godfrey, Director of Education & Lifelong Learning;
- Richard Portas, Programme Director, School Organisation Planning; and
- Michele Duddridge-Friedl, Operational Manager, Planning & Provision

64. Members will be able to agree any comments, observations or recommendations that they wish to pass on to the Cabinet Member during the Way Forward.

Legal Implications

65. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

66. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial

implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION

That Committee considers this report and information provided at the meeting and agrees any comments, observations for input into the development of the WESP, and this be fed back to the Cabinet Member and Director of Education & Lifelong Learning.

Davina Fiore

Director of Governance and Legal Services

17 September 2021