



Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref

Aled Evans
Director of Education, Leisure & Lifelong Learning
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Civic Centre
Port Talbot
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4 August 2017

Dear Aled Evans,

I have now considered your draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. As you will know from discussions between our respective officials, I suggest that the issues outlined below need to be addressed in the plan. I'm sure you agree that it's important that the authority takes appropriate ownership over its own plan. Therefore, I invite you to address these issues and submit an amended plan. I will then make the decision whether or not to approve that plan.

Can I thank you for the time and effort you have put into this phase of Welsh education planning. With the launch of our *Cymraeg 2050* Strategy, this is a new and exciting time for us all. To fulfil our vision for a million Welsh speakers by 2050, we need to make some radical and far reaching changes to the way we work as a government and how we plan Welsh medium education. We are on the cusp of significant change and Welsh Government can not do this on its own.

You will know by now that I want changes to the way we plan for Welsh medium education and I want to do this with you so we can work together to provide Welsh medium education with a strong framework for growth. Working in partnership is mutually beneficial and is the only way that we will achieve the million Welsh speakers by 2050.

Matters to consider

Below are the issues we think need addressing within your plan. We realise that in some cases, you will need to go through your own approval process, but we would ask if you could present your amended plan to us as soon as possible or no later than **29 September 2017**. This of course will be dependent on your consultation processes.

It is for you to decide what constitutes fair and open consultation in terms of timescales. It is important that all those with an interest in Welsh medium education have an opportunity to contribute their views.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

This feedback includes Aled Roberts' views and these are attached in full as annex 1.

- Ambitious targets must be set in order to increase the numbers in Welsh-medium education
- Need to set targets/actions to ensure adequate provision for early years
- Following the measuring demand survey held in 2013, it should be noted in the WESP when the next survey is planned and to ensure that a clear analysis of the demand in specific areas
- To include details of arrangements for latecomers.
- Insert details of the schools that are within 10% capacity and any plans to address possible capacity issues.
- Include transfer figure between primary and secondary for 2016 and details on how secondary schools promote their provision to primary schools.
- Transport for 11-16 provision in the south of the County in response to parental demand – when will this be implemented?
- Note the targets set for outcome five for Welsh first and second language achievements and provide further details for promoting opportunities to use formal and informal Welsh.
- Set timetable and objectives to undertake an Additional Learning Needs assessment
- Need clear objectives for workforce planning and development

You may have my assurance that my officials will provide any support, advice or guidance necessary.



Alun Davies AC/AM

Gweinidog y Gymraeg a Dysgu Gydol Oes
Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language

NEATH PORT TALBOT

Vision

The plan is based on maintaining the current provision rather than showing any ambition to contribute to the Welsh Government's strategy to create a million Welsh speakers by 2050. The targets lack ambition with no plan to raise numbers although it should be noted that there's an intention to introduce Welsh Education Strategy following the local elections in May 2017.

Outcome 1

The main objectives in outcome 1 include a commitment to increase the pre-school provision. Again, no targets have been set or any details about any negotiations with Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin to expand existing provision. Figures for those transitioning between the cyloedd and the foundation phase should be included to understand if work is needed to improve the percentages transferring. A statement about Welsh medium Flying Start provision and information about Welsh medium provision plans for the 30 hour childcare offer would be beneficial as well as targets for an increase in provision.

Here we must accept the projections are children who are already within the Welsh education system. When considering the recent investment within Welsh education, the plan should note that plans will be more ambitious in the future.

The authority is about to undertake an assessment of the demand for Welsh-medium education in the autumn but it would be good to understand if there are plans within the authority to increase the provision of Welsh medium primary and include within the Band B.

It is disappointing that no explanation is provided about the arrangements for latecomers and there is no intention to introduce immersion provision following consultation with the Welsh medium schools. No information has been provided about the capacity of the existing Welsh primary schools. It is therefore difficult to understand if there are pressures within any areas in the authority – more will need to be done if the authority succeeds with their plans to better promote Welsh education in the future.

There is no statement about deciding on the language of any new school built under 106 agreements or detail about any housing developments within the local plan.

Outcome 2

The percentages transferring from Welsh medium primary to secondary in outcome 2 is lower than other authorities although the percentages have been rising in the Neath Port Talbot over the last three years. It is likely that parental choice due to geographical is the main reason but it's anticipated that due to significant investment within the sector with a second campus for Ystalyfera opening in the south of the County. The plan is expected to include targets to improve the percentages transferring as well as plans for more robust transition arrangements.

Outcome 3 and 4

The percentages of pupils in outcome 3 and 4 studying more than 2 and more than 5 subjects through the medium of Welsh should they sit an exam in Welsh first language Ysgol Ystalyfera is healthy. There is no explanation however about providing science through the medium of Welsh.

Outcome 5

Targets for the three years need to be included in outcome 5 to improve attainment of Welsh first language and second language. There is a need to understand how many pupils within English medium schools currently leave schools without sitting a qualification in the Welsh language and what plans have been agreed with those schools following the removal of the GCSE second language short course.

More detail is required about the County's arrangements for increased opportunities for young people to use the Welsh language in formal and informal settings; this should include any targets agreed with the Urdd, youth service, Menter Iaith and other agencies involved in increasing provision.

No information has been presented about outcome 5 (4).

Outcome 6

The arrangements operating between Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera and the primary schools for ALN provision within mainstream education is provided under outcome 6. According to the plan, there is little demand for specialist provision, such as a dedicated Welsh medium Learning Support Centre. Nevertheless it is necessary to understand if a review has been undertaken and if any gaps have been identified. Understanding how any gaps as well as a timescale for this or any sub-regional discussions would be beneficial.

Outcome 7

Any details following any assessment of language skills held within the Council should be included in outcome 7, noting any decisions for training or professional development resulting from this.

The authority identified within its previous plan that Welsh is losing ground in lower Brynamman, Gwaun Cae Gurwen and Cwm Llynfell. It would be beneficial to understand what steps have been taken by the authority to strengthen the language within those areas in terms of education policy.