

EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 17 March 2021

PRESENT: Councillor D. Price (Chair)

Councillors:

S.M. Allen, L.R. Bowen, K.V. Broom, D. Jones, G.R. Jones, M.J.A. Lewis, E.M.J.G. Schiavone, B. Thomas, E.G. Thomas and D.T. Williams

Co-opted Members:

A. Enoch - Parent Governor
V. Kenny - Roman Catholic Church Representative
Rev. D. Richards - Church in Wales Representative

Also in attendance:

Councillor G. Davies, Executive Board Member for Education & Children

The following Officers were in attendance:

G. Morgans, Director of Education & Children's Services
S. Davies, Head of Access to Education
A. Rees, Head of Curriculum and Wellbeing
S. Smith, Head of Children's Services
A Thomas, Head of Education Services and Inclusion
C. Griffiths, Welsh Language Development Manager
M. Evans Thomas, Principal Democratic Services Officer
R. Lloyd, Democratic Services Officer
S. Rees, Simultaneous Translator
J. Corner, Technical Officer

Virtual Meeting - 10.00 - 11.55 am

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence was received from Councillor D.M. Jenkins, Executive Board Member for Resources.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST INCLUDING ANY PARTY WHIPS ISSUED IN RELATION TO ANY AGENDA ITEM.

The following declarations of personal interest were made:-

Member	Minute Item(s)	Nature of Interest
Cllr. Darren Price (Chair)	4. WESP Update	Personal and prejudicial interest - his wife is a Welsh lecturer at Trinity St. David's University where the sabbatical course is held.
Cllr. Bill Thomas	4. WESP Update	He is an LEA Governor at Ysgol y Felin.

There were no declarations of party whips.

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (NONE RECEIVED)

The Chair advised that no public questions had been received.

4. WESP UPDATE

[NOTE:

(1) Cllr B. Thomas had earlier declared an interest in this item;

(2) Cllr. D. Price, Chair, having earlier declared a prejudicial and personal interest in this item, left the meeting prior to the consideration and determination thereof.]

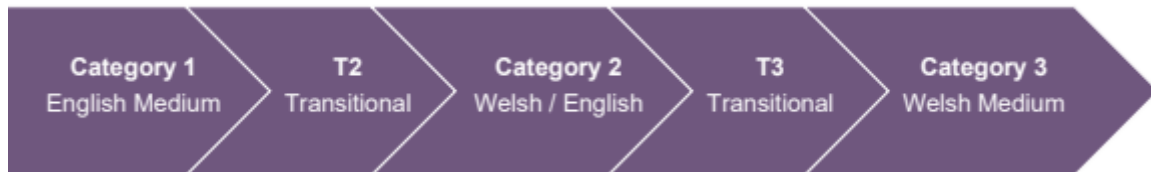
The Committee considered a report providing an update on progress in implementing the Carmarthenshire Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2017-21. The report also appraised the Committee of anticipated developments in Welsh Government policy.

The current WESP has been extended by one year and will conclude no later than September 2022. The next WESP is to be a 10-year plan to 2031. WG have shared the planning template and criteria with LAs. This and proposed ancillary developments indicate that there will be some noteworthy changes which have certain implications for decision making in Carmarthenshire.

The following questions/observations were raised on the report:-

- Reference was made about the sabbatical and in-house training and a breakdown was requested on how many staff are taking the training and at what level. The Head of Curriculum & Wellbeing advised that a Welsh Language Audit was recently carried out for all staff. Some 758 responses have been received (at 8.3.21) to request enrolment for linguistic courses across all ability levels determining at what levels they are. The Welsh Language Development Manager advised that there is a need to understand the pedagogy within the Foundation Phase. There is a holistic resource which looks at not only language learning but also teaching and learning within the Foundation Phase as well as working with parents. This will be offered to the schools who wish to work with us in moving along the continuum. Proficiency levels are very important within the teaching staff. Also staff learning alongside very young pupils can also be a powerful vehicle in language learning.
- Officers were asked how much of the £30m will be available for training – the Director advised that we are eligible to apply for the £30m capital grant but understands that its only for building; not training but are in conversation with WG with regards to revenue.
- The Welsh Language Development Manager advised that the Welsh audit gives 1 overview on the Welsh language and is a good starting point for strategic planning
- Clarification on what courses have been undertaken and completed by teachers during lockdown and what level are they at. The Executive Board member for Education & Children advised that feedback from courses has been very positive and the Welsh Language Development Manager are in consultation with the schools.
- Concern was expressed on the need to be clearer on language used and the aim of the national consultation on categories. The Head of Curriculum &

Wellbeing advised that the new system envisages three main categories (1, 2 and 3) with two transitional categories (T2 and T3) to facilitate a developmental journey from one category to the next (see diagram):



- Reference was made as to why the need for change in Curriculum at this time? The Head of Curriculum & Wellbeing stated that this started 7yrs prior and that proposals by WG will be informed by the national Curriculum Bill that the introduction of Welsh will be compulsory from age 3, with English being compulsory from age 7 (assuming the Bill receives Royal Assent). He advised that he will submit this meeting's suggestions at this afternoon's Executive Board meeting.
- What is the timeline referenced to on pg.12 – The Executive Board Member for Education & Children advised that everything is being monitored by ourselves as well as WG with full consultation at the end of this year on the new WESP before it's adopted. The Head of Curriculum & Wellbeing added that the new WESP is proposed to be a continuation of the existing WESP and progress made in the last 4yrs. It is used as a baseline and will be submitted to WG no later than end of January, 2022. The Director advised that there are different mechanisms that we report to on different actions with regards to our plans – there is a monitoring process in place and the information gathered is used as evidence to build on our strategy.
- Clarification on how should Governors be all made aware of the WG Strategy and confirmation sought on specific training for Governors within the training programme and if so, would it be mandatory? The Executive Board member for Education & Children advised that any policy changes etc. are presented to Governors and Headteachers. The Director stated that working with schools is done regularly and can confirm that progress is made at every school and that many schools have adopted the language charter, the ethos and the general use of the language and we ask every Governing Body to include a statement on their template on what they've done in relation to the WESP to ensure that they are working towards the language continuum ensuring that progress is achievable.
- Officers were asked if the County had a list with specific dates noting when discussions started with school and with whom? Follow up meetings/discussions? If not, could it be introduced and suggests that it be included on a termly agenda for open discussion. The Executive Board member for Education & Children agreed with the point raised and that a specific record of what's happened, with whom and when meeting next. The Director stated that he has been reviewing the process to ensure that evidence is recorded on who is aware of the changes etc. on discussions taken place.
- Clarification on what support for learners is available. The Head of Curriculum & Wellbeing advised that Language Centres have been set up in county e.g. Maes y Gwendraeth / Canolfan Griffith Jones. The Welsh Language Development Manager reiterated that it is important for schools to communicate with us in order that provision for latecomers can be facilitated. Language Centre staff are also working with the Admissions Team to ensure good understanding of linguistic provision within schools.
- Reference was made as to how pupil funding formula favours Welsh

Language? The Director confirmed that formula funding is directed by pupil numbers; however there are some supplements if it's a dual stream school.

- Officers were asked on the current process on changes – need to be more open and provide more advanced warning with communication with parents, staff, Governors and everyone relevant to those changes are part of the discussions to improve the system. The Director stated that compliance to legislation is achieved and that the process has been reviewed over the last few months and are improving communications with the community, staff, Governors making them aware of changes and are complying with the direction of the WG. The Head of Curriculum & Wellbeing stated that there will be public consultations with the public and statutory partners such as ESTYN and neighbouring Local Authorities. This will be for a period of 8 weeks ensuring that we reach everyone albeit virtually or on paper.

Cymraeg 2050 includes a target for increasing the proportion of each school year group receiving Welsh-medium education from 22% (based on 7,700 seven-year-old learners in 2015/16) to 30% by 2031 (about 10,500 in each year group). Each Local Authority has been offered targets to achieve in the context of the new WESP. Targets set for Carmarthenshire by WG place the County in the most stretching category (together with Conwy, Denbighshire, Powys, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Neath Port Talbot). WG have requested that a 10-14% increase in the percentage of Year 1 children being taught through the medium of Welsh based on the 2019/20.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.

5. PROPOSAL TO RELOCATE YSGOL HEOL GOFFA TO A NEW SITE AND INCREASE ITS CAPACITY FROM 75 TO 120 (STAGE 3)

The Committee considered a report detailing a proposal to relocate Ysgol Heol Goffa to a new site and increase its capacity from 75 to 120 (Stage 3) from September, 2023. In accordance with Executive Board's instructions on the 18th November, a formal consultation exercise was undertaken from 21 September 2020 to 1 November 2020. The results of the consultation exercise were contained in a Consultation Report and were presented to the Scrutiny Committee and then to the Executive Board for consideration and determination as to whether or not to publish a Statutory Notice.

On the 21st December 2020 approval was granted by the Executive Board for the publication of the Statutory Notice which provided objectors with 28 days in which to forward their objections in writing to the Council at the end of which no objections were received.

Should the County Council agree to implement the proposal, the capacity of Ysgol Heol Goffa will increase from 75 to 120 once the school re-locates to its new school site from September 2023.

The following observation was received on the report:-

- An observation was made stating that although this is a separate special school that they should have the full experiences as mainstream children. The Director advised that there is an inclusive policy in place which is

supported at our mainstream schools as well as Special Units and that its fortunate that this new school location will be close to Penrhos School and will work on relationships between these schools and possibly other secondary schools in Llanelli.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED

- (1) that the report be received;**
- (2) to recommend to the Executive Board that the proposal to relocate Ysgol Heol Goffa to a new site and increase its capacity from 75 to 120 from September, 2023, as laid out in the Statutory Notice, be implemented.**

6. EXPLANATION FOR NON-SUBMISSION OF SCRUTINY REPORT

The Committee received an explanation for the non-submission of the following scrutiny reports:-

- Department Self Evaluation and 10 Year Strategy
- ALN Transformation Action Plan
- Departmental Business Plans

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the information be noted.

7. FORTHCOMING ITEMS

The Committee considered a list of items to be considered at the next meeting to be held on 21st April, 2021. The Committee was also given the opportunity to provide suggested items for discussion for the FWP for the 8 month period May-December, 2021. Suggested items collated for discussions today included:-

- Self Evaluation – look at this for next 6 months.
- NEET – potential impact of loss of European funding
- Departmental Structure
- WESP – being involved in the corporate process with respect to the new plan
- Wellbeing and Mental Health / COVID - keep an eye on it as schools are going back full-time. WG accept that more resources into Mental Health in general needs to be looked at and as a Committee improve our situation to move forward – up-to-date data may be required.
- MEP – how we are funding it?
- Consultation with School Changes – look at how the Council shares the message / consultation around the strategic objectives with schools across the county re closure of school, change of language of learning etc.

The Chair and Vice-Chair will meet with the Director to scope out some of the ideas suggested before presenting back to the Committee for final adoption.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the information be noted.

8. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 28TH JANUARY, 2021

It was pointed out that on pg.38 (Agenda Item 4) re. pay rise it should read “the *full*

cost of this would have to be met the Local Authority”.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 28th January, 2021 be signed as a correct record.

CHAIR

DATE