

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales

Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and Education Committee

Ymchwiliad i Gynlluniau Strategol Cymraeg mewn Addysg | Inquiry into Welsh in Education Strategic Plans

WESP 22

Ymateb gan : Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pent-y-bont ar Ogwr

Response from : Bridgend County Borough Council

Question 1

What are your views on whether Welsh in Education Strategic Plans are contributing to the outcomes and targets set out in the Welsh Government's overarching Welsh Medium Education Strategic Plan?
WESPs are one factor that contribute to the outcomes and targets in the WG's WMESP.
If you believe that WESPs are not contributing sufficiently, how do you think this could be resolved?
By involving other agencies/departments more specifically.

Question 2

What are your views on whether WESPs are (or have the potential) to deliver the required change at a local authority level (for example delivering provision to meet any increased demand for Welsh medium education)?
The WESPs help to keep Welsh Medium education on the agenda and prominent but in the current economic climate it is difficult to say whether they can bring the required change at local authority level.
If you believe that WESPs are not, or don't have the potential, to deliver change, how do you think this could be resolved?
Ensuring that representative from all sectors are involved in the WESP and ensuring adequate investment to support changes.

Question 3

What are your views on the arrangements for target setting; monitoring; reviewing; reporting; approving; and ensuring compliance with delivering the requirements for WESPs (and the role of the local authority and the Welsh Government in this regard)?

Much of this work is conducted via consortia / Challenge Advisers now and it feels that the role of the LA in this is an unnecessary duplication in this regard.

Approval of the WESP is a time consuming activity as it has to be approved locally by cabinet before going to Welsh Government and is then returned for modification/amendment. Further time has to be set aside for translation of the documentation before being placed on the website /distributed.

At a very operational level, the document itself is also cumbersome – there are difficulties encountered in ensuring that revised targets/progress updates align on the document. A lot of time is devoted to what should be a straight-forward task.

If you believe there are problems in this area, how do you think they could be resolved?

By Welsh Government providing the data that is already collected centrally.

Allow sufficient time to produce revised documents – the timescales are very tight.

Produce the document in a spreadsheet format so that information can be automatically drawn from other sources and will be easier to manage.

Question 4

What are your views on whether WESPs evidence the effective interaction between the Welsh Government's Welsh-medium education strategy and other relevant policies and legislation*?

(*for example school transport policy; 21st Century Schools programme; A living language: a language for living – Moving forward policy statement; Flying Start; planning policy)

Yes, the WESPs are able to evidence the interaction although this does depend on colleagues from other policy areas being sufficiently involved in the production and monitoring of the WESP and ensuring that this is an area that is prioritised.

By definition, the wide coverage of policy areas requires the involvement of a large number of people and this can make attendance of meetings, gathering sufficient views more difficult.

If you believe there are problems in this area, how do you think they could be resolved?

Continue with WESP forum attended by a range of representatives as this is a helpful way to gather an holistic view of some of the demands/tensions.

Nominate leads within each region/consortia with responsibility for specific parts of the WESP and for these to meet to collate the plans.

Question 5

What are your views on whether the outcomes of WESPs deliver equal outcomes for all pupils, including for example, primary/secondary pupils or children from low income households.

The outcomes of the WESP are targeted at the different age groups of pupils – whether they deliver equal outcomes is difficult to measure as there are differences in funding arrangements at each level. Similarly, there are differences between Welsh as a first or second language – where it seems there is a lot of emphasis given to first language.

Again, outcomes at all levels is a targeted by the consortia / Challenge Advisers working with schools, although I recognise that this does not include post 16 provision in Sixth Forms/FE College.

Closing the gap in outcomes is a key focus in all areas (FSM/non FSM)

If you believe that the outcome of WESPs do not deliver equal outcomes, how do you think this could be resolved?

N/A

Question 6

If you had to make one recommendation to the Welsh Government from all the points you have made, what would that recommendation be?

Provide a straight-forward template that can be populated easily by relevant departments/policy areas.

Question 7

Do you have any other comments or issues you wish to raise that have not been covered by the specific questions?

I recognise that this is only the first year of the statutory WESP and am interested in how much/if any difference the legislation has made to this work?