



# Local Development Plan

2021 > 2036

Cardiff Council - January 2025

Background Technical Paper Number 9

## Deposit Plan

### Welsh Language



# **Cardiff Deposit Local Development Plan**

**2021 - 2036**

## **Background Technical Paper No. 9: Welsh Language**

**January 2025**

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## 1. Introduction

1.1 This paper forms part of the evidence base of the Deposit Plan for Cardiff's Replacement Local Development Plan 2026-2036. It is firstly, and primarily, intended to set the linguistic context for the Welsh language in Cardiff. Secondly, to provide further discussion context to be able to consider the role the WL plays in land use policies in the city and the potential impact of planning decisions on the Welsh language. And thirdly, consider some of the challenges and *opportunities* available from a Welsh language perspective - and suggest possible considerations that could strengthen the fabric of the language within the city. To facilitate this a combination of data sources in combination with more stimulating discussion will be used to specifically highlight some challenges and opportunities that are likely to come our way over the plan period.

Inevitably, therefore, although this document is presented as a technical paper, it also provides a more general overview of the Welsh language context in the city and should perhaps be regarded more as a contextual document than a purely technical one. At times the treatment is general - which will benefit readers unfamiliar with the field and perhaps coming to the subject for the first time; at other times it will be quite detailed, taking account of recent data and be perhaps more useful to readers already familiar with the field.

As mentioned, this is also a document to stimulate – within it a number of relevant considerations will arise from the content - based on perception or data - and these are highlighted in specific light blue boxes in the text body. They are intended to help highlight specific situations or considerations while also identifying challenges and opportunities. They are not in any sense comprehensive but rather a hopeful starting point for more thought, discussion, motivation and action.

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## 2. Executive Summary

In preparing the *Preferred Strategy*<sup>1</sup> in order to consult on it over the Summer months of 2023, and having seen the publication of more 2021 Census statistics showing a slight increase in the number of Welsh speakers in Cardiff – but a decrease for Wales as a whole – this presented an opportunity to take a more comprehensive view of the Welsh language situation in the capital, specifically within the context of the preparation of the RLDP currently underway, and at the same time to look for relevant considerations and possible new policies that could be formulated to support the language that could support the current Bilingual Cardiff Strategy and any evolution of that strategy in future.

2.1 To assist with that work therefore, and to complement the consideration previously given to the Welsh language in the Sustainability Assessment, but also to consider the above context in light of a number of national legislative and policy developments since the adoption of the current LDP 2006-2026, it was deemed beneficial to have:

- i] A technical background paper on the Welsh language for the RLDP 2026-2036
- ii] an independent review of the impact of the RLDO Preferred Strategy on the Welsh language
- iii] An independent full Impact Assessment of the RLDP Deposit Plan on the Welsh Language

and in tandem with that -

- iv] to develop a new Strategic and Detailed policy on the Welsh language as part of the RLDP 2026-2036

On the Council's behalf therefore, experts were commissioned to undertake the review of the Preferred Strategy and to complete a full Impact Assessment of the Deposit Plan on the Welsh Language, and to work with the Council on the development of a new strategic and detailed Welsh language policy.

1.4 This background technical background paper is therefore part of the evidence base for the RLDP and the above assessment work, that being part of the evidence base for land use decisions within the authority's boundaries up to 2036.

From a linguistic perspective, LDP's must be at any given time, fit for purpose and should also demonstrate best practice in terms of the interface between language planning and planning authorities' intentions for land use. This paper will assist and hopefully contribution to inform similar considerations at regional level as well – as part of the Strategic Planning phase of the wider region as that process progresses in the coming years. It shouldn't be forgotten either that considerations such as land use and language and culture more widely are not confined to Wales, but are also a feature that can also be seen in action today in other European cities, for some years now such as in Bilbao<sup>2</sup> or Dublin more recently and the plans there for the city's Irish centre and

<sup>1</sup> [Bilingual Cardiff Strategy 2022 to 2027.pdf](#)

<sup>2</sup> [The Department of Culture and Linguistic Policy of the Autonomous Basque Government signs agreement with the Port Authority of Bilbao to encourage the use of the Basque language in the Port of Bilbao. - Port of Bilbao also Bilbao case study.docx](#)

network and strengthening the Irish language as a village community language in an urban city context<sup>3</sup>.

Closer to home, it is also hoped that this information will be of use to Cardiff Council's service providers, housing and employment developers and businesses and to a number of the Local Authority's other partners and stakeholders.

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### 2.3 *The Headlines*

- The Welsh language has been part of the history and fabric of Cardiff's growth from its inception. Like the sea in Cardiff Bay, the Welsh language tide has come in and out over the years in Cardiff but it's great to be able to say that the tide has turned here and that the language has been on the rise in Cardiff for several decades now.
- With the advent of a Welsh legislature in the Bay, that has led to a raft of new legislation and further impacts relating to land use (and language planning) in Wales. One feature that arises from these more recent developments is an expectation on Local Authorities to shoulder some of the responsibility for the linguistic development of their own areas. The paper highlights this at a city level but also further at individual neighbourhoods level. However, the wider regional as well as national picture should also be kept in mind, as there may be solutions to challenges to be had in those directions, or a way of at least maximising potential opportunities, by working together at the different relevant geographic levels.
- As the authority that saw the most growth, and one of only four areas that saw an increase in their Welsh speaker numbers at the 2021 Census, the rest of Wales will be looking to the capital to lead the way in further increasing the numbers of Welsh speakers at the next Census in 2031, as we look to realise Welsh Government's strategy *2050: A Million Speakers*.

<sup>3</sup> [New project will work to develop Irish language quarter in Dublin](#) also [12.5 - Policies and Objectives | Dublin City Council](#) and p.116-8 [Dublin City Development Plan 2022 - 2028: Two-year Progress Report 2024](#)

- Statutory education will be *key* to that, certainly – after all Cardiff's Welsh schools and full immersion education have been the 'engine' that has been producing such successful speaker numbers in the city for four decades – but the importance of creating new speakers in the community or workplace should not be forgotten either, people of all ages. A large part of the solution to the second challenge set by the 2050 challenge also lies in the community and workplace, which is to double *daily use* of the language by 2050.
- In terms of the city's demographics, the paper highlights that there are significant clusters of speakers all across Cardiff. The treatment specifically mentions wider linguistic groups than just the fluent speakers - which is usually the cohort used in linguistic discussions on the Welsh language. That is deliberate because the capital's position is one of growth – not an ebbing tide, yet at the same time, its 'a mixed bag' as well. Although passing on a language from one generation to the next to ensure language survival is critical, to *grow* the language new households must be won to the Welsh language cause. The nature of linguistic differences in households and between the generations are subtle features here in the city, it is also important that discussion of Welsh is inclusive of those who may not speak the language, but who feel and hold a kinship with the language and an element of ownership of it – perhaps a grandparent who has a granddaughter in a Welsh school – and wants to be part of her new little world. Simply put, if someone understands spoken Welsh then they are on the road to crossing the bridge to becoming speakers of the language. Over the next few years and generations – and it will take generations – to increase daily usage will require focusing our attention on this cohort of residents, just as much as paying attention to protecting the interests of the city's fluent Welsh speakers.
- The paper also highlights Cardiff's unique situation in terms of its population density of Welsh speakers – and those who understand the language. The geographical proximity of this large community in terms of its numbers, in a fairly small city, makes the possibilities of increasing daily language use especially, exciting, and something that will require more consideration in developing ideas and plans to promote language use in the coming years. It is therefore suggested with this density in mind, that the city should designate itself in planning terms as an 'area of linguistic importance'.
- The potential strength of all that inherent proximity that the city has needs building upon and the obvious place to start is by increasing the language's visibility. Although this may feel elementary, but the more the Welsh language is seen throughout the city, then the less invisible and irrelevant it will feel, the greater the confidence people will have to own it and the more likely they are to use the language and echo it – regardless of each person's Welsh language level or ability. (The same emphasis can be seen in recent land use planning efforts in Dublin with the Irish language – there for example 5% of the available space in certain developments of a certain size is devoted to cultural activities, with a natural emphasis also on the Irish language).
- The language's visibility is also equally important for residents who move here to live, many of whom are from overseas and may have had no idea of the existence of the Welsh language before landing in Cardiff. Again, if the language is visually obvious to them, the context of their new homes and their sense of place, and even their emotional connection, can change in an instant upon arrival.

- This document also outlines the viability of the social life to be found through the medium of Welsh in Cardiff, a life that may not be as well-known even to some who already live here – unless they are part of it. From children's and youth clubs to students and choirs and societies and pop music and sport and social media, if you put it all together, there is a palpable buzz to the language in Cardiff.

2.4 The aim of the document is therefore to show the full extent of the practical relationship between land use decisions and language strengthening efforts and that it is possible to ensure not only that something like the Local Development Plan isn't a barrier to language growth in the city, or at best ambivalent or neutral to the discussion, but rather the realisation that a Development Plan strategy can be *part of* the solution – part of that necessary and creative constructive infrastructure needed in any attempt to see the Welsh language thrive in the capital in the years ahead.

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### 3. Legislative and Policy Background

3.1 Since the adoption of the current LDP (2006-26), several relevant developments and statements have significantly changed the context of the Welsh language in relation to the proposed new Local Development Plan 2026-36. The most important ones are summarised below:

3.2 New Welsh Government aspiration - Welsh Government's planning framework document (**Future Wales**, 2021)<sup>4</sup> states:

*"We aim to have a million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050 – an increase of almost 80% on current levels. The language will be an embedded consideration in the spatial strategy of all development plans. Where Welsh is the everyday language of the community, development will be managed to ensure there are jobs and homes to enable the language to remain central to those communities' identities. Elsewhere development will be a positive force towards encouraging the creation of education and social infrastructure to enable the language to develop as a natural, thriving part of communities."*

3.3 And for the capital's **wider region**:

*"With 150,792 Welsh speakers across the region, it is important that Strategic and Local Development Plans consider the relationship between strategic housing, transport and economic growth and the Welsh language. Strategic and Local Development Plans should contain settlement hierarchies and growth distribution policies that create the conditions for Welsh to thrive across the region and encourage the development of communities where Welsh can be the everyday language."*

3.4 **Planning Policy Wales 12**<sup>5</sup> gives more details about the *Welsh language and Placemaking*:

3.25 *The Welsh language is part of the social and cultural fabric and its future well-being will depend upon a wide range of factors, particularly education, demographic change, community activities and a sound economic base to maintain thriving sustainable communities and places. The land use planning system should take account of the conditions which are essential to the Welsh language and in so doing contribute to its, use and the Thriving Welsh Language well-being goal.*

3.26 *Planning authorities must consider the likely effects of their development plans on the use of the Welsh language as part of the Sustainability Appraisal. Planning authorities should seek to ensure a broad distribution and phasing of development that takes into account the ability of the area or community to accommodate development without adversely impacting use of the Welsh language.*

3.27 *Development plans should include a statement on how planning authorities have taken the needs and interests of the Welsh language into account in plan preparation and how any policies relating to the Welsh language interact with other plan policies.*

3.28 *Considerations relating to the use of the Welsh language may be taken into account by decision makers so far as they are material to applications for planning permission.*

<sup>4</sup> [Future Wales: National Plan 2040](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Planning Policy Wales - Issue 12](#)

*Policies and decisions must not introduce any element of discrimination between individuals on the basis of their linguistic ability, and should not seek to control housing occupancy on linguistic grounds.*

3.29 *If required, language impact assessments may be carried out in respect of large developments not allocated in a development plan which are proposed in areas of particular sensitivity or importance for the language. Any such areas should be defined clearly in the development plan.*

### 3.5 Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The principle of sustainable development is central to this Act<sup>6</sup>- summarised in its essentials.<sup>7</sup> One of the seven Well-being Goals is to ensure **A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language**. This requires all public bodies - such as planning authorities - prepare plans and act in a way that will promote the prosperity of the Welsh language as well as protect it.

The Future Generations Commissioner's website now states the following Requirement with regards the Welsh Language:<sup>8</sup>

*Public bodies are not giving culture and the Welsh language sufficient attention in their well-being objectives and plans.*

*Lack of funding and short-sighted decisions are threatening community infrastructure and cohesion.*

In terms of activity, we should:

*Advocate for cultural well-being and the Welsh language to be given more priority in approaches to well-being...*

*Shine a spotlight on examples that solve challenges through culture and the Welsh language... Ensure organisations look broadly at how they can improve cultural well-being, for example in areas like housing, land use planning, health, education, and community regeneration...*

*Advise public bodies to take action to enhance the fabric of our communities and to value multi-culturalism.*

### 3.6 Welsh Language Commissioner

In 2019 the Commissioner undertook a review of planning authorities' procedures in Wales<sup>9</sup>. The results of the survey and the discussion in the report raise a number of important considerations which remain relevant but which hopefully receive due attention as Cardiff's planned LDP preparations progress.

\*It should be noted that the Welsh Language Commissioner, although identified by the Planning Inspectorate as a non-prescribed consultative body in Wales, in the same way as a body similar to CADW, *they need to be treated in the same way as prescribed bodies* in the similar regulations for England.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Well-being of Future Generations 2015: The Essentials](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Culture and the Welsh Language – The Future Generations Commissioner for Wales](#)

<sup>9</sup> [WLC Planning Overview report.pdf](#)

<sup>10</sup> [ANNEX 1 TO ADVICE NOTE 5 \(VERSION 5: MAY 2013\) \(planninginspectorate.gov.uk\)](#)

## Welsh Language Commissioner

### All proposed applications likely to affect land in Wales

The Welsh Language Commissioner is not identified as a prescribed consultee within Schedule 1 of the APFP Regulations. However, in view of the importance which the Planning Inspectorate places on supporting the Welsh language<sup>37</sup>, it is considered that the views of the Welsh Language Commissioner should be sought in relation to all proposed applications that are likely to affect land in Wales.

### 3.7 TAN 20: Planning and the Welsh Language (2017)<sup>11</sup>

This provides guidance to planning authorities on land use and the Welsh language and how the Welsh language should be considered when developing LDPs. It recommends using the Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment framework to develop a sustainable objective with regards to the Welsh language and to assess the resilience of the Local Delivery Plan against that specific objective. This is a completely voluntary recommendation and the responsibility to act rests squarely on the shoulders of the Local Authorities themselves.

### 3.8 Bilingual Cardiff Strategy 2022 – 2027<sup>12</sup>

This strategy has adopted the three themes along with their supporting areas of work that were presented in Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 action plan to have one million Welsh speakers and double the daily usage to realise Cardiff Council's vision of a truly bilingual capital:

#### Theme 1: Increasing the number of Welsh speakers

**Areas of work:** Language transmission in the family, The early years, Statutory education, Post-compulsory education, The education workforce, resources and qualifications

#### Theme 2: Increasing the use of Welsh

**Areas of work:** Workforce, Welsh Language Services, Social use of Welsh

#### Theme 3: Creating favourable conditions - infrastructure and context

**Areas of work:** Community and economy, Culture and media, Wales and the wider world, Digital technology, Language infrastructure, Language planning, Evaluation and research

### 3.9 Cardiff Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-31

'Our vision is to see a truly bilingual Cardiff.'<sup>13</sup>

Underpinning this vision are the following principles:

- Apply the principles of the '15-minute neighbourhoods'<sup>2</sup>to ensure that all learners have access Welsh-medium education within a reasonable distance of their homes.
- Seek to establish at least 50% of new school places provision on Local Development Plan sites as Welsh-medium.
- Every child in the city can choose to be educated in Welsh or English with the benefits of a bilingual education actively promoted to all parents from birth
- Parents will be supported to transfer their child, or children, to Welsh-medium education at any age, with high quality immersion provided to support in-year transition applications.
- Learners who have been educated through Welsh-medium throughout the primary phase will be proactively supported to continue into Welsh-medium secondary provision

<sup>11</sup> [TAN20: Planning and the Welsh Language](#)

<sup>12</sup> [Bilingual Cardiff Strategy 2022-27](#)

<sup>13</sup> [Cardiff Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-31](#)

- The Council will work with a wide range of partners to proactively promote and increase Welsh/English bilingualism.
- All learners will be supported to become confident in at least two languages
- All Cardiff schools will increase the amount of Welsh taught, used and heard in their schools, consistent with new curriculum for Wales
- Learners with additional learning needs (ALN) will receive equal linguistic opportunity.
- Learners with English or Welsh as additional languages will receive equal linguistic opportunity
- To facilitate the growth of Welsh medium education we will aim to maintain city wide capacity in the Welsh-medium sector at 10% over the projected intake.

3.10 As Welsh language immersion education has been largely responsible for creating new Welsh speakers in the city, the implementation of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP), the location and numbers of any new school places - in both languages - and how/if existing English schools move along the linguistic continuum along with the implementation of the new Curriculum for Wales - are *essential* to language growth in the capital - growth that can be promoted and facilitated or hindered with implementation of the new Development Plan. It is also important to re-visit the aforementioned WESP principles to see whether they are fit for purpose five years since first formulated – and whether or not they can be further strengthened by adding more specific and measurable targets and timescales to them.

3.11 The current WESP has 7 outcomes:

- 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 - An increase in the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and teach through the medium of Welsh.**

### 3.12 The Welsh Language and Education Bill, 2024

This is the latest legislation relevant to the development of Welsh language education and the creation of Welsh speakers.<sup>14</sup> As well as building on the local education authorities' recent Welsh in Education Strategic Plans, it also goes hand in hand with the new non-statutory arrangements to re-categorise schools according to their Welsh-medium provision<sup>15</sup> and also with the introduction of the new *Curriculum for Wales* (\*A curriculum that places particular emphasis on awareness of locality and place as one of its four purposes that pupils are "...principled, knowledgeable (citizens) that are:... knowledgeable about their culture, their community, their society and the world now and in the past".<sup>16</sup>

The new categorisation arrangements also facilitate steps to enable an individual school to increase its Welsh language provision and to move from one category on to the next – the so-called 'moving

<sup>14</sup> [Welsh Language and Education \(Wales\) Bill](#)

<sup>15</sup> [WG43283](#)

<sup>16</sup> [Developing a vision for curriculum design - Hub](#)

along the linguistic continuum'. This is set out for example as part of Carmarthenshire Council's current WESP vision – with schools able to move forward on the continuum following public consultation.<sup>17</sup>

The aim of the Welsh Language and Education Bill is "...trying to ensure that all pupils reach the end of compulsory school age as an independent Welsh language user... The aim is for all pupils to develop skills equivalent to level B2 of the Common European Reference framework for languages."<sup>18</sup> To make that a reality, schools will need to move along the continuum, as some schools have already begun to do so. \*A fuller discussion of Education can be found in section 5 below.

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<sup>17</sup> [Our ten-year vision for increasing and improving the planning of Welsh-medium education provision in our area - Carmarthenshire County Council](#)

<sup>18</sup> [Association of Language Testers in Europe \(ALTE\) - Home](#)

## 4. The Welsh language in Cardiff - Demography

### 4.1 Cardiff:

Capital of Wales since 1955 (City designation since 1905)

54.2 square miles / 140.3km

Population 2021: 362,400

Population density: 6,686 per square mile / approximately 18-19 people to each area of land the size of a football field

Population of Cardiff Capital Region: c.1,543,293

### 4.2 Context:

Before looking more specifically at the Welsh language, and recent 2021 Census statistics<sup>19</sup>, as well as later data, it would be useful to take a look at the findings of the *Cardiff Tomorrow* report,<sup>20</sup> a paper that forms part of the Cardiff Public Service Board's Wellbeing Report under the Well-being of Future Generations Act. This report summarises a number of findings made at the time about the future of Cardiff's growth over the next few years – which differ from some of the previous assumptions at the time the current LDP 2006-26 was drawn up. [*\*The report in question was produced ahead of the 2021 Census results*]

### 4.3 Summary of the report's findings:

Population growth – this will continue but slow down between 2020-2043 with total growth of only 19,688 with the highest rate among those aged 65+. There are projected to be increases of 33% (to 68,364) in those 65+ and 52% (to 11,156) in those 85+ by 2043. This will lead to an increase in demand and need for health and care services and to a projected growth in the number of older people with complex care needs (including severe dementia)<sup>21</sup>; an increase in demand for frailty-based services; and the need for more accommodation for older people. The older population is currently concentrated in the north of the city. It is therefore reasonable to assume that this will have implications for Welsh speakers and their needs as well. (See also the more recent note on population size in 4.9 – 4.11)

4.4 It is anticipated that a smaller increase in the 16-64 age group and a decrease in the 0-15 age group will have implications for the planning of primary school organisation in particular and other services and provisions for young people. *"These projections have changed significantly, with the 2018-based projections now predicting that Cardiff will see an average 0.4% increase in people aged under 18 year-on-year to 2023. After 2023, there is predicted to be a year-on-year average decrease of 0.5% to 2036, resulting in a projected reduction of the under 18 population of 4.4% by 2036."* (*Cardiff Tomorrow, 2022*)

4.5 Also worth noting: *"Furthermore, over the past 25 years, birth rates in Cardiff have followed a cyclical pattern. It is possible that there will continue to be rises and falls in the birth rate that differ from Welsh Government projections, particularly when less-common events, such as the impact of the*

<sup>19</sup> [Exec-Summary-Welsh-Final.pdf \(cardiffpartnership.co.uk\)](https://www.cardiffpartnership.co.uk/Exec-Summary-Welsh-Final.pdf)

[Population projections by local authority and year](https://www.cardiffpartnership.co.uk/Population-projections-by-local-authority-and-year)

<sup>20</sup> [Cardiff Tomorrow \(2022\)](https://www.cardiftomorrow.com/)

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.comisiynyddygymraeg.cymru/media/h0knbvow/final-reportwlc.pdf>

pandemic, are factored in. Birth rates have fallen below each of the three Welsh Government population projection trajectories published in 2011, 2014 and, most recently, in 2020 (based on 2018 data). It could also potentially rise at a higher rate in future ." (Cardiff Tomorrow, 2022) [\*Information from the Census and more recent population data sources suggest different trends again, see 4.9 – 4.11].

4.6 According to the report, secondary schools on the other hand will be filling up in the coming years, so it is sufficiency of places that will be the sector's challenge for a while. In terms of the side effects of Covid on children and young people, in terms of the greatest relevance for Welsh speakers, children with special learning needs and children from Black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds and Welsh-medium pupils who do not speak Welsh at home were identified as among the most vulnerable cohorts post-pandemic.

4.7 The picture in terms of net migration is very uncertain following Brexit changes and the effects of Covid but if the city grows in the future, presumably that will mean that the net migration rate will remain positive, and perhaps drive that growth. [Again, see 4.9 – 4.11]

On the other hand, in terms of Welsh speakers, as the growth of the city's speaker numbers in more recent decades has depended at least in part on Welsh speakers migrating to the city for work reasons, Covid (and possibly Brexit to a lesser extent) could have a more negative impact on those numbers.

Similarly, depending on immigration levels, the side effects of Covid and Brexit could also have an influence – by reducing or inflating the proportion of the city's population who consider themselves ethnically diverse or of the global majority (i.e. identifying as non-white). The percentage of this cohort in the city increased from 15.3% in 2011 to 20.8% in 2021. 25% of those are aged between 16-24 and only 18% are over the age of 50. (2021 Census). It should also be remembered that a higher percentage of this population live in the city's central wards. Here again the more recent population data from the ONS discussed in 4.9 – 4.11 is relevant.

4.8 It is important that we keep track of multiple sources when it comes to population data because some sources may highlight trends that are not found in a once-a-decade Census. In terms of the growth of Welsh speakers, since the publication of **Cardiff Tomorrow** in 2022, according to the latest Annual Population Survey report<sup>22</sup>, Cardiff is ranked third in terms of Welsh Local Authorities with the largest numbers of Welsh-speaking residents, giving a figure of **80,600**.

**\*These figures are quite different to official Census ones** (where Cardiff also remains as the third-placed authority according to the 2021 Census, but with **42,757** fluent speakers - with the difference between the data results of the two mainly attributable to the questions asked and the different methods used to collect the data). The sample size of the Annual Survey has also reduced over the last decade which means that the strength of this data is its trends rather than absolute numbers. The statistical differences are discussed in a blog post by the statistician.<sup>23</sup>

4.9 It is also worth noting at this point the latest information on the city's population growth. Overall, although lower than past projections, it was assumed that the population would continue to grow reaching around 375,700 by 2028 – largely due to a higher number of births than deaths combined with a little net migration. Between 2011-21 the population grew by around 14k or 4.2%.

<sup>22</sup> [Welsh language data from the Annual Population Survey | HELM. WALES](#)

<sup>23</sup> [Chief Statistician update: understanding 2021 Census data about Welsh | Digital and Data Blog \(gov.wales\)](#)

But now, the latest data from the Office of National Statistics suggests a quite different trend (Fig 1 below).

4.10 According to the ONS mid-year data for 2022 and 2023, the city's population is projected to have seen a significant jump in the last 2 years, reaching a total of **383,536** (ONS - Summer 2024) an increase of 6.6% in 2 years. This is quite different to the 2018 WG population projection line (the orange line in the graph below).

\*New projections are expected from WG in 2025 which will be based on 2022 data – i.e post-Census and post-Brexit – but it is uncertain whether it will comprise more than a small proportion of the recent population growth shown here (tail of blue line). That jump is largely attributable to significant international migration since 2021. [It should also be kept in mind that there is some doubt as to the Census baseline data itself due to Covid – which essentially means that the normal international student numbers that would have been here at the time of a normal ten-year Census may not have been counted in 2021 – but that they subsequently returned to Cardiff with the end of Covid in 2022. But that hardly explains the above increase here entirely as the same is true of other university cities in the UK with high numbers of international students among their ranks. Furthermore, according to this latest population data from the ONS, Cardiff is second only to London in terms of population growth of the UK's core cities, where prior it had been close to the bottom of that table].

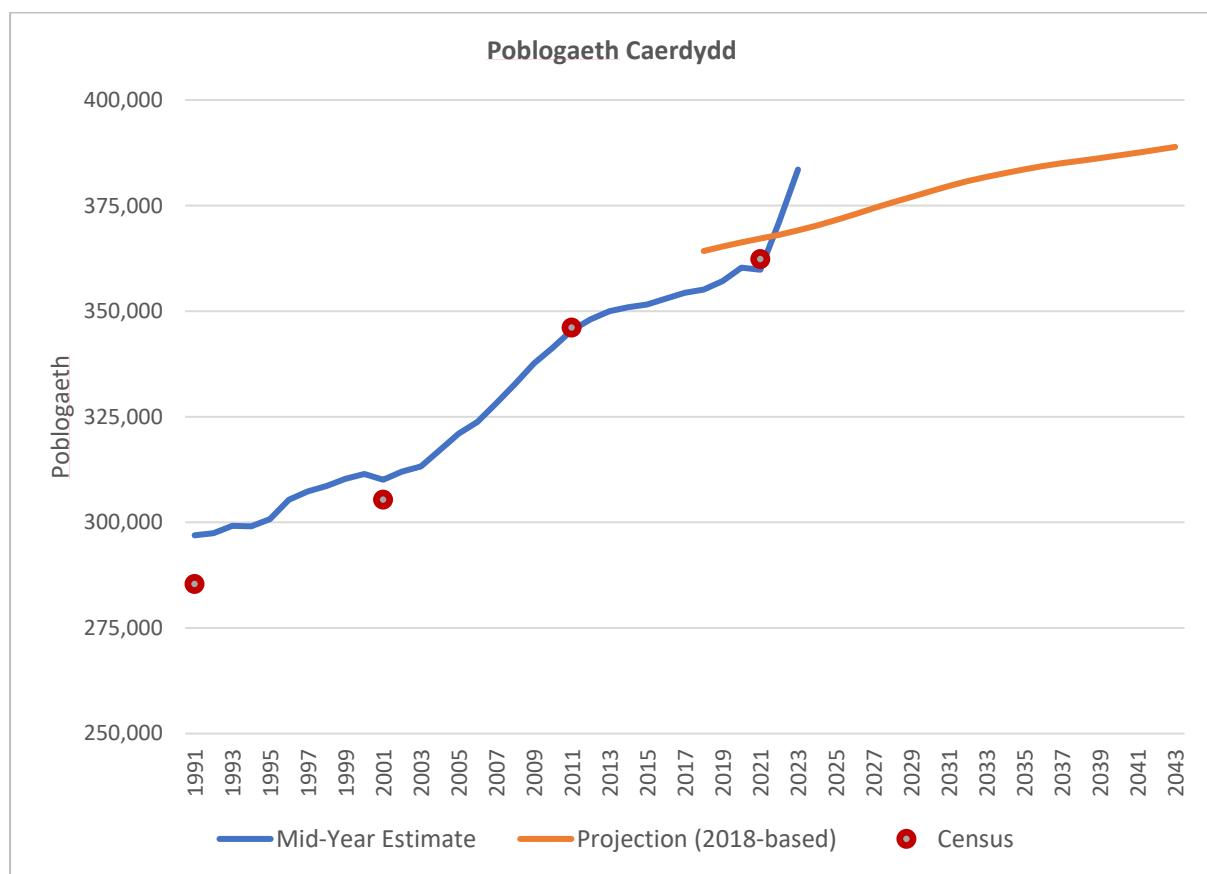


Figure 1: Cardiff's recent population change according to ONS mid-year figures

4.11 Between 2012 and 2021 the total net annual migration to Cardiff was 25,041. Between 2021 and 2023 however, there has been total net annual migration of 19,249, so the last two years we have seen an increase equivalent to 76% of what was seen over the previous decade. Remember that only 24,642 growth in 25 years between 2018 – 2043 was predicted in the *Cardiff Tomorrow* report – which was part of the evidence when preparation for the RLDP began in 2021 [see 4.3 above].

Some three-quarters of this latest change has been driven largely by significant international migration from **outside** the EU, then of the remaining quarter we have international refugees and migration from other parts of the UK (including other parts of Wales), migration from mainland Europe itself and only a small amount of the increase is attributable to the inherent growth of Cardiff's population (fewer deaths than births) see Table A below.

4.12 It is important to remember that young cohorts are by far the largest of these new international migrants, 60% of the increase comes from the 20-29 cohort – most now coming here to work probably more than to study – which again contradicts some of the potential impact of Covid on the Census mentioned above in 4.10. It is also worth noting that they include a few thousand children of statutory school age – mainly secondary (\* these will have been counted in the PLASC annual statistics for the years under review which are PLASC 2023 and 2024).

Period	Pop. Projection Start of Period	Natural Change	Net Internal Migration (UK)	Net International Migration	Other	Pop. Projection End of Period
Mid-2011 to Mid-2012	345,442	2,205	327	1,343	-1,233	348,084
Mid-2012 to Mid-2013	348,084	1,760	-725	2,071	-1,208	349,982
Mid-2013 to Mid-2014	349,982	1,963	-1,683	1,989	-1,347	350,949
Mid-2014 to Mid-2015	350,949	1,704	-2,131	2,735	-1,657	351,600
Mid-2015 to Mid-2016	351,600	1,787	-1,603	2,864	-1,666	352,982
Mid-2016 to Mid-2017	352,982	1,407	-539	2,110	-1,612	354,348
Mid-2017 to Mid-2018	354,348	1,046	-1,088	2,566	-1,747	355,125
Mid-2018 to Mid-2019	355,125	1,114	-781	3,739	-2,060	357,137
Mid-2019 to Mid-2020	357,137	659	2,614	2,054	-2,177	360,287
Mid-2020 to Mid-2021	360,287	636	-2,770	3,570	-1,899	359,824
Mid-2021 to Mid-2022	359,824	903	555	9,833	-11	371,104
Mid-2022 to Mid-2023	371,104	466	2,456	9,416	94	383,536

Table A: Cardiff's population changes based on migration and natural change 2011-2023 (ONS, 2024)

**Consideration:** There is no strong reason at this stage to suspect that the mid-year 2024 figures, which will be released in summer 2025, will differ significantly from this new pattern – a new administration did not come to power in Westminster until summer 2024 and therefore any proposed policy change on international immigration will not be reflected in the half-year figures for 2024.

That means Cardiff's population could easily cross the 400,000 threshold in the next two years. It also means that the birth rate in the city could also be different to that expected over the next few years and increase faster than the predicted potential cyclical pattern – and the expected trajectory in the birth rate to the end of the RLDP period, as this additional population who are in their twenties today begin to raise families in their thirties tomorrow.

This will also be a consideration when thinking about plans to promote and facilitate the Welsh language among the city's diverse communities as the proportion of those 16-24 who are from Black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds increases further from the 25% recorded in the 2021 Census.

These figures and tables all show that the picture on the ground is constantly changing and that any new information must be continually re-assessed as new data is received. That will be part of the work that will underpin the RLDP's annual monitoring reports.

#### 4.13 2050 Trajectory

In considering the numbers of Welsh speakers and the growth required to enable Welsh Government's 2050 vision and strategy of 1 million speakers to be realised by 2050, it will be seen that the government has based its strategy on a small pattern of growth in the first years of the strategy which gradually increases and diverges from the projection through a number of policy interventions and actions to bolster the numbers – so that the growth rate peaks in the final years immediately prior to 2050. According to this trajectory at the time the original strategy was published, we would have seen a very small increase in the number of Welsh speakers between the two censuses of 2011 and 2021. By the end of the RLDP period - which will be fifteen years further along the trajectory - that rate should show more significant, and increasing, growth above the population projection, as seen in Fig 2 below.

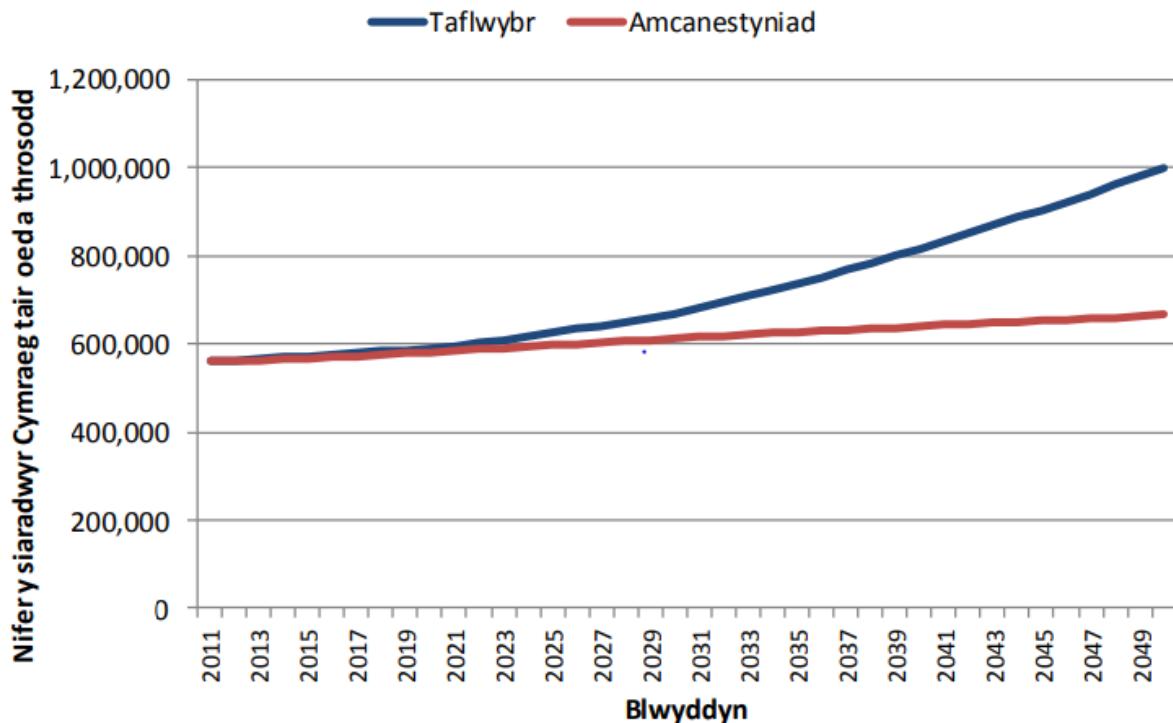


Figure 2: Welsh Government projection and trajectory, number of speakers aged 3+, 2011-2050<sup>24</sup>

4.14 That means WG is aiming for 750,000 speakers by 2036, which is the end of the RLDP period, being based on 600,000 speakers in Wales in 2021, and 630,000 in 2026 – the planned first year of the RLDP. Converting that into a trajectory for the Cardiff area, following the same growth profile, and assuming the percentage for Cardiff remains unchanged at 7.9% of the Welsh speakers in Wales, that would give an expectation that the number of Cardiff Welsh speakers would rise from 49,770 in 2026 to around 59,250 by 2036. That equates to growth in Cardiff of 9,480 over 10 years – or +948 linear growth each year between 2026-36.

This is an *extremely* challenging target given that 538,300 speakers were recorded in Wales in the Census itself, against the WG projection of 584,000 for 2021, but also 600,000 for the same year for the 2050 growth strategy trajectory drawn up in 2018! Adapting this for Cardiff would require the Welsh speaking population to grow by 16,493 over the fifteen years 2021-2036, from 42,757 to 59,250 so that the increase in Welsh speakers reaches the slope of the 2050 trajectory, or an additional +1,099 speakers per year.

*\*The Welsh Government is expected to publish a new set of population trajectories in 2025 which will be based on 2021 Census data but will also take account of some later data. So we can expect to see significant variation on this growth trajectory figure towards the 2050 target over the next year.*

4.15 We know that the numbers of Welsh speakers across the whole of Wales at the last Census in 2021 saw a **reduction**. That simply means that the trajectory of the 2050 national strategy, originally based on the 2018 projections, when revised will have a steeper slope than the blue line seen above, and the scale of the task will require perhaps even more effort and actions and policy interventions at the national level.

<sup>24</sup> [welsh-speaker-estimates-2011-to-2050-technical-report.pdf](https://gov.wales/welsh-speaker-estimates-2011-to-2050-technical-report.pdf)

**Consideration:** A point worth noting, as the vast majority of Welsh local authority areas experienced a decline in the number of Welsh speakers in the period 2011-21, then in order to realise the 2050 ambition, it would not be surprising to see that the overall growth required in the number of Welsh speakers in Cardiff and a few other growth areas by 2036 would be even higher than the 16,493 quoted above in order to *compensate for a lack of growth - and a (possibly inevitable) decline* - in other areas of Wales, particularly if people continue to migrate to Cardiff from more densely Welsh-speaking traditional communities in the west and north.

#### 4.16 2021 Census

Although the proposed development plan and the *Edge Analytics* report were based on growth projections made prior to the publication of the 2021 Census results, the more recent Census results provide a very robust and timely narrative framework for the purposes of producing a full impact assessment of the proposed RLDP on the Welsh language, outlining the exact scale of the challenge, whilst also bearing in mind that, currently at least, the Census data remains the overriding measure to discuss the viability of the Welsh language's position in language planning terms.

How did we get to here then?

The story of the Census in Cardiff as a whole since the 1980s has been a history of growth in the number of Cardiff's Welsh speakers, but while the number of speakers has almost tripled in the 40 years between 1981 and 2021, from around 15,000 to 42,757 in 2021, as noted above, that has happened within a context where the capital's population grew by over 100,000 - from around 260,000 to 362,400. The difference in growth rates is shown below:

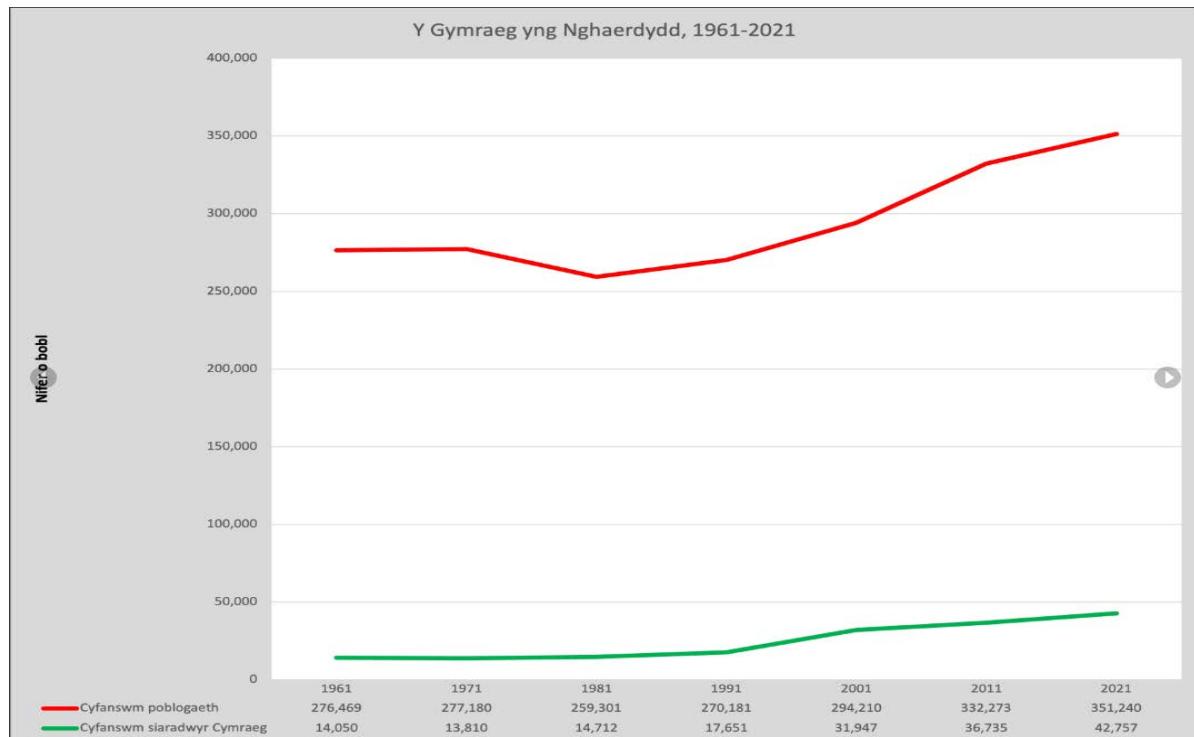


Figure 3: Population growth v Welsh speaker growth in Cardiff 1961-2021 (c. *Atlas y Gymraeg*, 2024)<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> [Cardiff | Atlas y Gymraeg](#)

4.17 So while growth in the number of Welsh speakers in Cardiff is a positive feature and has continued to increase in the latest Census, that growth has also slowed compared to the growth seen at the end of last century with an increase of only **6,000** in the 10 years from 2011-2021 to **42,757**. To realise the necessary growth towards the 2050 trajectory between 2021 and the next Census in 2031, this next decade in Cardiff would require an annualised growth of 1,099 as noted above at 4.14, or a total of approximately 11,000, almost twice the growth seen during the second decade of this century.

4.18 Among the more positive signs in the 2021 Census, there has been an increase in the numbers of 3-15 year olds in Cardiff able to speak Welsh (an increase of almost **1,300** since 2011), although the percentage at that age at 26.2% is slightly lower than the 26.7% seen in 2011. There was also an increase in numbers aged 16-24 (**+863**) and in the percentage from 11.5% in 2011 to 13.9% in 2021. The increase in numbers aged 25-34 is small in contrast to the rest of the Wales where there has been a slightly larger increase - but we've seen more growth amongst the older ages in the city - an increase of **2,521** in those aged 35-64 and another **724** (+35%) in those 65+ since 2011. See Figure 4 below:

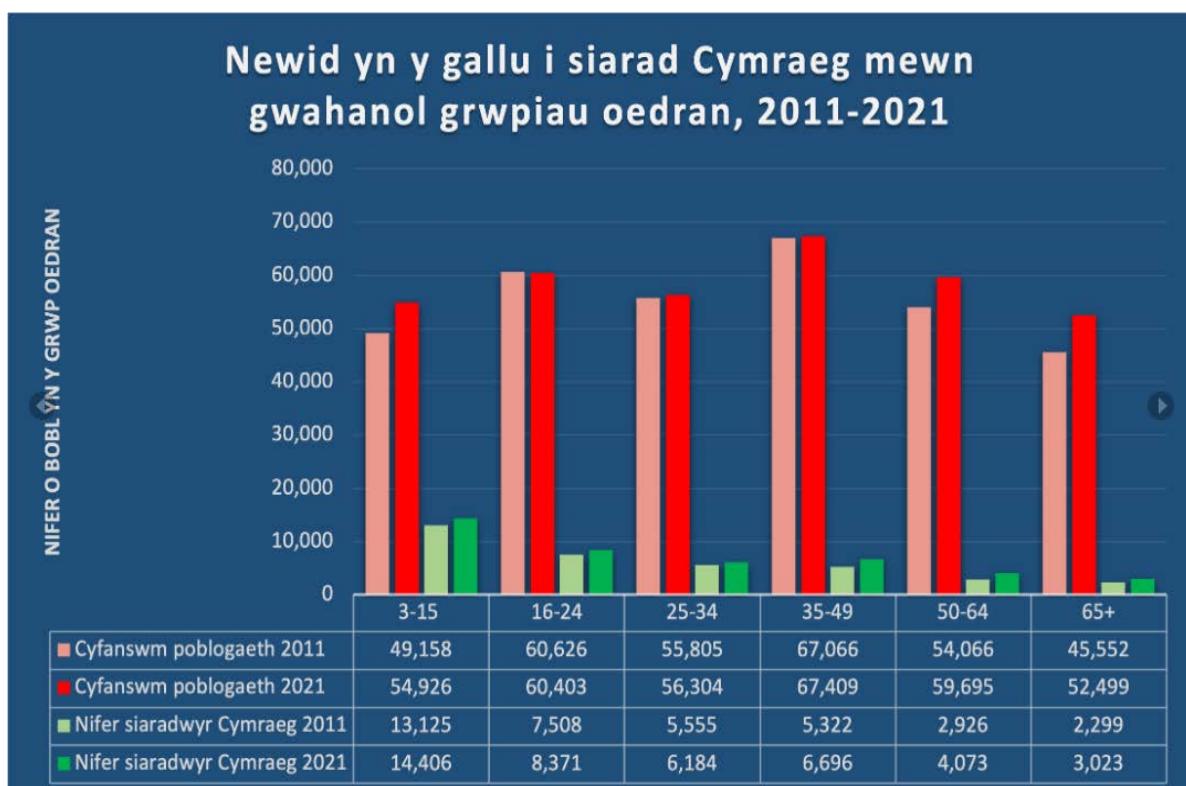


Figure 4: Change among Cardiff Welsh speaker groups 2011-2021 (c. Atlas y Gymraeg 2024)<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. Figure 3

**Consideration:** – There may be a hint of a new phenomenon here in more older people moving to the city and/or those who used to move out of the city in the past (after their children left home or perhaps to retire elsewhere) now choosing to continue living here. But it must be remembered that the increase in the size of older age cohorts is a general trend, not just a trend among Welsh speakers. However, it *does* highlight a consideration that has been little discussed so far, as this cohort grows in size in the coming years, what will be the levels of service provision for the city's older Welsh speakers – particularly in terms of health and social care, but also in terms of housing, suitable facilities and social life?

As for the cohort in the centre (aged 35-64), it should also be remembered that the pupils of the new primary schools that opened in the city during the 80s (Treganna, Coed y Gof, Melin Gruffydd, y Wern, Bro Eirwg) and Ysgol Gyfun Glantaf as well (if the pupils stayed in Cardiff or came back to live and work in Cardiff) now belong to the 35–64 cohort in this latest Census - they have their roots in this city, so they hardly have the same compulsion as some of their peers in the city who hail from elsewhere in Wales to move 'back home' after an extended period in the capital.

On the other hand, it's possible that the side effects of Covid, higher house prices and more employees being able to work flexibly may also be having a contrary effect on the future size of this cohort, motivating more of them to move 'back home' or perhaps move 'out of the city' for the first time - in search of a different quality of life.

4.19 It is also worth noting the economic distribution of Welsh speakers across the city. It is a common old assumption that it is 'children of the Welsh middle class' that attend Welsh-medium education in Cardiff. If that was once the case, today's data doesn't support that – at least not completely. Yet there is a difference to be seen with Welsh speakers tending to be *slightly* stronger in those areas that are economically less deprived, and slightly weaker in those areas of greater deprivation.

According to the WIMD (Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation) measure, which measures deprivation by population fifths in communities across Wales, looking at fluent speakers over the age of 3+ in Cardiff, we can see in *Table B* below that the percentage of Welsh speakers is higher the lower the level of deprivation, and that speakers are less numerous the greater the level of deprivation.

*\*The WIMD uses a number of diverse indicators including income, employment, health, education, accessibility of services, housing and community safety. The measurement is carried out on small economic areas LSOAs – Lower Super Output Areas.\*\**

*\*LSOA areas are combinations of production areas, usually four or five small areas, and each LSOA has between 400-1,200 households and a population that is between 1,000 and 3,000. They are fairly evenly split in their population levels across Cardiff, more so than electoral wards, but their boundaries are subject to change, so it is difficult to trace change patterns in them over a number of years.*

Deprivation Fifth	No. who can speak Welsh	No. who can NOT speak Welsh	All normal residents aged 3+	Can speak Welsh %	Can't speak Welsh %
Greatest Deprivation	6,042	64,174	70,216	8.6	91.4
Next Greatest Deprivation	7,652	66,048	73,700	10.4	89.6
Middle	9,139	62,874	72,013	12.7	87.3
Next Lowest Deprivation	9,594	58,509	68,103	14.1	85.9
Lowest Deprivation	10,335	56,875	67,210	15.4	84.6
Cardiff Total	42,757	308,483	351,240	12.2	87.8

TABLE B: *Levels of Deprivation and being able to speak Welsh, Census 2021*

It is therefore seen above that the percentage of Welsh speakers is highest (15.4%) in the least deprived areas (which are the 20% of the most privileged LSOAs in the city). That's almost double the percentage of Welsh speakers found in the most deprived areas at 8.6% (which are the 20% of least privilege LSOAs).

3.20 The same trend can be seen when looking at patterns of housing tenure, where there a slightly higher percentage of Welsh speakers are home owners and a lower percentage of them tending to rent social housing.

Household tenure	No. who can speak Welsh	No. who can NOT speak Welsh	All 3+ age in the household	Can speak Welsh %	Can't speak Welsh %
Own: Owned outright	8,032	72,389	80,421	10.0	90.0
Own: Own with a mortgage, loan or shared ownership	20,780	94,249	115,029	18.1	81.9
Renting: Social renting	3,921	52,974	56,895	6.9	93.1
Renting: private rental or rent-free living	8,852	74,633	83,485	10.6	89.4
All residents aged 3+ in Households	41,585	294,245	335,830	12.4	87.6

Table C: *Household tenure and being able to speak Welsh, Census 2021*

**Consideration:** It is fair to point out that, historically, stronger demand from areas with less deprivation have been responsible for driving the growth of Welsh language provision in the past, but in order to continue to grow more Welsh language provision will need to be available on the doorstep, along with more equal Welsh language social opportunities, in areas of the city with greater deprivation and where it could be argued that more social and economic obstacles are a barrier.

For example, in social housing developments, adequate opportunities to access Welsh language provision and facilities – to use Welsh – should be readily available in the local area, particularly when they are in areas of higher levels of deprivation and where there are greater barriers to ease of travel. This will be as true of provision for the younger ages as it is for older people.

#### 4.21 2021 Census - Electoral Wards

In terms of the number of Welsh speakers at ward level, Canton is the ward with the highest number (3,729) of speakers (who can speak, read and write in Welsh) – which is about 24% of the population. But it's also a more nuanced picture than that. If we take a closer look in Figure 5 below at the distribution of Welsh speakers across the capital by ward, according to the 2021 Census:

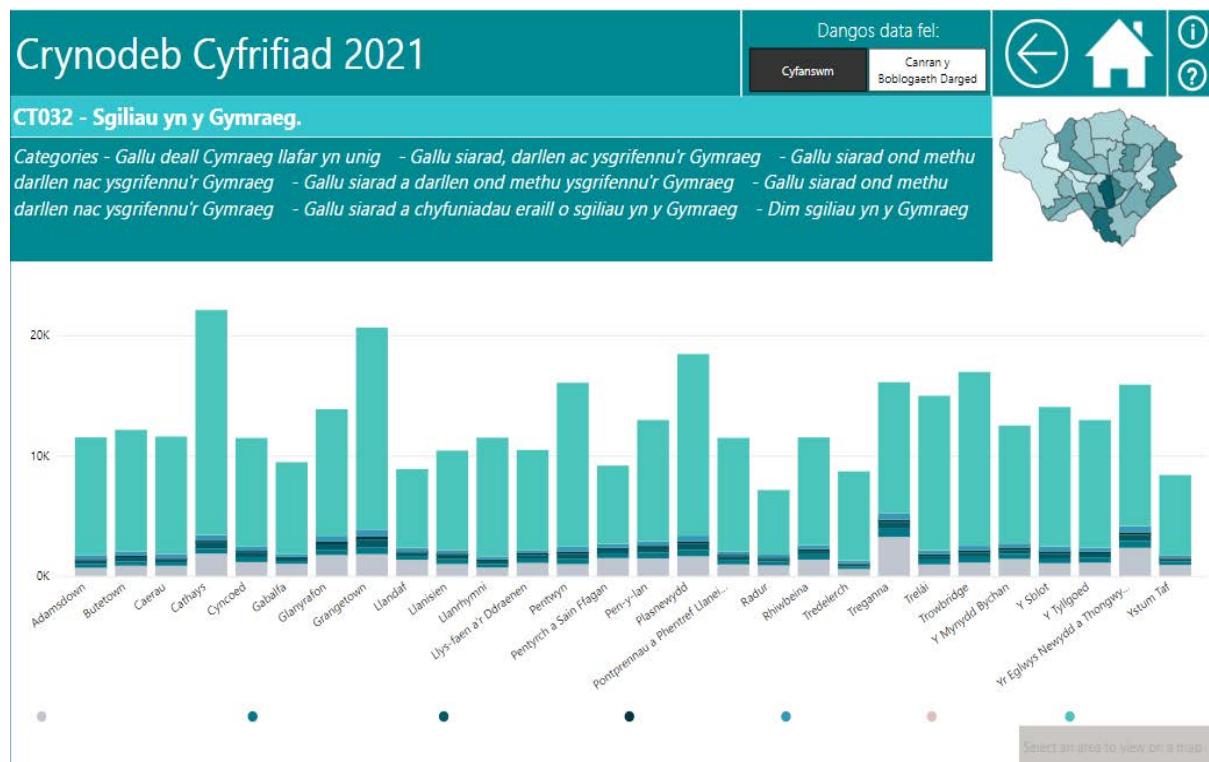


Figure 5: Welsh language skills Cardiff electoral wards 2021 by numbers, Cardiff Council

4.22 Initially staying with the Canton ward, if we look at the numbers who **share a range of Welsh language skills**, in any combination *including understanding spoken Welsh only*, we have over 30% at 4,659. [see Table D below] Those numbers would probably include those currently learning the

language at different levels and others who have forgotten how to speak it – or lack the confidence. But that gives a combined percentage of any Welsh language skills in this ward at circa **30.19%**.

4.23 Following Canton in terms of this particular percentage (of having any Welsh skill) comes the *Pentwyn and St Fagans* ward at 26.48% which is 2,331 people. Then we have 24.08% in the *Llandaff* ward with 2,016 who understand the language at least with *Whitchurch and Tongwynlais* electoral ward also close at 23.7% but - with significantly greater numbers this time at 3,645.

4.24 **Note that a very similar percentage can mean quite a difference in numbers and therefore the density in the number of speakers in a given local area. For example in the case of Radyr and Caerau wards that have around 1500 inhabitants each that have some Welsh language skills but the percentages are 22.42% and 13.63% respectively - which could give the impression that there may be twice as many inhabitants in Radyr with a Welsh language skill, or that there are twice as many Welsh speakers in Radyr than there are in Caerau - but the numbers are the same - so care is needed.**

This ambiguity between *percentage* and *numbers* is discussed below at 4.3. It is also worth noting that most of the wards named above are among the city's wealthiest wards.

4.25 Other wards that are over the 20% threshold for a combination of speakers and those who understand spoken Welsh include: *Riverside, Penylan, Rhiwbina, and Llandaff North*. These wards are all in the north or centre of the city, and again, some of them are among the wealthiest wards.

4.26 In contrast, the lowest percentages are found in the least privileged wards and in the main in the southern parts of the city – such as *Adamsdown, Llanrumney, Rumney, Ely and Trowbridge* – all in the range of 12 – 13% who have some Welsh skill or understand spoken Welsh.

4.27 **But it is important to note that none of Cardiff's 28 electoral wards has fewer than 1,000 residents that have some Welsh language skill** – i.e who at least understand spoken Welsh. In 2 of the wards with the lowest percentage, namely *Adamsdown* and *Trowbridge*, in terms of numbers it will be seen that both these have over 2,000 residents with some Welsh language skill, that is a substantially greater number than the *Radyr* ward - which gives these communities significant linguistic density as well (Table D)

	<b>Electoral Wards</b> <i>*After the 2022 changes</i>	<b>% Speakers</b> <i>(*Any Welsh Language Skills)</i>	<b>Number*</b>
1	Adamsdown	12.71%	2,125
2	Butetown	14.4%	1,659
3	Caerau	13.63%	1,523
4	Cathays	13.65%	2,845
5	Cyncoed	18.84%	2,081
6	Gabalfa	17.19%	1,581
7	Grangetown	16.41%	3,268
8	Riverside	21.4%	2,816
9	Llandaff	24.08%	2,016
10	Llanisien	3-18	1,866
11	Llanrumney	12.38%	1,372
12	Lisvane and Thornhill	18.58%	1,883

13	Pentwyn	13.09%	2,051
14	Pentyrch and St Fagans	26.48%	2,331
15	Penylan	20.02%	2,482
16	Plasnewydd	15.92%	2,825
17	Pontprennau and Old St Mellons	15.74%	1,739
18	Radyr	22.42%	1,545
19	Rhiwbina	20.14%	2,241
21	Rumney	12.86%	1,085
22	Canton	30.19%	4,659
23	Trowbridge	12.91%	2,123
24	Ely	12.48%	1,810
25	Heath	19.57%	2,379
26	Whitchurch and Tongwynlais	23.7%	3,645
27	Splott	15.14%	2,065
28	Llandaff North	18.77%	1,517
29	Fairwater	16.11%	2,001

Table D – Electoral wards of Cardiff – percentage and number - any Welsh language skill

4.28 A similar and not dissimilar pattern manifests itself when looking at the cross-section and percentage of Welsh speakers living in Cardiff's electoral wards who are of Black, Asian and ethnic minority background seen in Table E below. This table also, like Table D above, shows at least a tendency for more Welsh speakers from a minority Black, Asian and Ethnic background to live in the more prosperous wards of the city and a lower percentage of them that are Welsh speakers to live in the less prosperous wards.

Ward	No. who can speak Welsh	No. who can NOT speak Welsh	All 3+ usually in the household	Can speak Welsh %	Can't speak Welsh %
Adamsdown	185	4,385	4,570	4.0	96.0
Butetown	185	4,436	4,621	4.0	96.0
Caerau	164	1,469	1,633	10.0	90.0
Cathays	142	5,419	5,561	2.6	97.4
Cyncoed	212	2,326	2,538	8.4	91.6
Gabalfa	156	2,025	2,181	7.2	92.8
Grangetown	529	8,572	9,101	5.8	94.2
Riverside	305	4,439	4,744	6.4	93.6
Llandaff	61	772	833	7.3	92.7
Llanisien	90	966	1,056	8.5	91.5
Llanrumney	157	1,470	1,627	9.6	90.4
Lisvane and Thornhill	86	857	943	9.1	90.9
Pentwyn	283	3,086	3,369	8.4	91.6
Pentyrch and St Fagans	61	497	558	10.9	89.1
Penylan	231	2,450	2,681	8.6	91.4
Plasnewydd	258	4,803	5,061	5.1	94.9
Pontprennau and Old St Mellons	175	1,958	2,133	8.2	91.8

Radyr	72	589	661	10.9	89.1
Rhiwbina	79	523	602	13.1	86.9
Rumney	65	935	1,000	6.5	93.5
Canton	323	2,762	3,085	10.5	89.5
Ely	246	2,345	2,591	9.5	90.5
Trowbridge	275	2,875	3,150	8.7	91.3
Heath	139	1,507	1,646	8.4	91.6
Whitchurch and Tongwynlais	88	924	1,012	8.7	91.3
Splott	283	3,153	3,436	8.2	91.8
Llandaff North	147	1,170	1,317	11.2	88.8
Fairwater	153	1,253	1,406	10.9	89.1
Splott	283	3,153	3,436	8.2	91.8
Llandaff North	147	1,170	1,317	11.2	88.8
<b>CARDIFF</b>	<b>5,153</b>	<b>67,971</b>	<b>73,124</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>93.0</b>

Table E – Number and percentage of Welsh speakers aged 3+ from Black, Asian and ethnic minority background by ward (2021 Census)

The table above shows that the higher *percentages* live in the *Rhiwbina, Llandaff North, Pentyrch/St Fagans* and *Radyr* wards – but despite the percentages in these wards, the numbers are small. (\*it should be remembered that these are generally less densely populated areas as well).

4.29 If we look at the largest *numbers*, these are found in the electoral wards of *Grangetown, Canton, Riverside, Pentwyn* and *Splott*. More densely populated areas and also generally more deprived. Percentages at first glance can therefore misrepresent when trying to paint a picture of the population in a community and numbers and similar considerations also need to be looked at, such as area size and population density.

#### 4.30 A word about Density...

If we look at Wales which is a country of 8,024 square miles with a population of 3,107,500 in 2021, that gives us an overall population density of about 387 people per square mile. 17.8% of those (2021) are Welsh speakers which means Wales has about **68.88** Welsh speakers per square mile.

4.31 If we look at a naturally Welsh speaking county like Gwynedd which is 979 square miles with a population of 117,400 in 2021, that gives us a population density of 120 people per square mile. 64.4% of those are fluent Welsh speakers which means that there are **77.28** Welsh speakers per square mile in Gwynedd.

4.32 What makes Cardiff different from the rest of Wales in terms of its Welsh speakers however is the density of the city's Welsh speakers in an extremely small geographical footprint. The capital recorded a population of 362,310 at the 2021 Census in a capital city of approximately 54.2 square miles – approximately 6,685 persons per square mile. With 12.8% of the city's population being Welsh speakers in 2021, that means Cardiff has **855.64** Welsh speakers per square mile.

That density difference can be seen visually below in Figure 6. Here density conveys something rather different to percentage. The percentage of speakers can be high over a large and sparsely populated geographic area but the chances of seeing a speaker on a day-to-day basis can be relatively small and the chances of speaking or interacting with them likely to be even smaller.

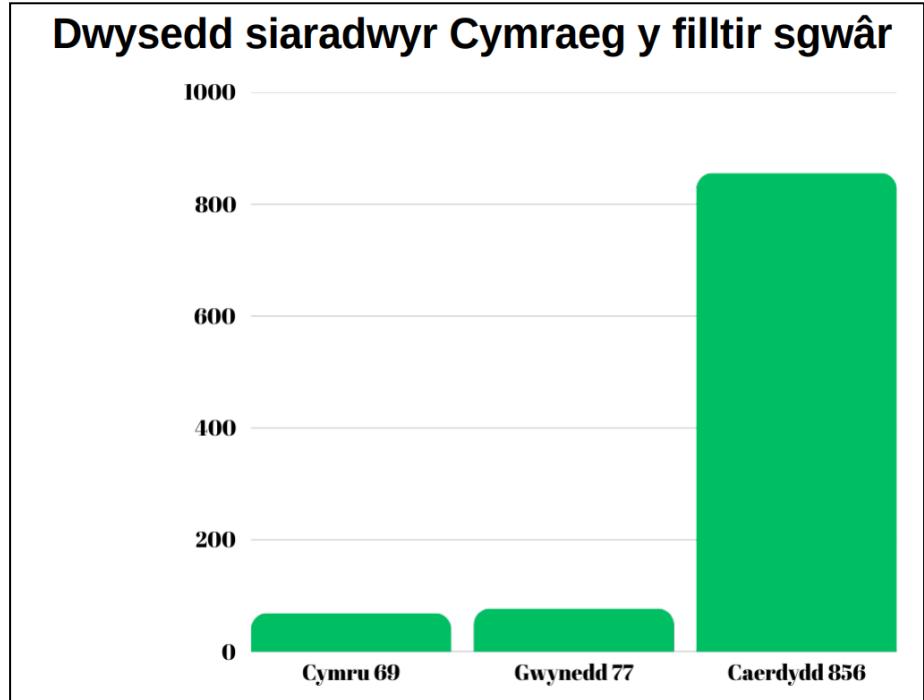


Figure 6: Density of Welsh speakers per square mile

4.33 If we look at the percentage with *any Welsh skill* in the city, which is around 17.5% (c. 63k people) – that puts the density of any Welsh skill in the city higher again, at around 1170 people per square mile. When thinking about the potential for language use opportunities therefore, one should bear in mind this numbers 'penumbra' when discussing the numbers of fluent speakers in an area – this larger figure will represent the maximum language use potential at the most basic level e.g. the ability to understand conversation. At its most basic, as a practical example this benefit can be seen in a supermarket - when announced over the tannoy that an extra till number is about to open creating a stir and movement among the shopper queues - before the English language announcement is made.

4.34 Clearly, the fact that Cardiff is a city and people live much closer together than in rural areas is key to the opportunities and potential for casual Welsh language use in Cardiff. The population

**Consideration:** - When planning facilities and opportunities to use the language, consideration must be given to the density of speakers in the city and how this 'proximity factor' can be used to work positively for the language's benefit. This is as true at the city-wide level as it is when considering very local communities.

That is, even in those parts of the city that have the fewest *numbers* of speakers, there will be a few hundred Welsh speakers living within a few streets of each other – with the daily possibilities that offers. The challenge will be for them to recognise each other, something much easier in long-standing communities but more difficult in a city – with its young population in particular being very mobile.

While the reality of the city's non-Welsh-speaking majority needs to be acknowledged, the raw possibilities arising from this - in terms of increasing daily consumption - *do* look promising. A host of interventions and schemes need to be formulated that will promote and give people confidence to use whatever Welsh they have in their daily lives in their local area as well as when moving around the city.

density in the capital is approximately three times the population density of Newport. And compared to Wales' second city in size, Swansea to the west, there are only 177 Welsh speakers to each square mile there (\*in fairness it should be noted that the land area of Swansea as a county is almost 3 times the size of Cardiff's land area). The density of the capital's Welsh speakers is nevertheless significant – and even more so if adding the 'penumbra' of residents with any Welsh language skill including understanding only spoken Welsh.

#### 4.35 Cardiff as a Community or Area of Linguistic Importance...



The discussion regarding areas of linguistic importance or significance is currently ongoing. The focus so far has been on the traditional 'Welsh language heartlands' which exist mainly in the north and west ARFOR economic zone. The Commission for Welsh Speaking Communities has been looking most recently at this subject and the term adopted by the Commission in reporting in summer 2023 to describe such locales are communities that have 'higher density' of speakers.<sup>27</sup> These are areas where specific efforts and steps are needed to maintain the current levels of Welsh as a community language. The same day saw the Welsh Government's response to this position paper,<sup>28</sup> where it acknowledges the use of the term 'higher density', so it is reasonable here for us to use this term and any variations of it when discussing the subject.

4.36 The Commission's final conclusions on the 'higher density' areas were published at the National Eisteddfod in Pontypridd in summer 2024.<sup>29</sup> In this work higher density communities are defined as communities where over 40% can speak Welsh. The commission then discusses the next 'tier' that deserves policy support:

*The Commission is of the opinion that communities where between around 25% and 40% can speak Welsh are strategically important to the Welsh language. Using the discretion of local authorities, a number of these communities could be designated as higher density areas of linguistic significance. In the Commission's view that would be beneficial from a public policy point of view.*

<sup>27</sup> [Welsh Speaking Communities Position Paper \(2023\)](#)

<sup>28</sup> [Written Statement: Publication of Position Statement - Welsh Speaking Communities Commission \(2023\) \(2,023\)](#)

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2024-08/empowering-communities-strengthening-the-welsh-language.pdf>

4.37 The logical consequence of using '*higher density*' is that there are also areas that are '*lower density*' Welsh-speaking communities. The Commission does not draw further firm conclusions on this point - rather it was the Commission's intention to look in more detail at these communities and their strategic significance to the language. This work began in the second half of 2024 – and it is planned to report back by summer 2025. But the Commission's discussions and conclusions to date, and the Government's response, provide an insight into the likely Welsh language and language planning context over the next decade, namely when Cardiff's proposed new LDP is up and running starting in 2026. In addition, since the summer the Welsh Language Commissioner has urged the Welsh Government to act on the Commission's first recommendations.<sup>30</sup>

4.38 Historically at least, in terms of language planning policies in Wales to date, '*lower density*' areas have been in the range of roughly 20-40% of Welsh speakers in a given area. A number of Cardiff communities when looking at different population levels (Ward /AGEHI) fall into this category. Furthermore, the urban nature of the city – where patterns of travel, diverse networks and people's social interactions with each other – should not to be forgotten. Furthermore, Cardiff's special cohesive role as the capital for the whole of Wales should also not be forgotten and as a leading local authority in the south-east region in terms of economic growth and development. With an important concentration of Welsh speakers (and those who understand the language) in a very small geographical footprint, it is difficult to compare the capital with any other part of Wales.

**Consideration:** Given the evolving language planning context therefore, it would be wise to think ahead whilst producing any Assessment of the Impact of Cardiff's LDP on the Welsh language, i.e. that the proposed Development Plan, its policies and any further measures that may come with the adoption of the Plan, are flexible enough to be able to respond to and drive change in a linguistic landscape that will certainly evolve by 2036.

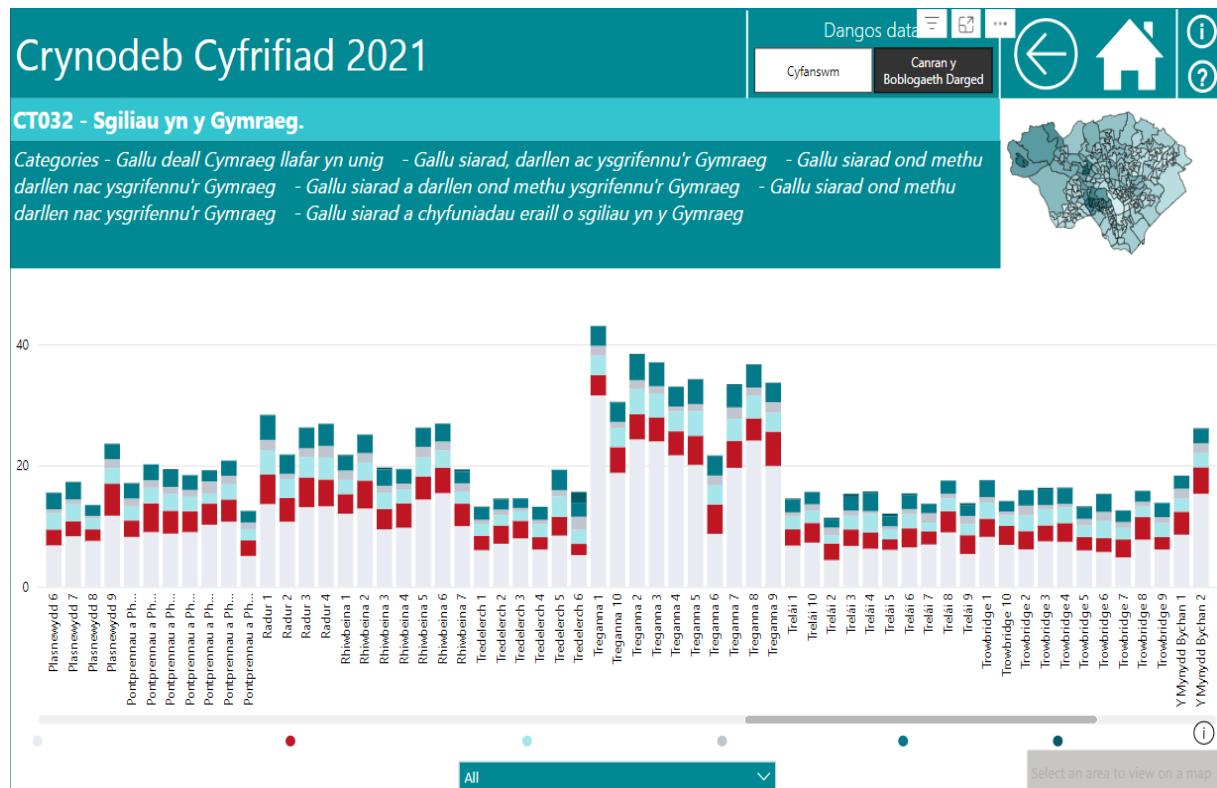
As the Communities Commission discussions are still ongoing this year and the capital and areas of it appear to be transitioning or pivoting between being described as '*higher density*' and '*lower density*' areas, pending more definitive agreement and definition on this, it is suggested that **the whole city**, at least for now (so that guidance can be given in the planning arena and land use in the RLDP), is described as an '**area of linguistic importance**' – which will at least be consistent with the phrasing in the Development Plans Manual (2020): "*The local planning authority must identify areas of sensitivity or linguistic importance to ensure that growth is suitably directed to areas where the impact on the Welsh language can be positive.*" That will give us a recognised and practical term, before adopting a definition or phrase that is deemed suitable as the terminology and discussion in this area evolves.

4.39 To better understand the nature of communities and neighbourhoods with population densities in a city, it would be useful to look more closely at the distribution and '*proximity factor*' of Welsh speakers at a *lower* level to that of individual electoral ward populations, particularly say when it comes to considering an individual development proposal - whether that's a greenfield development proposal - but particularly so if it's a brownfield development proposal *where an established community already exists* and where the focus of much of the proposed Development Plan will be, given the allocated development sites set out in the plan.

<sup>30</sup> [Welsh Language Commissioner Encourages Implementation of Commission Recommendations](#)

4.40 Looking at *\*Lower Super Output Areas* [LSOAs], it will be seen that several LSOAs in the capital exceed 25% in terms of the number of Welsh speakers. For example one small part of the Canton ward (*\*\*Canton 1*) which is the Victoria Park area has a percentage of Welsh speakers that reaches 35% - or 529 fluent speakers. But if including the range of speaking skills, this number comes to just over 600 along with 51 others who understand spoken Welsh. That raises the percentage of any Welsh language skills in this small area of the city to 43% as seen in Figure 7 below.

Maent wedi eu rhannu'n weddol gydradd o ran eu lefelau poblogaeth ar draws Caerdydd, yn fwy felly na wardiau etholiadol, ond mae eu ffiniau yn gallu newid, felly mae'n anodd olrhain trywydd newid ynddynt dros nifer o flynyddoedd.



Welsh Language Skills Canton LSOAs (\*\*Cardiff Council LSOA names/codes used)

4.41 On the other hand, in another part of the same electoral ward (*Canton 6*) we see that the percentage who can speak Welsh fluently is at 18% - which is considerably closer to the percentage level of some of the electoral wards with the lowest speaker/understand spoken Welsh percentages in the city (in the 14-16% range). The linguistic pattern across the *Canton* electoral ward is therefore not entirely uniform.

4.42 In contrast, in Rumney which is the electoral ward with the fewest number of Welsh speakers / understand spoken Welsh, there are 1036 speakers (just over 12%) + another 213 (2.51%) who understand spoken Welsh; there it is a more uniform picture across all the ward's LSOA communities.

4.43 However, we can see among *some* of the electoral wards that have the lowest numbers of Welsh speakers in the city, that there are LSOAs *within* those wards - which can be described as *important* pockets of speakers for the city as well, see Figure 8 below:

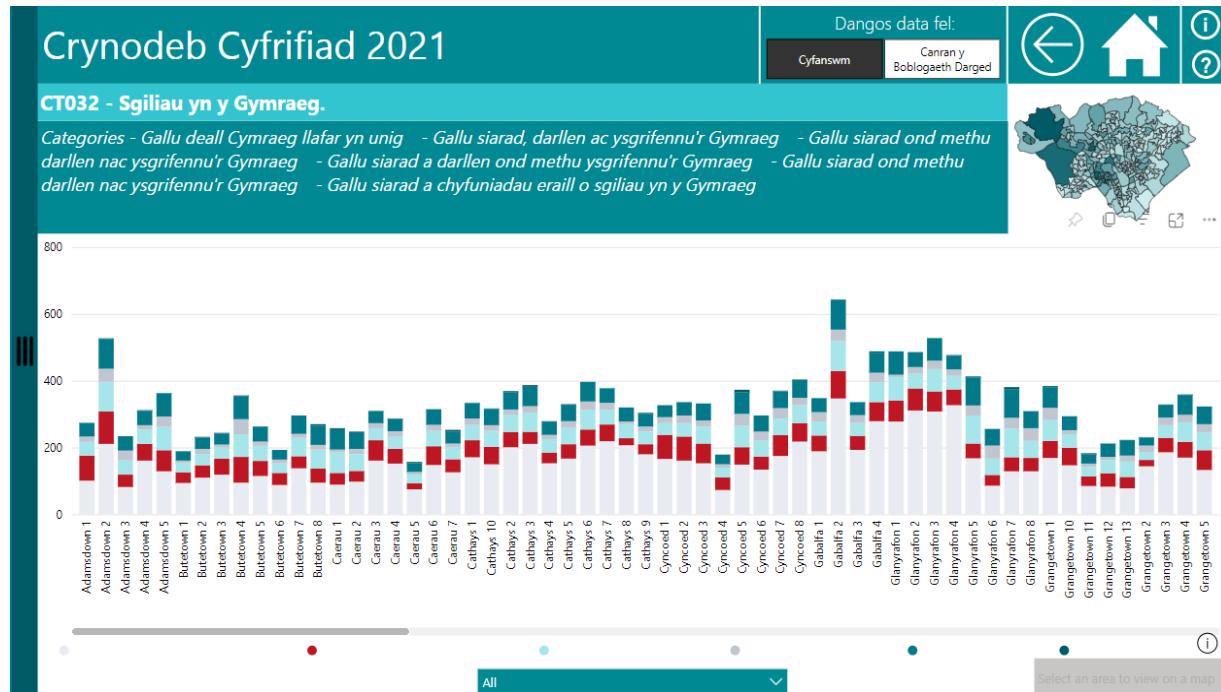


Figure 8: Welsh Language Skills of Adamsdown and Gabalfa LSOAs

4.44 For example, the *Adamsdown 2* LSOA is home to 428 Welsh speakers + a further 97 who understand spoken Welsh. *Gabalfa 2* is very similar with 561 Welsh speakers + another 82 who understand spoken Welsh. These compare well with the *Canton 1* area above in terms of their *numbers*. So whilst the percentage of speakers in these LSOAs may be relatively low, when considering the density of the numbers of Welsh speakers in a very small geographical footprint, then they represent an important critical mass of speakers - which compares favourably in terms of their numbers say with some of the traditionally most Welsh speaking villages in Wales which would certainly be defined no doubt as 'lower density' areas, if not even 'higher density' in some cases.

**Consideration:** It is another matter entirely of course as to *who* these speakers are and what are their ages, language use patterns, other languages, confidence and specific opportunities available to use and speak Welsh in their local neighbourhoods and as mentioned, being in the midst of a non-Welsh-speaking majority on the one hand and not forgetting the importance and richness of other local community languages on the other. A great many of them will naturally be children and young people. But the key point is that the speakers and the range of Welsh skills are there. Knowledge at this level is key when trying to ascertain if it's worth offering further Welsh language provisions, facilities or opportunities in specific areas, where best to offer services, to stimulate further growth etc? One therefore needs to consider that in some very specific planning contexts, such as individual applications on brownfield sites, that LSOAs are also communities of importance to the viability of the Welsh language in the city.

Planning and land use considerations will naturally arise from the RLDP and so one needs to ask how land use policies and any new developments can promote and improve the position of the Welsh language across the city's communities, just as much as preserving the language. That could be a city-wide consideration in some policy contexts or at the level of very specific areas, to strengthen areas that are already comparatively strong linguistically or to elevate the other weaker areas to a better place. This should undoubtedly be a consideration when weighing up development applications. In adopting such a policy and practice, this would also be an

#### 4.45 Movements of Welsh Speakers

[–moving in and out of the city – ONS data for Cardiff Council, 2024]

Additional data obtained from the ONS highlights some things about the movements of the city's Welsh speakers between March 2020 and March 2021, at the time of the Census.

\*The information requires a 'health warning':

- They are based on the MSOA level, therefore roughly corresponding to electoral ward size but not to ward boundaries
- include student movements – therefore lack balance for certain areas
- based on very low numbers for the most part and therefore their statistical robustness - due to the need to anonymise data and rounding-up - means that they cannot be relied upon with the same certainty as other Census data.
- Based on where individuals were on Census day and exactly one year prior to that – the pandemic and lockdowns occurred across that year changing or disrupting people's normal movements and living patterns – including students - which will no doubt have affected the validity of the information as well.
- 

#### 4.46 Summary of Welsh speakers' movements over a year:

Despite the veracity warning, it is worth noting some general features highlighted by this data. The highest NET movements were seen – more Welsh speakers moving to the area from another area of the city (**all ages**) for *Cathays North, Creigiau, Pentwyn and St Fagans, Pwllmawr and St Mellons, Canton, Whitchurch and Rhiwbina and Pantmawr*, and the lowest NET movements (more Welsh speakers moving out of the area to another area in Cardiff) for *Gabalfa, Cathays South and Bute Park, Adamsdown, Cyncoed South and Roath Park, Pen-y-lan South, Victoria Park and Birchgrove*.

Among **children 3-15**, the highest NET movements in this category were for *Pwll-mawr and St Mellons, Llandaff and Danescourt, Creigiau, Pentwyn and St Fagans, Llanedeyrn and Canton* and the lowest NET movements for *Adamsdown, Ely East, Victoria Park, Penylan South, Grangetown South, Pontcanna and Thornhill*

Amongst those **aged 16-34** (thus including students), the highest NET movements were for *Cathays North, Cardiff Bay and Grangetown South* and the lowest NET movements for *Gabalfa, Cathays South and Bute Park, Cyncoed South and Roath Park, Llandaff and Danescourt, and Penylan South*.

There was very little NET change in the year among the cohorts older than 35 – who are naturally more stable in their living patterns.

4.47 If we look next at Welsh speakers moving to specific parts of Cardiff from the rest of Wales (but including other areas of Cardiff in the data), from England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and outside the UK, it is clear that internal movements within Wales/Cardiff are the most common by a considerable margin.

*Cathays North* saw 547 Welsh speakers moving there from other parts of the rest of Cardiff / Wales between 2020 and 2021, 25 speakers from England, 1 from Scotland and 7 from outside the UK. But of the 547 only 3 were children aged 3-15 while 536 were between 16-35 (student age cohort). The 25 Welsh speakers from England were also in this age group and it is also in this age group we see

the vast majority of speakers moving to different areas of Cardiff from outside the UK, which highlights this age cohort as being the most internationally mobile cohort among Welsh speakers.

At the other extreme, *St Mellons West* saw 20 speakers move there from the rest of Cardiff/Wales, and 2 from England. Of those 20 speakers, about 8 were aged between 3-15 from the rest of Cardiff/Wales, 11 between 16-34 from the rest of Cardiff/Wales and 2 between 16-35 from outside Wales (England).

4.48 We can also look at which local authorities 'send' Welsh speakers to the capital - and which other local authority areas that the city's Welsh speakers tend to move to also. Amongst Welsh speakers (all ages) the greatest NET county inflow into Cardiff (more moving into Cardiff than moving out of Cardiff to the same county) are from Caerphilly and Swansea and the smallest NET outflow (leaving the city) are for the Vale of Glamorgan, Powys and Rhondda Cynon Taf. The numbers here are generally small - with the exception of the Vale of Glamorgan that's more pronounced. Here we saw +110 speakers moving from the Vale to the city and a flow of -220 Welsh speakers moving from the city to the Vale during the year in question. These are also young cohorts in the main with +14 children 3-15 moving to Cardiff and -40 leaving Cardiff for the Vale, and among the 16-34 cohort we saw +76 move into the city but -112 leave. (\*Once again the population older than 35 is very static).

4.49 As well as students moving around, the capital's housing stock prices and rental rates may be responsible for this move to the Vale among this younger cohort of speakers. It's an area close enough to travel to work in Cardiff from places like Barry, Penarth and Cowbridge – also for those looking for larger houses than what's affordable for them in Cardiff or housing at a rent that may be lower than Cardiff's perhaps. And for the same reason to the contrary, there may be a reluctance to move from the Vale to the city precisely because it is so close to the capital but with more competitive housing prices and rental rates in the Vale. But other reasons could also be at play here – proximity of specific education provision, convenience of travel, influence of the pandemic, specific new housing developments, quality of life etc. Although the numbers are actually marginal, it is perhaps significant in terms of school places planning for example. It certainly deserves a better understanding than what we currently have.

**Consideration:** According to 2011 Census commuter data, there were 160,000 resident workers in Cardiff but 200,000 people worked (in a workplace) in the capital. That means a net number of 40,000 traveling to Cardiff from outside the city for their working day. (see. C.26 LDP Demographics Technical Paper – Updating the Evidence).

[In December 2023 there were 193,000 working in the city, an increase of 10,000 on 2022 and showing a post-Covid economic recovery. [Cardiff's employment, unemployment and economic inactivity - ONS](#)]

If we therefore assume that *circa* +40,000 net workers travel to the city from neighbouring authorities (Vale of Glamorgan, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Caerphilly and Newport - or even the wider Capital Region including Bridgend and Torfaen etc), and assuming the combined percentage of working-age Welsh speakers in these areas averages roughly 10%, (percentage of 3+ Welsh speakers in 2021: RhCT 11.5%, Vale 11.5%, Caerphilly 10.5%, Torfaen 8.24%, Newport 7.5%) that would mean that there are at least 4,000 Welsh speakers travelling from outside into the capital to work every day. [This number could be lower or higher again - given that there are generally more Welsh-medium working opportunities to be had in Cardiff than in some of the surrounding authority areas during the working week]. More work is needed to gain a greater understanding of this phenomenon – but it should certainly form part of any discussion on daily language use patterns and opportunities in the city and with an eye on the revision to

## 5. Projections - Pre-statutory/Nursery

To get a better view of what is likely to happen at reception age from 2025 onwards therefore, it would be useful to look first at what is happening in the nursery sector. And so that we know where we're going, it would also be good to be reminded of where we've come from.

**5.1 Background:** The first Welsh nursery school in Cardiff was initially established in the vestry of the former Crwys Church in 1951 (which followed the opening of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Caerdydd (Cardiff Welsh Primary School) in 1949 - which eventually turned into Ysgol Bryntaf thereafter - see 6.2) before the nursery moved to Tŷ'r Cymry on Gordon Road in Roath. That was then followed by a second nursery school established in Rhiwbina in 1959.

**5.2** In terms of terminology we would probably call these a 'cylch meithrin' (nursery group) today and by now the Mudiad Meithrin provision in the city has grown to 26 Cylch Meithrin and 'Ti a Fi' (You and Me) groups. As can be seen on the map below, there are 17 various Cylchoedd Meithrin with 319 children enrolled in them. These are the locations of provision that Mudiad Meithrin currently has in Cardiff [and the new provision in Ysgol Groes-wen, Plasdŵr \* since September 2023]

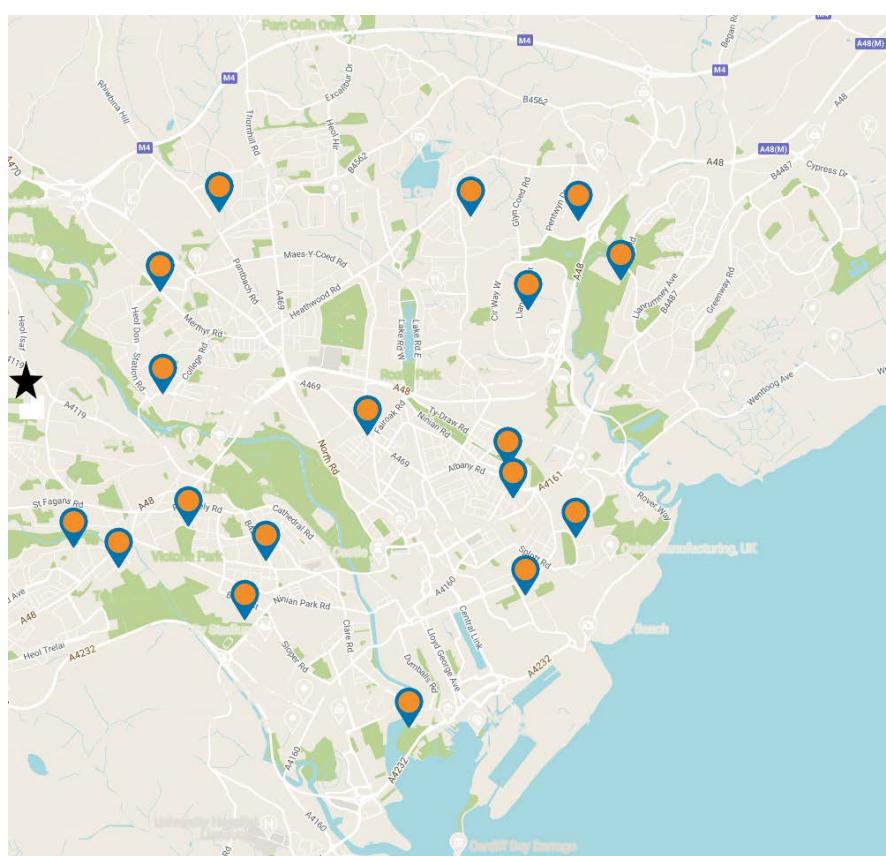


Figure 9: Current nursery provision of Mudiad Meithrin (2023/4)

**5.3** Although the Mudiad has a fairly wide distribution of nursery groups across the city, there are some gaps on the map. In fact the provision of the number of 'Cylchoedd' and Ti and Fi groups has remained fairly static over the past decade – some opening others closing. The organisation sees as a priority the need for Welsh nursery provision in the areas of Thornhill/Llanisien/Llisvane and Pontprennau, which are areas in the north-east of the city where there are gaps and greatest current

demand – and where a number of major housing developments are also being built. Unlike many other authorities in the south-east, the organisation hasn't had a *Ti a Fi* officer active in Cardiff for a number of years either, due to lack of an adequate funding model, so that is a practical obstacle in the organisation's ability to encourage and promote new provision in the city on the ground.

5.4 It should be remembered that nursery provision – sometimes in partnership with the Mudiad – is also available in all Welsh-medium primary schools in the city, with the exception of Ysgol Pencae and Ysgol Coed y Gof – although Cwtch offers bilingual wraparound provision at Coed y Gof for a period after school. The nature of the provision depends on the age of the children – rising two or three or nursery class age.

Of the children on Mudiad Meithrin's books, 255 (79.9%) transferred to Welsh-medium education [Mudiad Meithrin 2022/23 report]. It would obviously be good to be able to persuade the remaining 20.1% of the value of persevering with statutory Welsh-medium education too, as they already have a foot in the door and are therefore more likely to be convinced by this option over someone with no experience at all of the Welsh pre-school sector. This is a golden opportunity to increase statutory numbers in the city as, based on these figures for Cardiff, achieving a transition to the primary of 100% would mean filling the equivalent of another 2 x FE's of children across the city.

5.5 Mudiad Meithrin also collaborates with Flying Start provision at 8 of their locations across the city. Flying Start funded 278 Welsh childcare places in 2023/24. Of these, only 197 were filled (81 were empty). Again, there is scope here to encourage more take up of the Welsh language offer in specific communities in the city (those 4 communities where the service is offered by the county). Again if more of this provision was utilised, it is likely that the numbers who would choose to continue in the Welsh-medium sector from these locations would also increase. On the other hand, increasing English-medium Flying Start availability, however, may also jeopardise the viability of some existing Meithrin groups – as cheaper and perhaps more convenient provision becomes available locally and within reach of parents. Similarly if various private nurseries increase their care hours, that can also have a knock-on effect on the Meithrin movement's ability to retain and attract children – who were perhaps receiving some if not all of their pre-school care previously under the wing of the movement's diverse circles and groups.

5.6 In total, around 700 children are receiving a variety of nursery care across the city in the 26 Cylch Meithrin/*Ti a Fi* groups (April 2024) under the Mudiad Meithrin banner across all the pre-school ages. A proportion of these will be double counted (accessing morning and afternoon provision at different locations, so exact figures are difficult to obtain). In terms of nursery places in primary schools in the city, some settings are also run by Mudiad Meithrin and included in the 700 above.

5.7 Welsh-medium Childcare is also available in the city in other Welsh-medium private and bilingual settings. According to the Childcare Adequacy Assessment, according to the latest count made on 24-06-24, there were 18 Welsh/Bilingual Daycare locations available (compared to 79 English/Bilingual ones). Some providers offer session-by-session care and some offer out-of-school hours care. In addition, 11 registered Childminders offer Welsh/Bilingual provision. Again, those accessing Childcare provision here may already have been counted in the Meithrin organisation's nursery provision figures or nursery places in Council settings.

5.8 While Cardiff's policy of offering nursery places for half a day only offers more children the opportunity to access Welsh nursery education in the city for a portion of the day, similarly a lack of full-time Welsh language provision – such as a lack of convenient wraparound care too – can drive

some parents to access English-medium care or provision that may be better *able* to meet the needs of their lives and various full-time work patterns. This is not so much of a problem if one or two of the parents speak Welsh at home, but where there is no Welsh in the household and they have embarked along the English nursery care route, with children forming friends and parents forming links with other local parents, then it requires even more effort to then switch to the Welsh sector at the next stage for the statutory education of the child when they start at reception.

5.9 As a child can access more than one type of provision, it is difficult to arrive at a definitive figure for the number of children receiving Welsh-medium pre-school care/education. But it is possible to map the trends across different provisions to some extent and we can access data for provision available in primary school nursery classes.

#### 5.10 PLASC 2024 Nursery Data

The latest statutory nursery data is more encouraging in terms of the WESP's targets, as seen in Table F below. Whilst the numbers across the age cohort in the city fell last year to 3,200 due to the fall in the birth rate, the numbers as well as the Welsh-speaking percentage have maintained and increased slightly. The percentage we have for October 2024 of 20.3% (651) - if including the dual language stream at Groes-wen school - almost reaches the WESP target of 20.5% for 2024/5. Excluding the dual language nursery stream at Groes-wen gives us a percentage of 19.7% (631) which is slightly short of the percentage target, but an increase in numbers and percentage on the WESP's figures in its first few years.

\*In practice some change would be expected between the data available from the school systems on October 10, 2024 and what will be formally recorded for PLASC in January 25 (data which will then be available during the summer).

	PLASC JAN 22	PLASC JAN 23	PLASC JAN 24	RECEPTION Data October 24
<b>Welsh-medium numbers</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>611</b>	<b>577</b>	<b>631</b>
<b>Dual-Language Stream Numbers</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Total Numbers</b>	<b>3446</b>	<b>3282</b>	<b>3288</b>	<b>3200</b>
<b>As % of mainstream</b>	<b>17.5%</b>	<b>18.6%</b>	<b>18.2%</b>	<b>20.3% (19.7%)</b>

Table F: *The latest County Nursery Classes (PLASC) data*

**Consideration:** It must be remembered that the ability to reach early years provision at all, or expediently, remains a key factor for many of the city's communities – addressing any gaps will be an obvious important first step as this cohort is strategically important to growing the language in the capital. Outcome 1 of the WESP states "*More nursery/three-year-olds in Welsh-medium education*". It is therefore necessary to consider creating a more robust measurement and target perhaps for this outcome in the WESP – targets that identify specific gaps, challenges and groups whilst adopting suitable and appropriate facilitation and promotion strategies. What is achieved in Outcome 1 will undoubtedly affect the success of Outcome 2 of the WESP, which is "*More reception class/5 year olds in Welsh medium education*." - which is that key step when parents effectively make a choice about their child's statutory medium of education until the age of 16 – that is, effectively choosing whether or not they will be fluent and confident Welsh speakers – at least under the current system.

Ensuring that a higher percentage of children in various pre-school care and nursery provisions, who currently have at least some Welsh there, transition over to Welsh-medium primary reception classes is *also* an area that needs to be prioritised. Similarly the exact numbers of parents choosing English-medium daycare due to the hours and locations offered must be better understood along with their multiplicity compared to neighbouring Welsh part-time provision. Whilst the city's part-time nursery provision provides opportunities for more children to access the provision, at least for some of the time, for some parents that need full-time childcare due to their circumstances, could – inadvertently - be directing some children away from Welsh-medium primary provision in due course.

To the same end Mudiad Meithrin could probably do with more support on the ground in the city to promote their provision locally and fill some of the geographical gaps and associated demand they currently have – in terms of lacking staff and/or suitable facilities to carry out daily nursery activities.

5.11 With the decline in birth rates, to echo the above consideration, that attracting as many numbers as possible to Welsh childcare and nursery education is critical to the growth of the statutory education sector as a whole, if we look at the recent projections of Cardiff-wide nursery age pupils over the coming period, it was noted that the 4,380 3-year-olds seen in 2018 in the city will fall to a comparable number of 4004 by 2036, before rising once again to 4,233 by 2043.

(\*Cardiff collects NHS GP registration data, which for the year 2021 showed an age cohort of 3,626 children, significantly lower than Government projections for the same period. Cardiff's projections as such – seen in Figure 16 below are more robust in terms of these short- and medium-term first years than those of the Government).

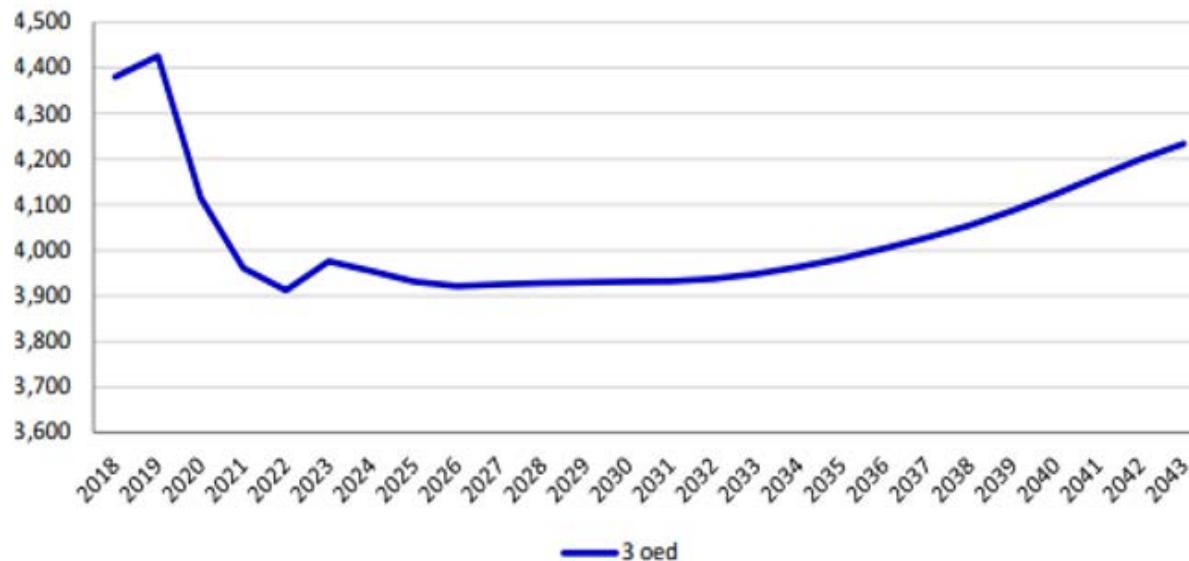


Figure 10: Monthly Projections of Nursery Age Pupils in Cardiff, 2018 to 2043

In addition, it is also worth noting the ONS's latest mid-year 2023 figures (June 2024) which give Cardiff a population of 3,909 3-year-olds. This is quite close to the above trajectory put together by Cardiff Council in 2021, which underlines their robustness for these years.

5.12 So while nursery age numbers are likely to fall across the board during the RLDP period, not returning to the current level until around 2036 *if the current trends continue*, the Welsh early years sector as a priority will need to grow quite significantly in such a demographic context to create a platform for further growth in Welsh-medium primary provision – and to fill the empty available places.

\*The recent growth in the city's population referred to in 4.9-4.11 – a large percentage of whom are young adults from overseas – means that the birth rate in the coming years could rise higher than expected (and the trajectory seen so far) which in turn could increase the projection seen in Figure 12 below. But the county will be aware of any change to this pattern by seeing a change in data on GP registrations.

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## 6 Statutory Education - Primary



### 6.1 Summary of the growth of statutory Welsh language education in Cardiff

[Some of the information below was extracted from: *Welsh-medium education chronology since 1940, Y Dinesydd, August 2018*<sup>31</sup> and other sources].

The first Welsh-medium school was established under the then Local Authority's mantle in 1949, namely **Ysgol Gymraeg Caerdydd** situated off Sloper Road (*Heol y Grange*) on the site of Ninian Park School today where this plaque can be seen.<sup>32</sup> There were 19 pupils on the first morning in 1949 - but only 18 by the end of the afternoon - not perhaps the most promising start for Welsh-medium education in the city! There was no Welsh-medium secondary school for these pupils to attend, although commendable efforts were made by a few individual teachers in secondary schools in the city - such as WC Elvet Thomas at Cathays High School, the Welsh teacher who introduced Welsh - as a second language subject - to the later Welsh language academics EG Millward (Teddy Millward) and RM Jones (Bobi Jones).<sup>33</sup>

6.2 Ysgol Gymraeg Caerdydd moved in 1954 to a site in Highfields, Llandaff and was renamed **Ysgol Bryntaf** – on the site that now houses **Ysgol Pencae** since 1990 and which overlooks the banks of the Taff river and the site of Ysgol Gyfun Glantaf. Bryntaf moved to a larger building in 1970 on the site of the former Viruami Jones secondary school in Gabalfa – but shared the site with Viruami Jones Primary School – and remained there until 1975. It is fair to say that this was not the best period for Welsh-medium education in the capital, despite the growth, as local residents were not best pleased with the necessary fleet of buses that clogged the narrow streets of their community twice a day while transporting children from across the city back and forth to the centre of a housing estate in Mynachdy.

6.3 So after 5 years there, in 1975 Bryntaf was again moved, by then a 3 form of entry school, to a site on The Parade in the city centre turning into a 4FE school. According to some, it was Europe's largest primary school at the time with over 600 children attending, but there was no playing field

<sup>31</sup> <http://dinesydd.cymru/author/rheolwr/page/3/>

<sup>32</sup>\*There had been an attempt to establish a private Welsh-medium school in Roath in 1940 during the war and a Saturday Welsh language school was held in Roath in the years 1943-47 (attended by the politician Rhodri Morgan and his brother the historian Prys Morgan).

This was also the high school of Welsh language pop singers Geraint Jarman and Heather Jones later on in the 60s.

and only one yard and a small garden shared with the community education organisation next door – which focused on teaching English to immigrants from abroad.

6.4 In terms of the history of secondary education, in 1962, some of Bryntaf's (Highfields site) pupils began to travel out of the then Local Education Authority's boundaries in order to attend Ysgol Gyfun Rhydfelen near Pontypridd after that school opened, but by 1974, the vast majority of Bryntaf pupils were travelling to the newly opened Ysgol Gyfun Llanhari in another county, the other side of Pontyclun – a journey of between forty minutes and an hour and a quarter twice a day – depending on the exact route of the buses through the city! No surprise then that financial and educational pressures came to bear to open the capital's first Welsh-medium secondary school – Ysgol Gyfun Glantaf opened its doors in 1978 in Llandaff North with the Welsh-medium pupils of the new school gradually displacing the English-medium pupils of Glantaf High School each year for a few years, until they eventually moved to alternative English provision in the wider area.

6.5 In 1980, Ysgol Melin Gruffydd was opened as a new Welsh-medium primary school in Whitchurch and then in 1981 the old Bryntaf gave up its site on the Parade in the city centre and split into three primary schools on new sites – namely Ysgol y Wern, Ysgol Coed y Gof and then in 1983 Ysgol Bro Eirwg opened – like the above schools also all inheriting old school buildings from the English-medium sector.. These new schools in the suburbs were soon followed by Ysgol Treganna in 1987, then Ysgol Pencae in 1990 and in 1993 Ysgol Mynydd Bychan was opened as a starter school – again, all these opening in old school buildings which formed part of the education authority's buildings estate.

6.6 When Cardiff became a city and county in 1996, 2 x two-stream primary schools (Welsh and English streams) were inherited, namely Creigiau and Gwaelod y Garth schools, from the former Taff Ely (now RCT) authority, and Ysgol Pwll Coch opened as another starter school as well (on the former site of Fitzalan High School).

6.7 In 1998 the city's second Welsh-medium secondary school Ysgol Gyfun Plasmawr was opened to years 7,8,9 and 10 when some of Glantaf's pupils who lived in the catchment area of the new secondary school were transferred there, to the site of the former Waterhall/Cantonian High School.

6.8 In 2000 Berllan Deg primary school opened in Llanedeyrn and in 2005, Glan Morfa in Splott (initially sharing a site with Moorland English-medium school before being given its own brand new site and school building in 2018 – since the closure of Bryntaf on the Parade, this is now the nearest Welsh-medium school as the crow flies to the city centre, a walk on foot of about half an hour).

6.9 Then in 2007, 4 starter schools were opened – Tan yr Eos (temporarily on the Ninian Park School site once again - until being able to re-join Ysgol Treganna in a new three FE school building in 2013), Nant Caerau in the western end of Ely and Pen-y-pil in Trowbridge and Pen-y-groes in Pentwyn in the east of the city.

6.10 In 2009 Ysgol Glan Ceubal opened in Gabalfa, and then in 2012 a third Welsh-language secondary school was opened, Ysgol Bro Edern in the east of the city. There was a gap of twenty years between the opening of the first and second secondary schools, and fifteen years between the second and third. Twelve years have passed since then and calls have now begun to open a fourth secondary school. Then in 2016 Hamadryad School opened in Butetown (on a temporary site to begin – again at Ninian Park School in Grangetown!) and Ysgol Glan Morfa was expanded – both of these schools serving the south of the city.

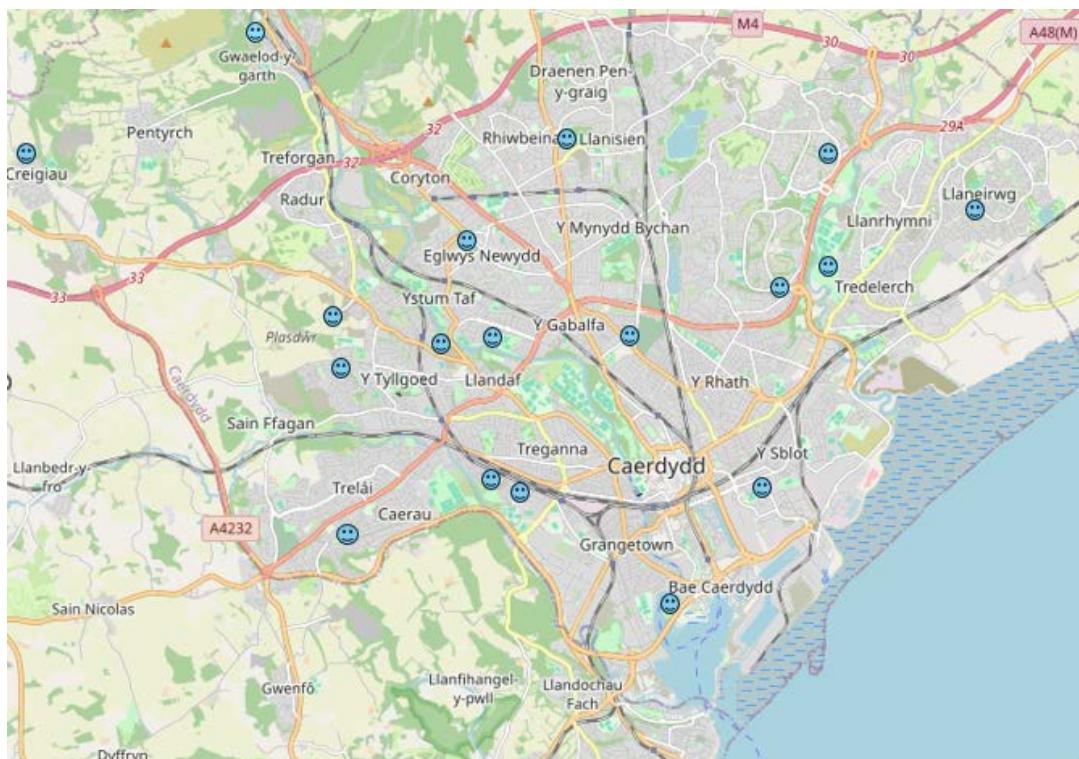
6.11 More recently in 2018/19 new school buildings were delivered for Glan Ceubal, Hamadryad and Glan Morfa as mentioned, and Nant Caerau and Pen-y-pil were also expanded, and in 2021 Plasmawr Secondary School was expanded to satisfy the need for more secondary places in the area and again in 2024 with the opening of a Specialist Resource Centre.

6.12 The latest Welsh-language school to open is Ysgol Groes-wen, in September 2023 on the large Plasdŵr housing development in the north-west of the city. This school is a new linguistic model for the county with one Welsh-medium stream and one dual language stream (where up to 50% of teaching is in Welsh). Provision in the centre of the city will also increase when Ysgol Mynydd Bychan moves to a larger building and expands in 2025 (in the former Allensbank school buildings).

As well as the dual language model, Ysgol Groes-wen is the first example in Cardiff of a brand new Welsh-medium school opening from scratch in a new school building on a new greenfield housing development. In the past every Welsh-medium school in Cardiff since 1949 has inherited old school buildings when first opening their doors and only eventually moving to new buildings or to larger sites. Groes-wen breaks that pattern and is therefore a significant development when considering the strategy in the authority's current WESP Education plan over the next few years, that at least 50% of the provision on the development sites on the outskirts of the city are to be allocated as Welsh-medium school places.

6.13 The situation today is that Cardiff has:

- **15** Welsh-medium primary schools +
- **2** bilingual primary schools (Welsh stream and English stream) +
- **1** WM and Dual Language model primary school (1 Welsh-medium stream and 1 Dual-language stream)

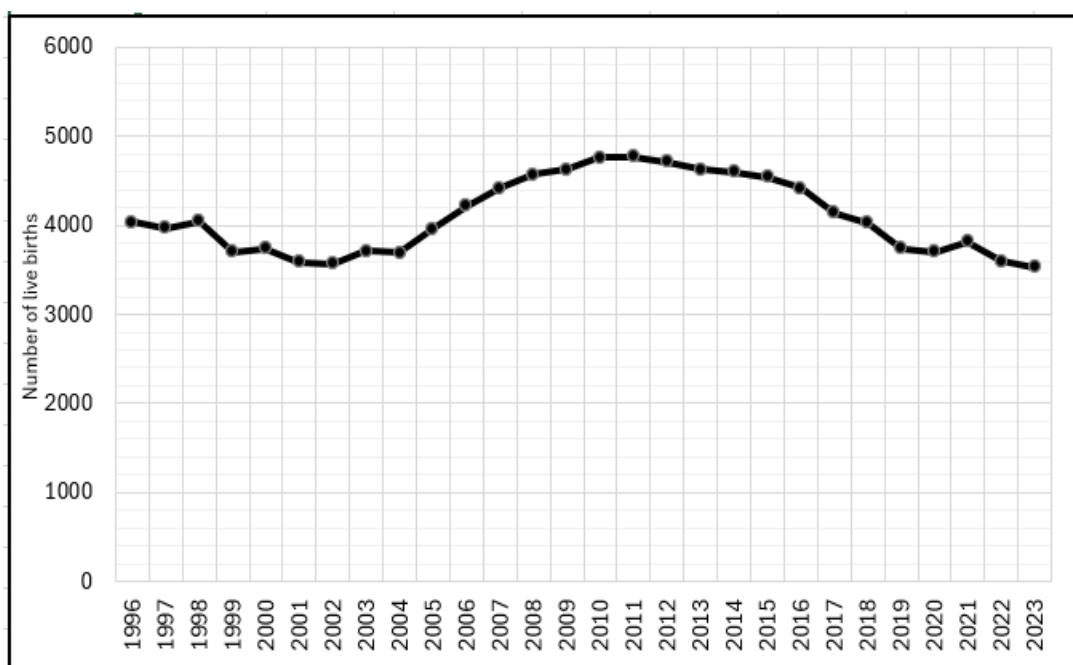


*Figure 11: Geographical Distribution of Cardiff WM Primary Schools 2025*

[\*The broad summary set out above was to give an idea of the normal pattern of growth of Welsh-medium education in the city over the years – in terms of locations in the city, some of the usual growth phases and techniques adopted by the education authority to respond to demand and facilitate growing numbers, along with identifying the more recent developments that will feed into the current WESP].

#### 6.14 Steady growth:

Since 1949 and until 2017 there has been only one year that saw no increase in the number of pupils receiving Welsh-medium education in Cardiff. Growth averaged between 5-10% annually in this period. [Michael Jones, *Y Dinesydd* 2018]. But, since 2012, the city's overall birth rates started to fall as seen below:



*Figure 12: Cyclical Pattern of Cardiff's Birth Rate*

6.15 As a result, in 2017 we also began to see a subsequent decline in Year 1 numbers (aged 5) for the first time across the city (that followed a drop in the same cohort born in 2012). The lower birth rate depicted above was largely responsible for that decrease in Year 1 numbers, although some other variants also affected cohort transmission, e.g. families with children under 5 moving in and out of the area.

While not a consistent percentage increase, as seen below in Figure 13, registration in Welsh-medium Reception Classes although not consistent increased 0.25% per year in the later years between 2015/16 and 2020/21. This percentage figure of 0.25% per year was used to feed the growth baseline for the 2022-2031 WESP trajectories.

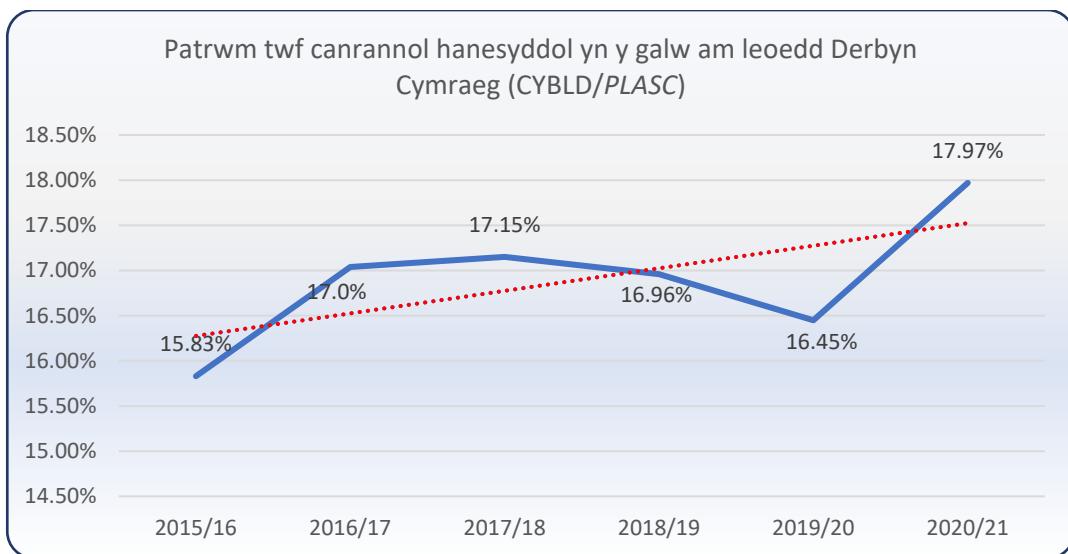


Figure 13: Growth pattern of historic demand for Welsh-medium Reception places in Cardiff (PLASC)

6.16 Since the same period, the PLASC numbers of Year 7 in the three secondary schools have fluctuated fairly closely to 650-700 a year – peaking in numbers in 2021 but small declines since then – again reflecting the wider demographics, with a historic decline in the birth rate reflected in lower secondary school numbers some 11/12 years later. The secondary sector is discussed in 7.1

6.17 In order to look more closely at these trends,<sup>34</sup> if we look at the percentage figures in more recent years, the percentage of primary pupils in Welsh-medium Reception classes as previously noted increased by around 0.25% per annum between 2015/16 - 2020/21. If this percentage were to increase at the same rate between 2021 and 2030, with no interventions or demographic changes, then 20% of pupils entering Reception in September 2030 would likely attend Welsh-medium provision as shown by the straight blue and red projection line in Figure 14 below.

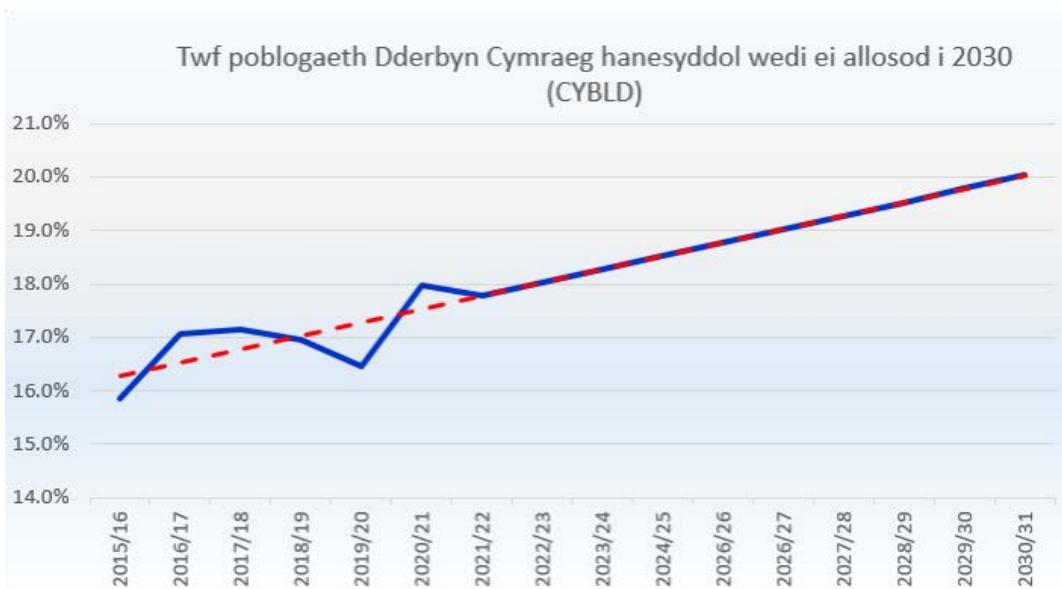


Figure 14: Extrapolating Welsh intake to 2030 at a rate of 0.25% per annum

<sup>34</sup> Cardiff Council's Department for Education data and statistics

6.18 This projected percentage increase does not take into account any major strategic housing developments identified in the current Development Plan (and to be rolled over into the RLDP), nor any significant demographic changes or policy and promotion interventions that may be relevant in changing this picture in terms of Welsh-medium primary education. It should also be remembered that the projection is a percentage and not numbers.

6.19 Figure 15 below gives the Council's Education Department projection of the number of 5-year-olds in Cardiff 2020-50 juxtaposed against the Welsh Government's three population projection trajectories (\*based on 2018 data). This alternative trajectory replicates previous birth rates and school enrolment numbers and incorporates the year-on-year gross numbers projections from the strategic housing developments published in the city's 2016-26 adopted LDP.

If this alternative trajectory were followed, Cardiff could see the birth rate peak around 2031, which would give a peak in 5-year-olds enrolling at school around the year 2036 at just under 5,000 (broken red line below). The numbers would then start to fall again, although they would remain above the cycle's previous low point due to the overall increase in population highlighted by the number of new homes in the city. This trajectory is quite different from the Welsh Government's published population projections (black lines), lower than their short-term projections (2021-2026) and above their longer-term projections (beyond 2031).

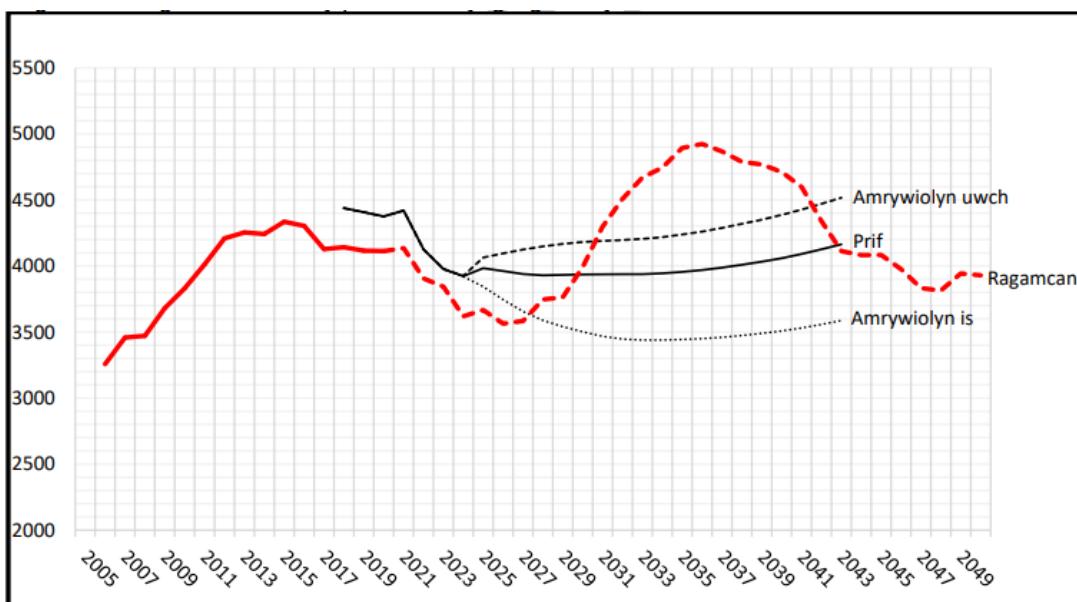


Figure 15: Cardiff and Welsh Government trajectories of 5-year-olds

6.20 As the Council's projections of the number of 5-year-olds in the period 2021-2025 are based on NHS GP registration data provided up to August 2021, we can at least be reasonably confident in these short-term projections and are therefore assumed to be more robust than current government projections. It is also reasonable to conclude based on past population cycles that while the timing and rate of change are uncertain, future pupil enrolment beyond 2025 will likely increase.

6.21 A new set of projections from Welsh Government based on 2021 Census data is expected during 2025, so the latest set of projections to be obtained from WG is data published in 2021 (but based on 2018 data). \*Interestingly though the latest ONS mid-year data (July 2024) indicates a sample average of 5-year-olds for Cardiff at 4,028 for mid-2023 – which is slightly higher than Cardiff Council's own equivalent figure. But the projection *currently* between 2024 and 2043 is that only a

gradual increase in the numbers of 5-year-olds (reception age) is anticipated, suggesting that there will not be strong demand to increase overall primary school places across the city until 2043.

6.22 But as demonstrated above again in 4.9-4.11, this data needs to be continually reassessed if new factors affect the number of birth registrations in the coming years that have not yet been factored into any projections on the numbers of 5-year-olds by the Council or by the Welsh Government. This will be something to keep an eye on in the first years of the adopted LDP plan.

### 6.23 Capacity

If we look at the number of school places (capacity), recent and proposed changes to the estate in 2021-25 could increase the number of Welsh-medium education places (Forms of Entry/FE) available from 836 to 956 (27.9FE to 31.9FE). This includes the opening of 2FE Ysgol Groes-wen school in September 2023 (1 Welsh-medium FE), 1 FE worth of additional places to serve the Nant Caerau catchment and 1 FE places to serve the Pen-y-Pîl catchment. Also in the plans is the intention to expand the Mynydd Bychan catchment provision by 1FE for September 2025. This is part of a reorganisation that will see Allensbank and Gladstone English medium primary schools combine (thereby creating an opportunity to invest in new resources and generate savings for the department) On realising these changes, this will increase the total number of FE places available to Welsh-medium education at Reception age to 19.5% of the total provision available by September 2025, as seen in Table G.

	Total FE	Percentage
<b>English Community</b>	103FE (+0.8FE)	62.9%
<b>English Faith</b>	28.9FE (+0.5FE)	17.6%
<b>Welsh Community</b>	31.9FE (+4FE)	19.5%
<b>Total</b>	163.8FE (+5.3FE)	100%

Table G: Total Cardiff Primary Reception Classes by September 2025

6.24 In the same time interval however, proposals to increase provision in the English secondary sector would mean a reduction in *percentage* for Welsh-medium secondary places from 15.1% in 2021 to 14.5% by September 2025 (remaining at 21 secondary FE – no change since the expansion of Plasmawr 1FE in September 2021).

6.25 Looking at the period from 2026 onwards, proposals will need to be brought forward to meet demand in certain areas of the city along with the introduction of potential schools on the new greenfield strategic development sites – namely developments west of Pontprennau near Lisvane, land north of Pontprennau (east of Lisvane), at Capel Llanilltern north of junction 33 of the M4 and the later stages of developments at Plasdŵr. These could offer a total of at least 8 new primary FEs with the first ones being introduced at Churchlands and Capel Llanilltern no earlier than 26/27 - and perhaps later than that - and the rest closer to the end of the decade and into the next decade. The first of these was introduced on a greenfield site in 2023 namely Ysgol Groes-wen in Plasdŵr.

By the end of the decade *if* these new primary schools are established then secondary provision will need to be increased – and depending on the exact nature of the growth of primary provision in these areas, perhaps a 4th and 5th Welsh secondary school in due course – with outline space allocated to one secondary school on the Plasdŵr development site masterplan and another on a site in the east masterplan.

Currently, these are *only possibilities* however. Much will depend on any demographic changes not yet considered, on the developers' housing completion rates, on the education department's policy –

in terms of reviewing WESP policy, on the organisation of schools in general across the city (and any plans to reorganise provision in the Welsh-medium or English-medium sector) along with parallel work on investment plans in the existing school estate under the banner of Welsh Government's new Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme.

6.26 The Council has currently modelled capacity changes as set out below in Table H based on new provision which is 50% Welsh medium in the aforementioned greenfield development areas. This commitment is also included in the WESP that at least 50% of any new provision on the development sites in the current development plan will be Welsh-medium immersion provision. There is no reference in the WESP strategy to the possible nature of the remainder the provision however (which could be the dual-language model, more Welsh-medium provision - or English-medium provision of course).<sup>35</sup>

6.27 The table below contains all planned capacity changes in the period 2021-2025 (+ 4FE Welsh-medium) together with the initial *additional* places above in the period 2026-2031 (+4FE Welsh-medium and + 4FE English-medium).

	<b>Total FE</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>English Community</b>	107FE (+4.8FE)	62.3%
<b>English Faith</b>	28.9FE (+0.5FE)	16.8%
<b>Welsh Community</b>	35.9FE (+8FE)	20.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>171.8FE (+13.3FE)</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table H: Total Cardiff Potential Primary Reception Classes by September 2031

6.28

**Consideration:** The RLDP will be required to consider the WESP because most of the development plots attached to new education provision on greenfield plots in the current development plan will roll over into the proposed RLDP and in their wake also the commitments contained in the WESP.

In addition, the RLDP will need to consider any potential education implications associated with any potential new education provision or planning obligation contributions associated with *brownfield* developments – which will be in more established communities in the city and will play a more prominent role in the new RLDP than they played in the current development plan. Brownfield development plots are not mentioned as such in the current WESP, so that will need addressing when reviewing the WESP.

### WESP trajectory

Individual local authority WESP targets have been set by the Welsh Government for the 2030/31 school year, based on Welsh Government population projections. These targets include a lower

<sup>35</sup> [Cynllun Strategol Cymraeg mewn Addysg Caerdydd 2022-31](#)

range and a higher range of Year 1 children and give numbers and percentage of pupils for each. Cardiff's Year 1 target is set out in Table I below.

	2019/20		2030/31		2030/31	
	WG Baseline		Target: Lower Range		Target: Higher Range	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
<b>Cardiff</b>	702	16.9%	1,035	25%	1,200	29%

Table I: Cardiff 2030/1 WESP Year 1 Lower and Higher Targets

6.29 By combining the data from the greenfield development sites with the data from the existing communities, a trajectory was created for Cardiff, to identify the *maximum possible number of* Welsh-medium pupils if new Welsh-medium places are added and these are all subsequently filled.

### 6.30 Pupil number projections<sup>36</sup>

Welsh Government population projections and the previous cyclical birth rate pattern give an indication of how the number of pupils in schools could change over the coming decades. As noted above, the percentage of pupils enrolling in Welsh Reception classes increased by an average of 0.25% per year between 2015/16 and 2020/21. However the actual percentage has been lower again than over the last 5 years at the same time as the lower number birth cohorts are feeding through to the education system (see 6.40 below).

6.31 The projected number of children entering reception year in Welsh-medium education is the number projected if current patterns and trends, relative to the population, continue. If the percentage of pupils increases at the same rate between 2021 and 2030, 20.9% of pupils entering Reception in September 2031 would attend Welsh-medium provision, which is just over 1,000 pupils. [see Table I above]

6.32 Projections don't show any changes to patterns of behaviour that are not reflected in the historical data, such as any likely change to future provision and/or changes in policy e.g. in the promotion of Welsh-medium education. Combining the intrinsic growth pattern observed in Cardiff's birth rate with the projection data of pupil numbers from the strategic housing development sites, allows a comparison of the Welsh-medium reception age growth trajectories below, namely:

- continuation of the intrinsic growth throughout the city (i.e. growth based on the recent, evidentiary pattern) in established communities
- a forecast taking into account an increase in numbers on strategic greenfield development sites (at a higher rate) taking the opportunity to access Welsh-medium provision (this was modelled at a 50% rate being Welsh-medium provision), and
- the trajectories necessary to reach the minimum WESP target threshold of 25%, the threshold for 27% and the higher threshold of 29% by 2031

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.32

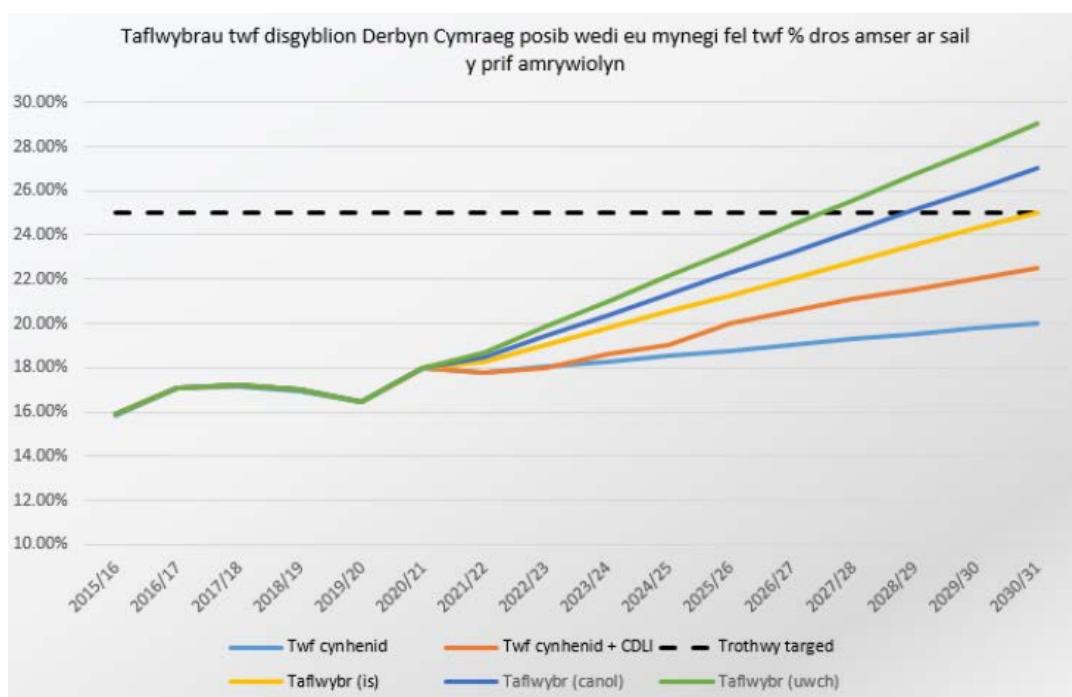


Figure 16: Potential Welsh-medium Reception growth trajectories as % over time

6.33 Intrinsic annual growth is based on PLASC 2015/16 – 2020/21 data which illustrates growth of about 0.25% per annum over the period. Adding the possible population of people moving to the LDP sites, and assuming 50% of those children access Welsh-medium, gives a combined potential growth rate of 0.52% per year. *However, this combined growth would still be insufficient to meet WG's published targets for the WESP.*

- Achieving the 25% threshold indicator by 2030 requires approximately 0.75% annual growth.
- To achieve 27% by 2030, you would need about 0.95% annual growth.
- Reaching the maximum threshold of 29% by 2030 requires around 1.15% annual growth.

6.34 The trajectory shows that the percentage of pupils in Welsh-medium education would reach the lower range target of 25% of 5-year-olds in Welsh-medium provision by September 2030 if additional growth of 0.23% is achieved *on top of* the intrinsic growth *and the* 50% attending new Welsh medium provision at the strategic sites.

4.35 Table L below sets out the projected number of children in the relevant cohort, in each academic year, the numbers modelled for Welsh Reception classes, and the number of children who would need to enrol in Welsh Reception classes to make steady progress against the targets set.

Academic Year	Main Population Projection	Projected intrinsic growth (established communities)	Intrinsic growth + growth from LDP communities	Growth to meet 25% target	Growth to meet 27% target	Growth to meet 29% target
2021/22	3937	696	700	720	728	735
2022/23	3810	687	685	725	740	755
2023/24	3777	690	704	747	770	792
2024/25	3822	708	728	785	815	846
2025/26	3801	714	759	809	847	885

2026/27	3781	719	776	833	878	924
2027/28	3774	728	796	860	913	965
2028/29	3777	738	815	889	949	1010
2029/30	3780	748	833	918	986	1054
2030/31	3937	757	850	946	1021	1096

Table L: Projected numbers in admissions classes that would meet the WESP's 3 targets

6.36 But, compared to the trajectory above, the reception number to Welsh-medium primaries was 653 and not 708 according to the January 2024 PLASC data (see Table M below) which is 17.7% of total reception admissions across the city. And the intake in 2023/24 was 656 and not 690 which is 16.9% of the total. Birth rate and population data are available for those children entering primary education from 2021 to the 2024/25 school year, and the relevant figures are set out below for admission to Welsh primary provision – up to the September 2024 conditional data (these figures are subject to change by the time the final January 2025 PLASC data is received by summer 2025).

Table M below gives the same recent figures and percentages but adding Ysgol Groes-wen's dual language stream to the Welsh language figures. But while the percentage increases to 18.5% with the addition of this year's dual stream numbers giving a total of 667, in fact 728 would be needed to meet the WESP's percentage target, effectively another 2 FEs.

## 2024 PLASC DATA

	PLASC JAN 22	PLASC JAN 23	PLASC JAN 24	SIMS / Capita Data October 24
<b>Welsh-medium numbers</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>656</b>	<b>653</b>	<b>641</b>
<b>Dual-Language Stream Numbers</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Total Numbers</b>	<b>3824</b>	<b>3844</b>	<b>3655</b>	<b>3598</b>
<b>As % of mainstream</b>	<b>17.2%</b>	<b>17.1%</b>	<b>17.9%</b>	<b>18.5%</b>

Table M: Latest Reception Class (PLASC) data, Cardiff Council's Education Department

Currently in 2024, there are 870 Welsh-medium primary reception places available in Cardiff. This equates to a surplus (empty reception places) of 28.8% in the Welsh-medium sector or 28.3% if including the dual stream from Ysgol Groes-wen. That surplus has grown since 2021 when there were around 10% of vacancies in Welsh reception classes (across 27.9FE).

6.37 \*This higher figure also does not take into account the increase in places that will come with the 1.1FE expansion of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan in September 2025 on the school's new site. That could either increase or decrease the number of surplus places depending on the school's success in attracting additional new children to the Welsh-medium sector – as opposed to leading to displacement of prospective pupils that would otherwise fill neighbouring Welsh-medium school places. Nevertheless, it's a similar picture across the city's primary school places as a whole, due to the drop in birth rates. In the English-medium sector (excluding the Groes-wen school dual stream), the percentage of empty places at reception is at 25.2% (25.3% in maintained schools and 24.7% in faith schools).

6.38 Also worth noting is that a total of 9.59% (63) learners from Black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds were in Welsh-medium Reception classes this year (\*provisional PLASC 2024 data). This is a small but encouraging increase of 1.52% (+10 learners) on the previous year. This is clearly an

area that requires a strategy to target it purposefully – yes to increase numbers, but also to ensure Welsh-medium schools are more representative of their communities, a pattern that largely succeeded with the opening of the new Hamadryad school in the Bay in 2016.

6.39 Also during 2023/24, it is worth noting that 50 learners attended the immersion unit, which is the largest number since the unit opened in 2010.<sup>37</sup> These 50 however have already been counted in the PLASC figures for Welsh-medium provision due to being already registered in their new home schools and therefore they do not impact the above PLASC data.

6.40 Nevertheless, continuing the current overall trend over recent years would see an increase of only **c.0.09%** per annum in the sector which would bring growth to only 18% by the end of the WESP period in 2031. In short, the current projections based on the latest PLASC data seen in Figure 17 below are much less positive than when the WESP targets were drawn up back in 2021 (see Figure 14 at 6.17 above).

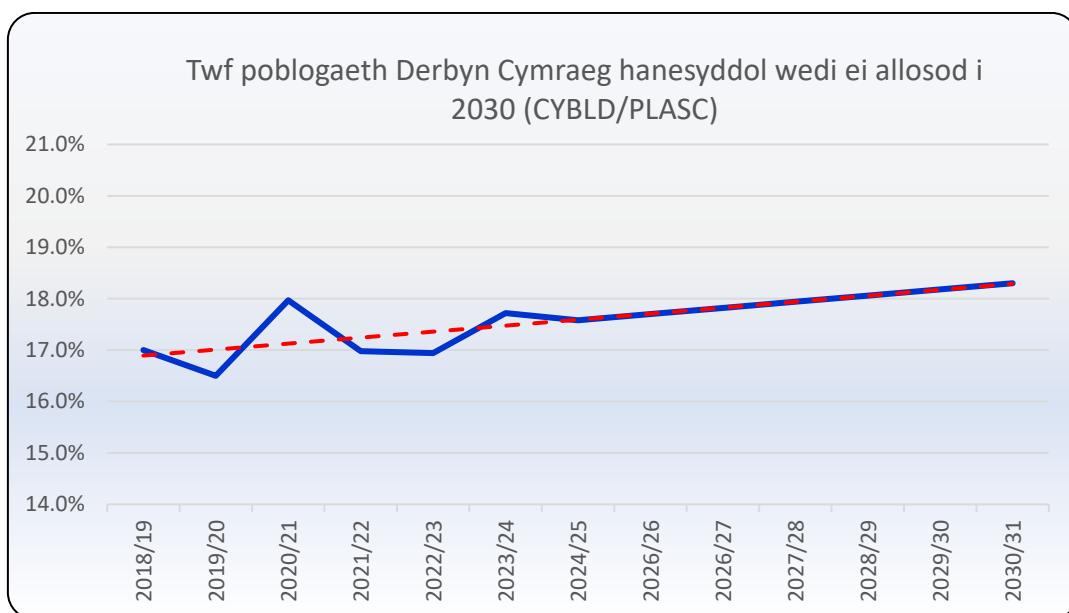


Figure 17: Welsh-medium Reception projections based on the latest PLASC data

4.41 **Conclusions** Despite the opening of Ysgol Groes-wen's new provision in September 2023, which was the first school to open in the new greenfield communities under the current LDP, the latest PLASC data shows that the numbers are not only behind the WESP's lowest target trajectory (25% in 2031) or 20.5% by 2024/25, but behind the intrinsic growth trajectory for numbers projection as well.

It is fair to note however that the total numbers across the city according to PLASC January 2024 are also lower than the original projection - which improves the percentage in Welsh-medium slightly, if not the numbers. Nevertheless the percentage of 17.73% is still short of the 20.5% that was hoped for by 24/5 when the WESP was first implemented. Meeting that target would have required around 741 children to enter WM Reception in September 2023 rather than 641 (provisional October 2024 figure).

<sup>37</sup> [Home | Cardiff Language Immersion Unit](#)

6.42 The plans already implemented to increase primary capacity to 32.9FE by 2025 (which includes Ysgol Groes-wen's Welsh-medium FE and the expansion of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan in September 2025), to meet and drive demand in parts of the city, will allow up to 25.2% of the Reception age learner population across the city to register for Welsh-medium education - *if they chose to do so* by 2025/2026.

That means that there is currently enough capacity (as a result of the natural fall in births) to admit significantly larger numbers into the Welsh-medium sector than are currently seizing the opportunity, and that current capacity, if the numbers remain as they are, is sufficient to offer school places that meet the WESP's minimum target requirement of 25% (\*but with no level of surplus to allow for further growth, and the WESP is committed to maintaining a minimum 10% surplus at least to allow for growth). Clearly if Cardiff were to aim for the WESP's medium target of 27% or the higher target of 29%, then it would be necessary to augment the existing capacity by 2031 through increasing the number of Welsh FEs available in the city.

6.43 New housing developments in the city offer an opportunity to accelerate uptake of Welsh-medium education, as on paper the increase in the general population from the new housing is sufficient to require that new schools be built as part of those developments – this will be dependent however on the new housing completion rates on the sites concerned but also on the vacancy levels of current surrounding Welsh-medium schools.

Clearly expanding Welsh-medium provision at the new development sites would support, if not guarantee, an increase in the number of pupils attending Welsh-medium schools. (\*After all a new school building is quite likely to attract pupils to it, regardless of the linguistic medium of education). The adoption of a ten-year WESP with an annual review also supports Local Authorities to set forth a long-term, strategic and sustainable approach to the growth of Welsh-medium education with an opportunity to adapt the WESP during this period as well.

6.44 Without any significant new interventions, and without a natural increase in primary age numbers, it can be argued that there are enough places available in Welsh-language primary school buildings across the city to meet the level of demand for Welsh primary education as it currently stands – those places may not in all cases be in the places where demand is strongest – nor where demand may perhaps increase over the course of the lifetime of the proposed development plan. In other words, while the spread of Welsh-medium education has improved in recent years, the unequal proximity compared to English-medium education (maintained and faith schools) is something that needs to be changed, a trait recognised by the County's Education Department.<sup>38</sup> The challenge in the coming years therefore, given the largely lost ground, certainly in numbers with the fall in births, will be to find the best ideas - and in what parts of the city - to increase Welsh-medium reception class numbers beyond what has already been set out in the current Development Plan.

With a new Local Development Plan pending, this is also an opportunity to reconsider the original WESP – and adjust it appropriately in line with the final development plan to be adopted in 2026 and with a view to a new more current data baseline also in terms of recent demographic changes and updates on intake numbers.

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<sup>38</sup> [Education Investment Strategy](#)

**Consideration:** It must be remembered that the creation and filling of more new Welsh-medium provision will inexorably influence for a time the nearest Welsh-medium provision through potential 'displacement' for some pupils – as well as having an impact on the numbers and raising questions about the viability of school places elsewhere – including the English and faith sector – ie how efficient and sustainable they are as institutions.

This also underlines the problem of proximity for Welsh-medium provision compared to English-medium provision as parents weigh the pros and cons of their education choices on their children's behalf – and so the most convenient reception places to access in terms of their own personal situations. Here, the lack of proximity - and convenience of travel to existing Welsh-medium provision compared to the English-medium sector acts as a practical barrier - at least for some - to choosing Welsh-medium education. There is also a need to seek a more equitable offer to negate the travel distance between choosing a Welsh and English-medium education which is reflected to some extent in the fluctuating numbers transitioning from the Welsh-medium primary sector to the Welsh-medium secondary sector (see 7.1)

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## 7. Secondary Education

### 7.1 Secondary Sector Challenge

A particular challenge facing the secondary sector more recently particularly since Covid is trying to achieve higher transition rates from primary to secondary – and retention rates in the secondary sector thereafter on to further education. A dedicated subgroup of the Bilingual Cardiff Forum has begun to look at this work to support the work of the WESP. In simple terms across the Welsh-medium sector the three secondary schools in the city are losing around 70-80 pupils a year who could be transitioning over from Welsh-medium primary to the Welsh-medium secondary sector.

7.2 If 100% of the Welsh primary cohort in Year 2 in the city in 2019 had transitioned to the secondary sector last year, between the three secondary schools 717 pupils would have started in the Welsh-medium secondary sector in September 2024. Instead only 641 registered; that means over a 5-year period 76 have 'disappeared' from the sector. Some will have moved out of county, and perhaps fewer of the same age have moved in and joined the Welsh-medium sector. Others will have left the sector perhaps for reasons relating to more specialist education, perhaps for other English-medium provision in the county or further afield, and others simply chose mainstream secondary English-medium education over Welsh-medium education – whether due to reasons relating to subject choice, subject progression to higher or further education, convenience of provision location or changes to travel arrangements etc. It is possible that indirect side effects after Covid are also a factor in pupils' behaviours and confidence levels as well. The subgroup is working to try to better understand why this particular increases since 2019 and what can be done to reverse it.

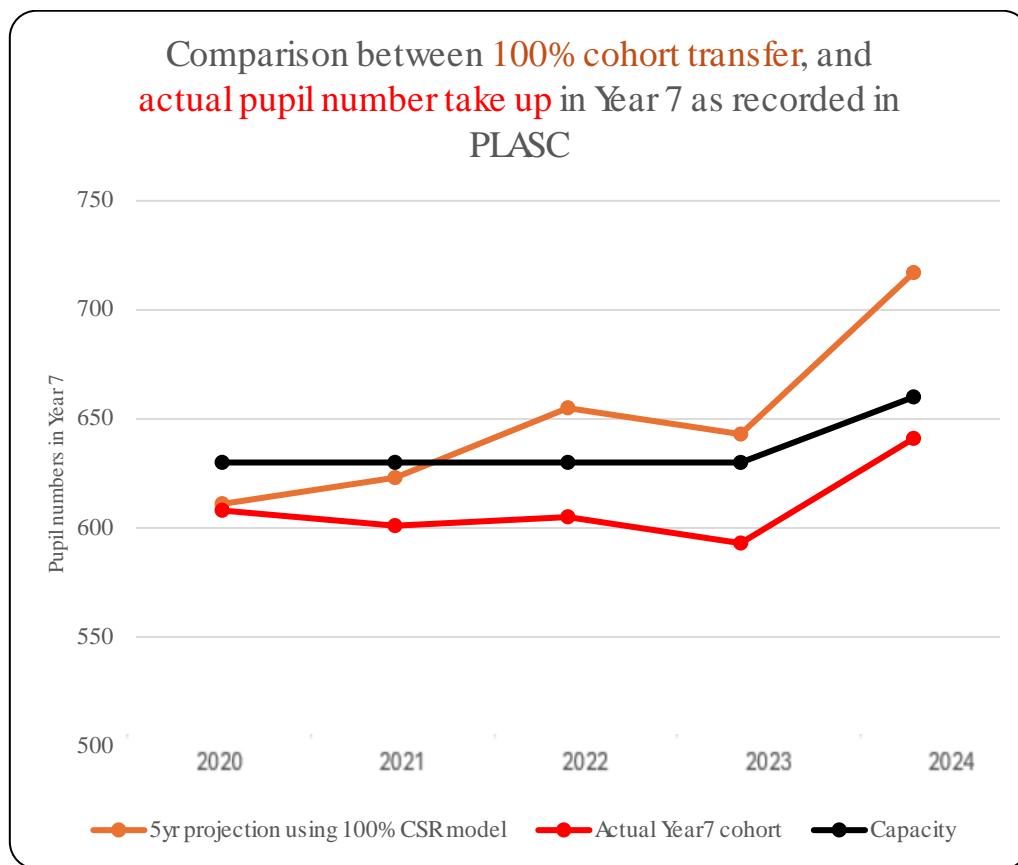


Fig 18: 100% Cohort transition, Actual numbers and WM secondary Capacity 2020-24

7.3 That said, if the full cohort from 2019 *had* transitioned, more Welsh secondary places would have to have been created in the city, at least temporarily, as is likely anyway, in the short term. But this is a temporary swell in numbers and the natural numbers of primary cohorts transitioning over to secondary will decrease slightly in a year or two.

7.4 One could add to this picture a more generalised pattern that has historically seen English-medium primary pupils, particularly in the south of the city, choose to enter secondary education in the Vale of Glamorgan, in neighbouring English schools such as St Cyres and Stanwell, but there are also similar examples in the west, north and east of accessing alternative provision to that available within the county.

7.5 Similarly some primary pupils in neighbouring counties may well sign up for secondary places within the city, rather than within their own counties. This cross-border movement also perhaps deserves more attention in the Welsh-medium education context given the net numbers for example moving to the Vale (see 4.48 above – where it is noted that a net flow of -26 Welsh speakers aged 3-15 left Cardiff for the Vale between March 2020 and March 2021).

7.6 That has not stopped recent calls however for a new Welsh-medium secondary school to be opened in the south of the city. In practice, for that to be able to happen, more forms of entry need to be created in the south of the capital above anywhere else, which would be able to feed into a high school of feasible size in the south, without endangering the viability of the three current secondary schools.

7.7 That will probably be part of the consideration for the second half of the RLDP period when proposals will need to be brought forward to permanently increase Welsh secondary provision in the city on the basis of higher overall secondary numbers largely stemming from the completion of housing on the major developments in the north-east and north-west, together with the development of more primary schools for that population, but also any other potential natural or demographic increase.

7.8 But the time between now and then also offers an opportunity to look at potential opportunities to collaborate on planning with neighbouring authorities that have settlements adjoining the southern parts of the city, in case a more efficient and mutually beneficial solution is possible in that direction. This has happened in other counties in terms of Welsh-medium education and has happened in Cardiff as well in the past.

7.9 Similarly the discussion about creating a general admissions system co-ordinated across the counties adjoining the city is a discussion that is on-going anyway – for schools to have better data to more accurately predict transition numbers within their counties – this because crossing geographical boundaries is something that happens in the primary and secondary sector and in both languages. That also suggests that there may be value in looking at solutions to at least increase the capacity of the Welsh secondary sector in the short term, by working with the county's nearest neighbours if the numbers within one county alone don't justify the opening of a new secondary school.

7.10 The other obvious opportunity available to grow the Welsh-medium education sector in the south of the city is to look at encouraging schools in the English-medium primary sector to move along the linguistic continuum, so that they could potentially feed into a larger Welsh-medium secondary sector in future. But this growth could happen in any part of the city where those

opportunities are available and look most promising and assuming that there are schools in the English-medium sector that would want to go along that education journey.

7.11 It is widely recognised that the effect of any success in the primary and secondary English-medium sector to create confident Welsh speakers will be key to making the Cymraeg 2050 a reality in areas such as Cardiff and the south-east in general. Programmes such as the Siarter Iaith (Language Charter) will certainly play an initial role in that along with the possibilities of the new Curriculum for Wales. And more clarity will also come with Welsh Government's re-categorisation of schools on the one hand and crucially - how or if - and which English medium schools in Cardiff might choose to move along the linguistic continuum over the next few years? Will there be an English-medium school keen to explore the possibilities of a new dual-language stream in their school (a variation perhaps on the innovation developed for Ysgol Groes-wen)?

7.12 Similarly the need to amalgamate and/or federate clusters of schools can create new links and partnerships between schools in the Welsh and English-medium sectors that are located within the same communities. This could also be influential in increasing the numbers of primary pupils that could access Welsh-medium secondary education from the English-medium sector – given suitable adequate immersion support to make that step a practical reality. These are changes that have been done in other countries - so why not here? Again though, ensuring sufficient support to significantly grow the immersion provision is key to facilitating growth in the Welsh sector and in due course from the English-medium sector also.

7.13 This would ultimately require perhaps a reorganisation of secondary provision – including looking possibly at the distribution and location of existing Welsh-medium secondary sites and any proposed new sites – and whether it would be possible to produce a better secondary geographical spread and arrangement in the long term towards the end of the LDP period? In considering the possibilities and feasibility of any reorganisation and any new provision in the coming years, it would be wise not to discount the cross-border element as well.

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## 8. Promotion

### 8.1 Primary Schools Pilot Initiative

A Bilingual Cardiff Forum subgroup was set up in October 2023 specifically to support 3 Welsh primary schools in Cardiff who had seen reduced numbers coming to their Reception classes in recent years. It includes representatives from Bilingual Cardiff, the Council's WESP Team, the South East Welsh-Medium Education Champion, Flying Start, Mudiad Meithrin, Cardiff Commitment, Menter Caerdydd and the three primary schools themselves.

8.3 The purpose of the sub-group is to identify and deliver actions and initiatives to support the schools concerned and to promote Welsh-medium provision within their catchment areas. This includes supporting nursery provision, open days for parents, and promotional events and there has been initial positive feedback from the schools to date. The work with the three primary schools is a pilot scheme and the promotional models developed if successful will be rolled out to other schools in future.

8.4 The reasons for low numbers can vary from year to year but if the numbers continue to be lower over a number of years then that suggests there may be an issue that has deeper more complex roots. For example, if we look at the locations of the city's Welsh-language primary schools (Fig 19 below), only one (Ysgol Hamadryad the southernmost in the Bay) is clearly within a Flying Start area (namely the blue, green and red areas of social deprivation in Fig 19 below and where there is specific targeted pre-school care provision targeted by Welsh Government and provided by the Council), although one or two other Welsh-medium primary schools also adjoin these areas.

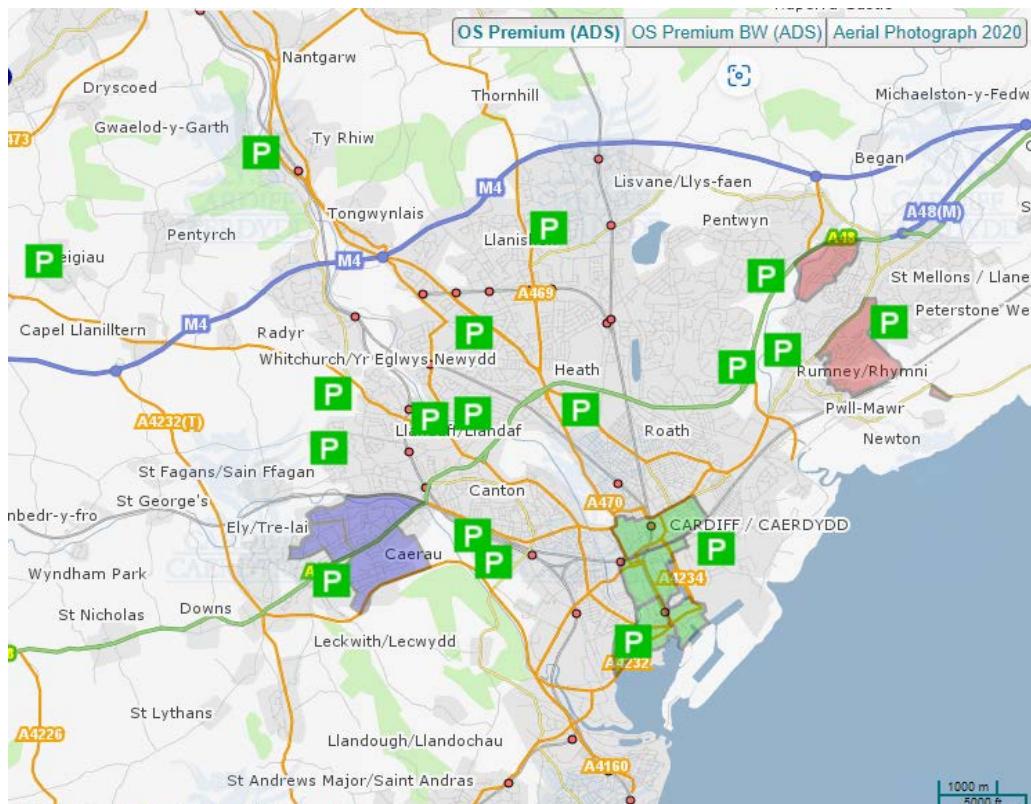


Figure 19: Flying Start provision and Welsh primary school distribution

8.4 Looking at the same Flying Start areas and the nearby English primary provision (Fig 20), it will be seen that a much more natural choice for parents in those neighbourhoods will be those schools that are on their doorstep and where progression to the English-medium sector would appear to make sense in terms of practicality and convenience. Although Flying Start offers Welsh language provision in these areas, essentially in terms of continuity, they are further from the current Welsh-medium primary provision than the English-medium provision.

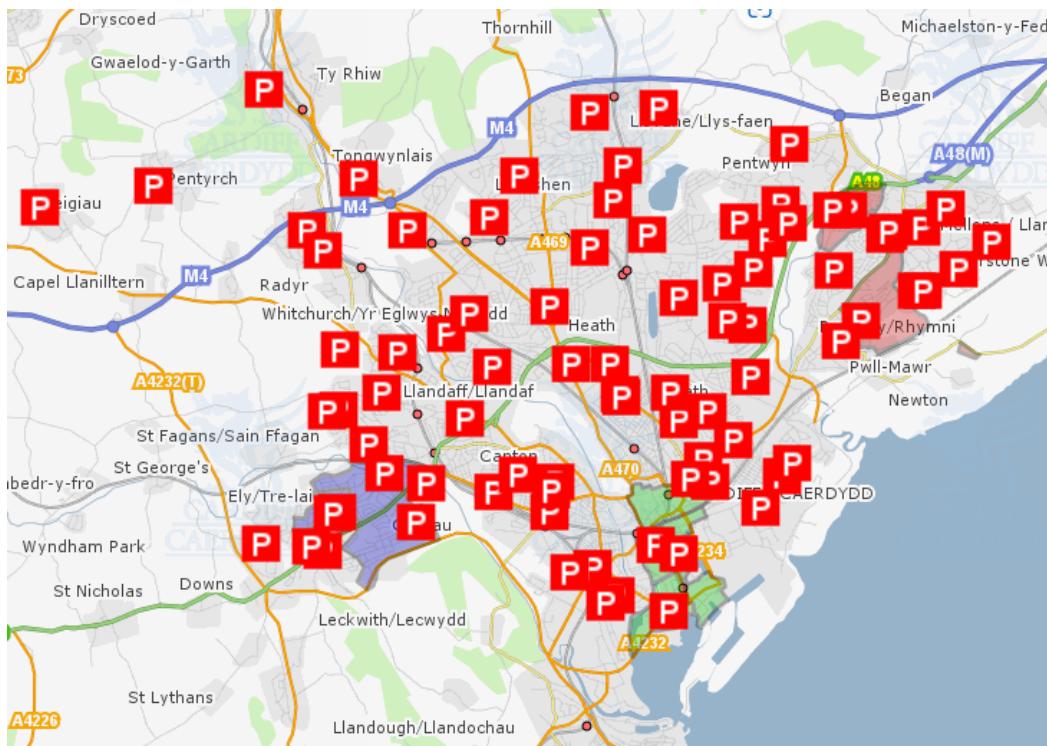


Figure 20: Flying Start provision and English-medium primary school distribution

**Consideration:** Although Welsh Flying Start places are offered, a fairly high proportion of places remain empty. There may be other reasons beneath the surface than the relative proximity of the nearest primary provision and the fall in birth rates.

While it is fair enough to pose questions about the parity of primary Welsh-medium education opportunities in these Flying Start areas, one must also question issues such as perceptions around Welsh-medium education and the exact nature of the relationship between social deprivation on the one hand and the appeal of Welsh-medium provision on the other to particular cohorts in the city's communities.

Is there a perception that Welsh language education is not relevant, or important? To what extent do family generational patterns have a stronger

8.5 However, one of the main obvious challenges to be met going forward is being able to jump over that barrier of convenience and the relative proximity of provision closest to your 'doorstep' in the city's communities compared to Welsh-medium provision – which is arguably even more of an issue in more deprived neighbourhoods – often in the southern arc of the city, where private cars have less ownership, less paying ability for pre-school childcare, perhaps less family support and a greater reliance on having to walk or use public transport to move around and the costs – both financial and time – involved in that.

8.6 While the specific pilot project under the umbrella of the Forum looks at a lack of numbers in a few Welsh-medium primaries, the other side of the coin is that if a primary (or secondary) school succeeds and is fully or oversubscribed, the next closest Welsh-medium catchment school (via a safe walking route) *which has a vacant school place* could be some travelling distance from the family home. This is particularly true in the secondary sector where there are generally fewer empty school spaces, which may make it unattractive for the parent or pupil to choose that alternative school as a second choice in light of the fact that there are so many English-medium language schools that much closer.

8.7 The map below (Figure 21) although somewhat complex shows the location of the 18 Welsh primary schools and 3 Welsh secondary schools in Cardiff, together with the boundaries of the secondary catchment areas (green) and then within those, the boundaries of the primary (red) school clusters within the secondary catchment area. So taking Hamadryad as an example, it is highlighted as being in Ysgol Glantaf's boundary cluster and the nearest WM primary schools to it are Ysgol Pwll Coch (also in the Glantaf boundary cluster) and Ysgol Glan Morfa (which is however in the Ysgol Gyfun Bro Edern cluster). The next closest primary school then to Hamadryad is Treganna, but that is in the Ysgol Plasmawr secondary boundary cluster. (The choices for parents are more complicated than this even, because the key factor in determining a pupil's secondary school catchment place is not the location of their child's primary school or its cluster, but rather, in the first instance, the pupil's home address).

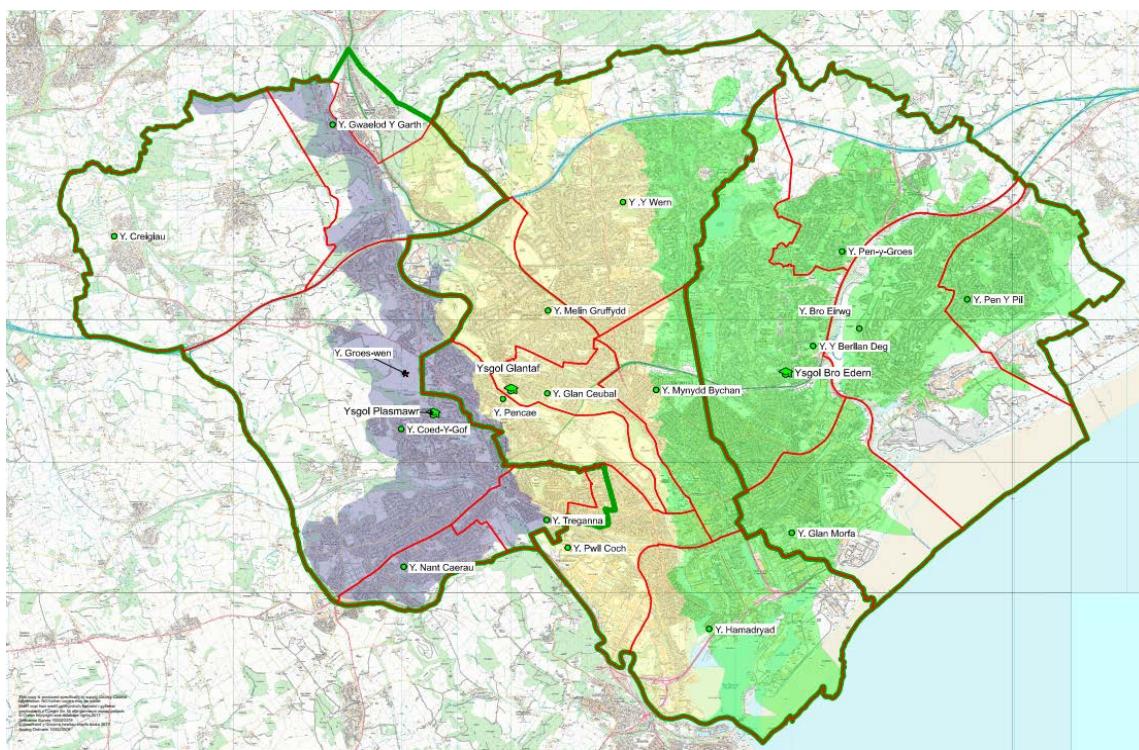


Figure 21: Cardiff Welsh-medium primary and secondary school catchment areas 2023

6.9 In contrast, when considering the distribution and numbers of the nearest English-medium schools seen on the map below (Figure 22), if the nearest school of choice is full there is a greater choice and spread of other English primary schools nearby - which are also more likely in the same secondary catchment area - so there is more noticeable consistency and continuity for primary cohorts and classes to be able to transition together to the same secondary provision. So looking at Mount Stuart school in the Bay, which is the nearest English school to Hamadryad, if Mount Stuart was full there would be a choice of seven or eight other English primary schools closer to Mount Stuart than the nearest Welsh schools are to Hamadryad (namely Pwll Coch and Glan Morfa) and most of those in this case would fall into the catchment area of Fitzalan High School. There will be some exceptions in the English-medium sector as well, but the likelihood will be less and the daily travel distances even if that were the case, also shorter.

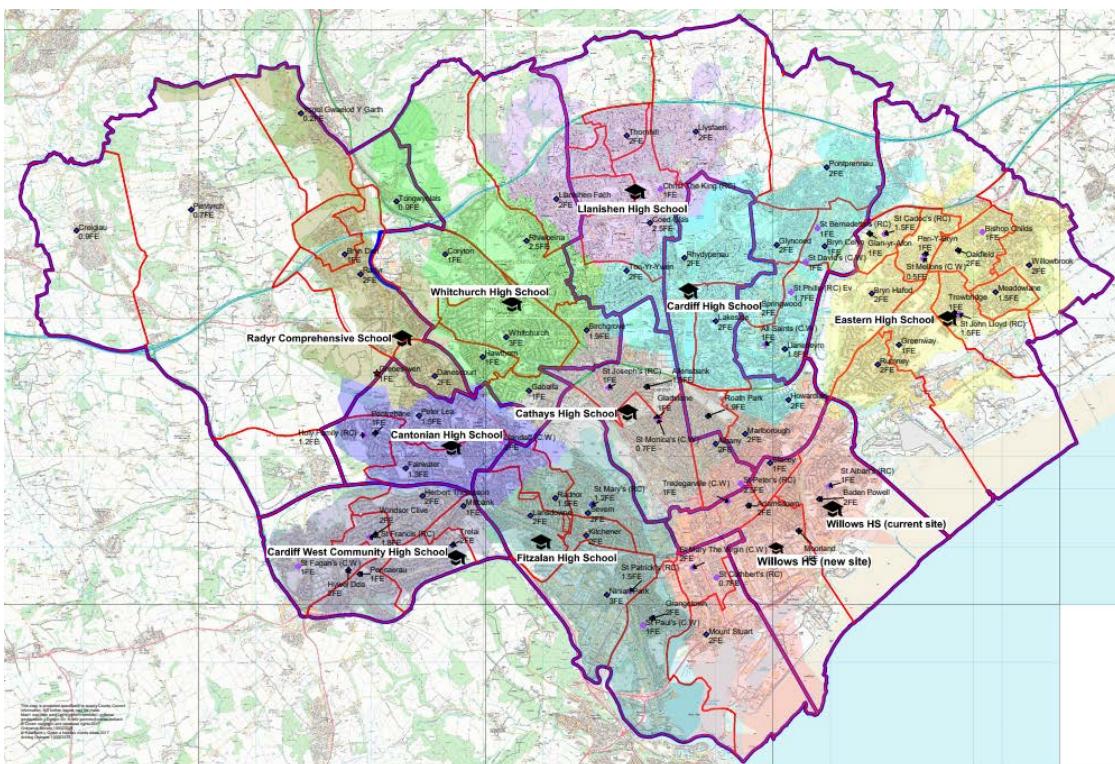


Figure 22: Cardiff English-medium primary and secondary school catchment areas 2023

8.9 It should also be noted that the success of a class or nursery group in an area is no guarantee in itself of numbers transferring to the local Welsh-medium primary school, as noted in 5.4 above, the evidence suggests that a significant percentage are lost to Welsh-medium education at this point. Any school could be facing particular challenges - either in terms of over-subscription on the one hand (and therefore having to turn down a number of pupils living within the catchment area) or in terms of not having adequate admission numbers on the other - with the budgetary challenges involved with that. Therefore it is necessary to look at the unique circumstances and situation of *each individual school and area* to understand what the picture and trend is in a particular neighbourhood in the city.

8.10 It should also be noted that the projections above regarding expected numbers in the Welsh-medium primary sector do not take into account any specific steps to promote provision in the city or

the success of any such actions. Similarly projections on numbers in the Welsh-medium sector do not take into account the success of specialist immersion provision to increase numbers going through that system over an extended period of time – and therefore creating new primary and secondary Welsh speakers.

### 8.11 Immersion provision to create Welsh speakers

Cardiff has had a successful immersion unit for several years now which has grown steadily since its inception - [Home | Uned Drochi Iaith Caerdydd](#). The unit supports pupils who want to transfer from the English sector to the Welsh-medium sector or it will also support pupils who need specific support who are already within the Welsh-medium sector. Table N below illustrates that increase from only 8 pupils in 2010/11 to supporting 48 pupils in 2022/23. \*But it must be remembered that the numbers indicated here are not additions from outside the Welsh-medium pupil numbers in the above tables as they will have already been counted in the PLASC numbers of their respective 'home' school (the school in which they are enrolled).

Blwyddyn Academaidd / Academic Year	Cyfnod Sylfaen / Foundation Phase	Cyfnod Allweddol 2 / Key Stage 2	Cyfnod Allweddol 3 / Key Stage 3	Cyfanswm / Total	Wedi <del>trosglwyddo'n barhaol</del> / Permanently transferred
2010 - 2011	6	2	0	8	8 (100%)
2011 - 2012	13	3	0	16	15 (94%)
2012 - 2013	17	5	1	23	23 (100%)
2013 - 2014	14	4	3	21	21 (100%)
2014 - 2015	11	10	1	22	22 (100%)
2015 - 2016	11	12	1	24	21 (88%)
2016 - 2017	16	13	6	35	31 (89%)
2017 - 2018	16	11	4	31	30 (97%)
2018 - 2019	17	7	11	35	31 (89%)
2019 - 2020	9	12	26	47	39 (83%)
2020 - 2021	12	17	17	46	39 (85%)
2021 - 2022	17	14	6	37	37 (100%)
2022 - 2023	17	19	12	48	43 (90%)
Cyfanswm/ Total	176	129	87	392	360 (91%)
2023-24	12	13	20	45	
Cyfanswm/ Total	188	142	107	437	

Table N: Cardiff Language Immersion Unit pupil numbers 2010/11-2023/4

### 8.12 Cymraeg i Bawb/Welsh for All – South East Welsh-medium Education Regional Partnership

This is a project that is a promotional partnership between the 10 local authorities in the Cardiff Capital Region and the 8 relevant Language Initiatives or *Mentrau Iaith* in the region. The [Cymraeg i Bawb | Welsh for All](#) pilot project is funded by Welsh Government and is drawing to the end of its second year. The Partnership has appointed a Promotion and Facilitation Champion that works with local authority language and WESP/Education officers and the *Mentrau Iaith* to develop and maintain networks across the Cardiff Capital Region and to commission bespoke projects and resources to be shared. The focus is on increasing the accessibility of all Welsh language education provision for all ages and promoting it to new parents and communities.

8.13 During 2023-24 projects supported by the Cymraeg i Bawb partnership to date have included:

- Mapping Welsh language education provision across the South East region.
- An assessment of regional local authority Welsh in Education Strategic Plan targets.
- Videos developed to promote Welsh-medium provision to Black, Asian and ethnic minority communities.
- Videos developed to promote Welsh-medium Additional Learning Needs provision.
- Develop a Welsh-medium education engagement and marketing plan for Local Authorities
- Provide bilingual banners to promote Welsh-medium education for all Welsh-medium primary schools across the south-east region.
- Website launch [Cymraeg i Bawb | Welsh for All](#) where all information about Welsh-medium education relevant to the region can be found.
- Hosting a regional stakeholder conference to demonstrate best practice in promoting Welsh-medium education.

Similarly to the formal local authority WESP strategies in the region, this pilot scheme is also subject to annual review. If it is seen as a successful development the model may well be expanded to be used in other parts of Wales in the near future which will then be able to build on the groundwork already completed.

8.14 **Our City Our Language** - Another recent development is the launch of the [Ein Dinas Ein Hiaith | Our City Our Language](#) website on 1 March 2024. It is a collaboration between the Bilingual Cardiff and the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan teams. The website, at least initially, presents information about Welsh-medium education and culture across the city and aims to provide a "one-stop shop" to access all the Welsh language activities and opportunities available in Cardiff. The website offers specific sections based on age groups:

- 0 - 3 years: Welsh baby clubs, activities for young children, and parent and baby groups.
- Ages 3 - 11: Welsh-medium primary education and language activities outside of school.
- 11 - 16 years: Welsh-medium secondary education and activities outside of school.
- Post 16: Welsh-medium sixth form, tertiary colleges and assorted activities.
- Students: Welsh-medium university courses in Cardiff and assorted activities.
- Adults: Opportunities for adults to learn Welsh, cultural and social events, and Welsh language shops and services.

The aim is to grow the content on the site along with its practical usefulness over the next few years.

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## 9. Post-16 / Colleges

9.1 Welsh speaking students in Cardiff make an important contribution to the cultural viability of the language in the city – as well as being a potential Welsh language workforce into the future. In recent decades the capital has cemented its name as a centre for further and higher education and that has been reflected in the numbers of Welsh students in the city.

9.2 Cardiff University has a Welsh Students' Union [Cardiff Welsh Students' Union](#) and also a social club [The Gym Gym](#), which brings into focus the extra-curricular Welsh activities of college students.

Last year the college opened **Y Lle** centre (The Place) – with the aim of offering a dedicated space to foster and promote Welsh language use amongst staff and students. Here there are opportunities to interact in Welsh and where Welsh language learning lessons are held and it is also the home of the Academi and the Cardiff Branch of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol. Through the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol for three years Cardiff University has provided a learning module *Dinesydd Caerdydd* (*Cardiff Citizen*) worth 5 credits per Welsh-speaking first year student - with plans to intensify provision for year 2 and 3 students with a 20 credit module in the future.

The profile of the University's speakers is as follows in Table O:

Welsh Language Ability	%	Number
Speaks Welsh	13.06	2,560
Fluent	15.82%	3,100
Can speak quite a bit	7.98	1,564
Speak a little	1.71	335
Just a few words	3.97	975
Understand spoken Welsh	1.16	230
Write in Welsh	14.09	2,760
None of the above	12.09%	2,370
No information available	29.11	5,705

Table O: Cardiff University Students Welsh language ability data 2022-23

9.3 As with Cardiff University Cardiff Met has a similar focus through the university's Welsh Language Unit - [WSU Student Rights](#) and [Welsh students](#) and socially the students cooperate closely and *Gym Gym* Cardiff University.

The Met's numbers and percentage of Welsh speakers have also seen an increase in recent years:

Cardiff Met Welsh Speakers: Students 2022 > 2024			
Year	Fluent	Speak Welsh but not fluent	% fluent speakers studying through medium of Welsh
2024/25	908	576	38
2023/24	835	555	36
2022/23	841	898	35

Table P: Cardiff Met Student Welsh Speakers Data 2025

9.4 Cardiff is only one of the University of South Wales' 3 campuses, so their Welsh-language student numbers in the city are significantly lower than the first two universities. But provision is available for Welsh-speaking students. [Welsh at University | University of South Wales](#) and support for students who want to learn the language [Learn Welsh at USW | University of South Wales](#).

9.5 Cardiff and Vale College is slightly different to the universities in catering mainly to 16-18 young people who want to take A-levels or vocational courses, but also 14-16 year olds who want to start apprenticeships. It is one of the largest British educational institutions of its kind with over 30,000 learners and over 1,000 staff. One of the aims of the college is to increase Welsh language provision to enable students to continue their Welsh education journey after leaving Welsh secondary education at the age of 16 <https://cavc.ac.uk/en/cymraeg-sdb>.

In its annual report 'Compliance with the Welsh language' for 22/23<sup>39</sup> the college reports that 6455 learners across all curriculum areas have studied at least one module of their course through the medium of Welsh/bilingually and furthermore that 2,539 learners across 923 courses reported an ability level in Welsh with 1060 indicating fluency. Across all areas (Health and Care, Engineering etc.) 11,481 Welsh/bilingual activities were delivered in 2023/24. In college there is also a club *Sŵn (Noise)* for learners and *Atsain (Echo)* for staff – clubs that promote bilingual activities inside and outside the college, bilingual resources, opportunities to use the language etc.

9.6 A recent example of the post-16 sector and colleges in the city coming together to work with the local Council and others was the Welsh Careers day on 18 June 2024 when 750 Year 12 pupils from a dozen Welsh secondary schools across the south came to Cardiff University in Cathays for a presentation on Welsh-medium higher education by Cardiff's universities in the morning and then in the afternoon an introduction to career possibilities where they could use their Welsh skills and that was with employers and other stakeholders. That followed a similar careers event at Cardiff and Vale College a year earlier.

A subgroup 'Increasing the Numbers' has also recently been formed under the banner of the Bilingual Cardiff Forum with the aim of increasing the numbers of students studying their subjects in Welsh. It is therefore clear that the further and higher education sector is beginning to move in the right direction but bearing in mind that most sixth form pupils in Cardiff continue to go to universities across the border, it is certainly a challenge that requires deliberate and careful collaboration if more Welsh-medium pupils are to be attracted to study in the capital in the coming years..

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<sup>39</sup> [J21078 CAVC Annual Welsh Report 22-23\\_W\\_FINAL.pdf](#)

## 10. Cardiff Social

### 10.1 Background:

Historically, although there are records of Welsh pubs and various societies and eisteddfodau in Cardiff in the G19, along with numerous examples of some in custody and court witnesses who could not speak English, the Welsh chapels have probably been the main proponents of the 'official' Welsh social life of Cardiff – official in the sense of holding regular weekly organised events, whether they were religious meetings or more cultural in nature. To give an idea of the significance of this, by 1845, of the 42 places of worship (chapel and church) in Cardiff, 30 were predominantly Welsh causes, 6 were bilingual and only 6 were English causes, with the Butetown area being among the most Welsh areas of the city – 3 Welsh chapels and a monolingual Welsh church.

10.2 But English was increasingly the language of public life in the city from the late G19 through to the twentieth – although it is worth noting here in passing that Pentwyn Community Council continued its bilingual minutes up to the 1960s, so Welsh was never far from the surface within official domains in the capital either.

10.3 Later in the last century, as well as the Welsh chapels – by then somewhat less numerous, meetings such as those of the Cymrodorion (Fellows) at Tŷ'r Cymry in Roath would also have been a type of Welsh-speaking cultural and civic hub for the city. However the Welsh language in Cardiff did decline by the mid-twentieth century, a process that accelerated especially during the years following both World Wars.

10.4 The Cardiff Cymrodorion Society was originally established in 1885 at Edward Thomas's coffee tavern, or Cochfarf to give him his bardic name, on Custom House Street not far from the back of today's John Lewis - a man who then became mayor of the town by 1902. And it was at the later location of the Society, after it moved to Roath, that a Welsh school was opened on Saturdays in the 1940s (attended by Rhodri Morgan and his brother Prys Morgan referred to in 6.1 above – and a little later, the home of the first Welsh nursery in the city) before the opening of the first Welsh language school namely Ysgol Gymraeg Caerdydd (later Bryntaf), on the site of today's Ninian Park School, in Grangetown.

10.5 Another important cultural centre later on was the Urdd Centre on Conway Road in Pontcanna, home of the Urdd *Aelwyd* (*Youth Club*) and location of a Welsh-language bookshop *Taflen* for a while. But Welsh also occupied other small domains over the decades, in earlier shops such as the *Siop y Triban* in Wyndham Arcade in the city centre, later the *Taflen* shop too, select pubs such as the *New Ely*, the *Halfway*, or the *Conway* in the seventies, in dining circles, branches of *Merched y Wawr*, in the social activity attached to Bryntaf primary school, in the Urdd children's clubs etc.

10.6 But with the opening of the city's first Welsh-medium High School in 1978 at Glantaf, the effectively splitting of Bryntaf primary school into four separate primary schools in the early 80s and then the opening of the Clwb Ifor Bach social club on Womanby Street - with the first pupils in Glantaf turning 16 by then - a new chapter in the social history of the Welsh language in Cardiff opened with the Welsh language occupying its place in the city centre with live Welsh language music being heard through the door and windows on Womanby Street at the weekends.

### 10.7 Cardiff Today:

Today, although the city's religious landscape has changed vastly, although at least 10 Welsh language churches remain in the city, the social and cultural activity focus is however more secular in nature these days. Having at least 10 Welsh language choirs in the city today perhaps typifies that change, with the latest to be established, Taflais for example attracting over a hundred prospective members when it was established in 2023



10.8 One of the cornerstones of the city's Welsh language for decades has also been a local newspaper *Y Dinesydd* (*The Citizen*) <http://dinesydd.cymru> – Wales' oldest locality newspaper (*papur bro*) founded in 1973 and still going to this day. Another institution that became another cornerstone of Welsh life in the city over a quarter of a century ago now is [mentercaerdydd.cymru](http://mentercaerdydd.cymru).

It would be fair to say that the Welsh language life of Cardiff has changed gears since Menter Caerdydd (Cardiff Initiative) company and charity was originally established in 1998 during the time of the Welsh Language Board, before that grant money was taken over by Welsh Government when the Board ceased to exist. The Menter's purpose is *promoting and facilitating and expanding the use of Welsh at a community and social level in the capital, ensuring that the language becomes a central and visual part of their life and that all citizens share responsibility for its future and prosperity*.

10.9 Menter Caerdydd is currently the focus of the capital's Welsh-language activity and services which include children's care and play clubs such as *Bwrlwm* and *Amser Stori*, adult education and leisure provision, weekly children's and youth clubs, community activities, the annual *Tafwyl* Festival, a Phone-book of Welsh language services/businesses, the Cardiff Calendar of Welsh language events – all promoting and supporting activities and empowering individuals and communities to engage with the language.

10.10 In 2022/23 the Menter held 523 activities with around 10,000 participating (Table R below). In terms of adult activities there were 158 activities with 2,231 participating, including online activity over Zoom which was a successful experiment during Covid and has continued.

10.11 For young people, 2023 saw the establishment of the CFTi club, a partnership between Menter, the Urdd and Cardiff Council's Youth Service under the encouragement of Bilingual Cardiff where 60 activities were held with 2,678 participating in the first year.<sup>40</sup>

10.12 [TAFWYL – Gŵyl Gymraeg Caerdydd](#) saw almost 30,000 people attend in 2022 – in the first post-Covid year - to watch 40 bands play live music – bringing £1.5m of economic value to the city. Last year on the Bute Park fields (2024) attendance numbers had grown further to 36,000.

10.13 The latest performance statistics for Menter Caerdydd give a further indication of the scope of activity in a year under the organisation's banner.

Outputs	Number
Number of activities for children	366
Number of children attending	8,459
Number of activities for young people (aged 11-25)	182
Number of young people (aged 11-25) attending	5,368
Number of family activities	236
Number of adults and number of children attending family activities	Children      Adults 2,644      2,475
Number of adult activities	202
Number of adults attending	3,180
Tafwyl	28,000
Number of Tafwyl Fringe activities	8
Number of Fringe attendees	730
Number of messages/posts published	1,263
Number of live online/hybrid activities	8
Number who have taken part in live online activities	337

Table R: Menter Caerdydd Activity 2023/24

10.14 That activity is also reflected online and on social platforms – which extends the Menter and Tafwyl's reach beyond the city's borders alone.

	March 2023	September 2023	March 2024	New followers	Page interactions (Post engagement)	Number of posts
<b>Menter Caerdydd</b>						
Facebook	5,215	5,336	5,400	+121	75,700	536
Twitter / X	6,039	6,067	6,111	+72	42,318	482
Instagram	2,299	2,406	2,520	+107	5,430	245

Table S: Menter Caerdydd Social Media Accounts

<sup>40</sup> [CFTICY](#) | [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) | [Linktree](#)

	March 2023	July 2023	New followers	Reach
<b>Tafwyl</b>				
Facebook	7,723	8,800	+1,077	45,102
Twitter	8,885	8,900	+15	
Instagram	5,938	7,100	+1,162	29,137

Table T: *Tafwyl Social Accounts*

10.15 In 2024/5 the Menter's focus will be on groups in areas that need support to promote the benefits of Welsh language education which will complement the provision of care and play during school holiday periods – so that children from non-Welsh speaking households in those areas can engage with and be able to play in the language outside of school.

10.16 Another aim is to expand youth work provision in partnership – under the CFTi brand, with more extra-curricular opportunities in and out of school. There are now 19 Welsh language sessions held weekly across almost all Welsh and English secondary schools and further education colleges in Cardiff. These sessions are held at lunchtime, after school or during the evening. A team of 8 youth workers are now working directly to support Welsh language youth provision in Cardiff for young people who speak Welsh as their mother tongue or as a second language. Mentors for young people have also been set up in Cardiff's Welsh secondary schools to provide one-to-one support for pupils.



10.17 One of the challenges in this area is to ensure that there are sufficient opportunities to use Welsh outside of school hours, in after school clubs and in community settings.

Centralising social events in only one location or in the school itself in the case of after school clubs means that some pupils will not be able or choose to take part. If an after school club finishes between 5-6pm it requires a lot from a parent to travel through city traffic (if they have a car at all) to pick up a pupil, otherwise it means a pupil may be travelling alone by bus or cycling or walking home in the dark during the winter months. For the pupils who live closest to the school, that's not so much of a barrier but it's a barrier for others who live further afield.

10.18 The same is true with other evening social opportunities – in that some will be able to attend a central place – say in the city centre or in an area hub – but that won't work for many young people. If Welsh language provision was available in their local community then they might be more likely to take advantage of it and therefore more likely to use the language outside the classroom. But that's probably the ambition – to ensure a range of fun activities and opportunities in various locations up and down the city where they can use Welsh.

10.19 For adults the work with learners will continue, building on the work started during lockdown – with social opportunities in the form of chats and leisure activities and strengthening the offer of the Welsh comedy scene and promoting the benefits of Welsh for business with the re-establishment of the Cardiff Cwlwm Busnes (Business Club).

10.20 The focus will remain on the east of the city where the level of Welsh activity and the number of speakers is traditionally lower. There will also be a focus on strengthening engagement with individuals and communities of the global majority.

10.21 Menter Caerdydd is a lead partner and Co-chairs the Bilingual Cardiff Forum – a Forum responsible for ensuring the successful implementation of Cardiff Council's Bilingual Cardiff Strategy, which aims to realise a truly bilingual capital for Wales.

10.22 It should also be noted that Welsh-medium activities take place beyond the mantle of formal organisation such as Menter Caerdydd – for example football, rugby, hockey and other sports clubs and teams have existed for years in the city through the medium of Welsh, through CRICC, the Urdd and venues and businesses that welcome and promote the Welsh language, such as at football centre *Gôl* – as well as sport within the Welsh-medium schools themselves of course.

10.23 In the entertainment arena, although Clwb Ifor Bach continues to offer diverse Welsh language provision, it is now predominantly an evening music venue for bands and events in both languages. But Welsh bands now play at other venues across the city, such as at the Liberal Club in Canton, or at the Globe in Roath, Tramshed in Grangetown or the Norwegian Church or at the Millennium Centre in Cardiff Bay. These venues – such as Gwdihw – can come and go or are temporarily closed such as St David's Hall or the location moves, such as Porters club. But performance activity seems to command a stage regardless of the particular availability of any specific space.

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## 11. Visual Infrastructure



11.1 The correct and purposeful use of Welsh in new developments is very welcome, from the name of the development itself to the name of the street (if it is a new street). It is important for this to be visible right from the very beginning of the construction phase.



Boards and signs like these from developers can be visible for a year or more across the city, the same with bilingual health and safety signs too, they are a great opportunity to create a living impression of Welsh in the city from the outset, regardless of the nature of the message!



11.2 The Council has adopted a policy of expanding the use of bilingual names for the city's streets along with giving Welsh names to any newly built streets, Welsh names that have a link with the history and heritage of the area.<sup>41</sup> The visible increase in the last decade in the use of Welsh by some private businesses in the city is notable, particularly in the city centre – whether they have Welsh language connections or not.



11.3 If you search for them, there is evidence here and there of Welsh being used on murals or in slogans on walls and on signs across the city. This can often have a multiplier effect as the existence of a single shop front or one Welsh sign prompts nearby businesses to start emulating the pattern and good practice.

For example in the businesses adjoining Victoria Park in the west of the city, not a single word of Welsh was to be found looking at those businesses ten years ago. But the BLOC café appeared at the southern end of the park along with the Welsh mural above and was then complemented by nearby

<sup>41</sup> [Cardiff Street Naming Policy 2019.pdf](#)

businesses - until very recently Welsh was visible on the shop fronts of 4 of the 8 businesses adjoining the park opposite BLOC.



11.4 And at the northern end of Victoria Park the former bowling club is now home to a beach volleyball club where the bowling lawn used to be – but the building itself is home during the day to a new Welsh nursery group – Cylch Meithrin y Parc – which highlights the natural evolutionary correlation of positive elements weaving through each other and one change for good leading to another good development.



Visual features like these are obvious initial stimuli to change attitudes and perceptions. The Council's Shop Front policy (2019)<sup>42</sup> which can be found as a Supplementary Planning Guide attached to the adopted Development Plan states:

*Welsh and bilingual signage enhances the character of Cardiff and promotes the city and its culture. Using Welsh and featuring it on front of shop signage can help promote businesses / attract customers and will be actively encouraged and supported as part of well-designed shop front proposals.*

<sup>42</sup> [Shop Front Design and Signage SPG - June 2019](#)

- and therefore also an encouragement at a planning policy level for businesses to take advantage of and promote the visibility of Welsh in the city which in turn is indirect encouragement to use the language.

**Final Consideration:**

With the exception of the city centre and a select few places like this in Victoria Park, outside the city centre itself, it would be fair to say that most district and local centres in the city remain untouched by the gradual but encouraging changes noted closer to centre - and it is *in these neighbourhoods* perhaps above all else, that the visual infrastructure of the proposed new LDP, with the renewed emphasis on brownfield development, can encourage daily use of the language and aid the effort to make the whole capital a truly bilingual one.

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