



Andrew Thomas
Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning
Neath Port Talbot Council
Civic Centre
Port Talbot
SA13 1PJ

22 October 2021

Dear Andrew

**21st Century Schools and college Programme - Ysgol Newydd Swansea Valley
(B-NPT-0004)**

Following on from recent discussions with my officials about the above project, we understand the Council and the Cabinet of Neath Port Talbot Council approved the proposal on 20th October 2021.

As you will be aware, clause 1(b) of the grant award letter issued to Aled Evans on 21 December 2020 stated as follows:

- (b) *This letter is to allocate a sum of up to £14,758,250 towards a project cost of £22,705,000. The breakdown of Capital Funding approved to date is detailed in Schedule 1 (the "Grant Allocation Table"). **This letter is to update this position to reflect that a new project has been approved subject to satisfactory completion of Welsh Language Impact Assessment.***

Officials from the Welsh Language Division have worked closely with your officers over recent months, and promised that they would provide further advice regarding the impact of this project on the Welsh language once the Council and Cabinet had considered your report this week. I want to reiterate that they remain committed to working in partnership with yourselves and to build on the positive relationship that's developed since you took up your post.

In terms of next steps and ahead of any further consideration by Ministers as to whether the "satisfactory completion of a Welsh Language Impact Assessment" condition has been met, we request that you consider the following actions:

- the implementation of all 11 mitigating actions in the additional report commissioned by Welsh Government to further inform the Welsh Language Impact Assessment;
- the inclusion of an implementation plan within the new Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP);

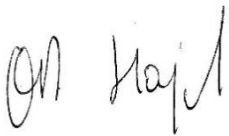
- a revision of the current draft WESP to make it clear how the new plan will support the Welsh language in the Swansea Valley and clearly demonstrate how you will increase provision in line with the proposed target of 27%

On the specific point around the mitigating actions, we believe that the draft WESP needs to include all 11 mitigations. The section in the draft WESP on outcome 1 is strong and sets out a clear ambition. However, as drafted we don't feel that there is any coherence thereafter in the draft WESP as to how the increases in the early years transfer into the rest of the system. Although there is mention of late immersion and promotion, there is no clarity currently within the plan as to how these commitments will be delivered to support the overall strategy. The team are happy to assist with the drafting, and if necessary could arrange further expert support if that would be of benefit.

Once a finalised WESP has been approved by Neath Port Talbot Council and submitted to Welsh Government for agreement, we will be in a better position to further consider whether the condition in clause 1(b) of the grant award letter issued on 21 December 2020 has been met. In the meantime, no funding from Welsh Government for this project will be released and any work undertaken will be at your own risk.

Finally, I understand the Welsh Education Forum (WEF) are meeting today. It would be helpful if the proposed actions listed above could be shared with the WEF members so that they are fully aware of next steps ahead of your consultation on the draft WESP in the coming weeks.

Yours Sincerely



Owain Lloyd
Cyfarwyddwr y Gymraeg ac Addysg
Director of Education and Welsh Language