

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET



Report to a meeting of Gwynedd Council Cabinet

Date of meeting:	24 October 2017
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Gareth Thomas
Contact Officer:	Debbie Anne Williams Jones
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Title of Item:	Gwynedd Secondary Sector Language Strategy

1 THE DECISION SOUGHT

- i. To adopt the Gwynedd Secondary Language Strategy as a document which sets a strategic direction and clear expectation for all secondary schools in the county to have a positive influence on pupils' social use of the Welsh language within and outside the school.
- ii. To commit £120,000 of additional funding from the Transformation Fund (£40,000 every year for over three years 2019/20 – 2020/21) to fund the Gwynedd Secondary Sector Language Strategy Coordinator to lead on further progress in pupils' social and curricular use of the Welsh language.

2 THE REASON FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

Realising the vision and objectives of the Gwynedd Secondary Sector Language Strategy has been included in the Council Plan for 2018-23. Forming and implementing the requirements of the Secondary Sector Language Strategy is a direct response to the call from the county's primary and secondary schools, and Elected Members to see succession to the primary schools' Language Charter, ensuring further progress in the social and curricular use of the Welsh language among young people.

A commitment of additional resources is needed over a three year period in order to realise the Strategy's objectives, and be able to provide specialist support to the county's secondary schools over time. The request for additional resources is based on the same commitment of resources that was provided to establish the Welsh Language Charter in the primary schools, by funding the Coordinator post over a three year period.

3 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this project is to ensure firm succession and to build on the success of the pioneering project of the Language Charter which is operational in Gwynedd's primary schools, and which has now been rolled out nationally. At the request of Welsh Government, following positive reports about the success of the Charter in Gwynedd, permission was sought to use Gwynedd's expertise and good practice to extend the project to other areas in Wales.

To ensure firm succession to the Primary Schools' Welsh Language Charter, and to continue to improve our young people's Welsh language skills, the Secondary Language Strategy was developed to provide clear guidance on how to plan intervention to improve awareness and increase the use of the language among young people in the secondary sector.

The Strategy focuses on the Welsh language and on Education, and includes curricular elements as well as social use of the language. There are four main fields to which the Strategy attempts to respond:

- Welsh First Language
- Welsh Second Language
- The Welsh Language as a medium
- Social use of Welsh among young people

The context and direction are based on a number of key policy documents, and it is acknowledged that a number of plans are already operational in these fields in a number of schools in Gwynedd and beyond, namely:

- Strategic Plan – Welsh in Education
- Welsh-Medium Education Scrutiny Investigation Report
- Alun Charles' Study Report
- Secondary Schools Language Practices Support Project
- Gwynedd Language Strategy 2014-2017
- Trywydd Report - Increasing the social use of the Welsh language among the children and young people of Gwynedd's secondary schools
- Cymraeg 2050
- A framework for increasing the use of Welsh by children and young people
- Donaldson Review 'Successful Future':
 - Recommendations 21-30 - The Welsh Language
 - Recommendation 62 - Ownership

A copy of the Secondary Sector Language Strategy is included in Appendix 1.

In April 2017, a Coordinator was appointed on secondment from the Secondary Sector Language Centre at Porthmadog - a person who has expertise and credibility among the heads of secondary schools, and has the ability to convince and challenge accordingly - to lead the Secondary School Language Strategy.

The following has been achieved since appointing the Coordinator:

- forming the Secondary Sector Language Strategy jointly with a working group of Gwynedd secondary school head teachers;
- every secondary school has formed its own action plan in response to the objectives of the Language Strategy;
- meetings and discussions have been held between the Coordinator and staff at a number of secondary schools;
- a brand new partnership has been established with Hunaniaith to respond specifically to objectives within the strategy, namely:
 - young people
 - the school and the community

Over the next three years, the Coordinator will be responsible for:

- Further supporting the 14 secondary schools to implement the main priorities of the Strategy
- Creating and implementing comprehensive training programmes for secondary teachers in the methodologies of bilingual teaching and learning
- Further promoting the value and advantages and usefulness of bilingualism in order to strengthen the pupils' incentive to develop into people who are fluent in both languages.
- Creating and implementing effective arrangements to monitor the implementation of the strategy.

4 THE REASONING AND JUSTIFICATION FOR RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

Receiving the additional resource from the Council would provide the project with continuation and firm succession for three years, and would ensure that Gwynedd continues to lead on pioneering work across the north and nationally.

5 NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

By accepting the Cabinet's decision to adopt this Secondary Sector Language Strategy, the strategy will become an operational document and every secondary school will be accountable for implementing it and the desired outcomes.

The additional resource of £40,000 will be needed for a three year period in order to effectively implement the Secondary Sector Language Strategy from 1 April 2018 onwards.

6 ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO RECOMMENDING THE

DECISION

Views of the Statutory officers:

i. Monitoring Officer:

The strategy has been developed in close co-operation with the county's secondary schools which is positive in terms of their commitment to achieve its requirements and aims. No further observations in terms of propriety.

ii. Head of Finance:

There will be several justifiable need / uses competing for the Transformation Fund's limited resources, and it will be a matter for Cabinet members to prioritize the relevant applications

iii. Views of the Local Member:

Not a local matter.

iv. Consultations:

The Secondary Sector Language Strategy has been submitted before the Secondary Sector Strategic Planning Group several times during the year. Also, a draft version was submitted to the Group for observations on 21 September 2017, where all head teachers supported the Secondary Sector Language Strategy.

A presentation was given on the main objectives of the Secondary Sector Language Strategy before the Language Committee on 28 February 2017.

The Secondary Sector Language Strategy was submitted before the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee on 26 September, 2017 and the observations received from the scrutineers have already been incorporated in the Secondary Sector Language Strategy submitted to the Cabinet.