

MEETING OF THE	LANGUAGE COMMITTEE
DATE	17 January 2019
TITLE	Progress Report on the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)
PURPOSE	To consider the contents of the progress report and offer observations
AUTHOR	Debbie Anne Williams Jones
CABINET MEMBER	Councillor Gareth Thomas

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. The School Standards and Organisation Act (2013) became law in Wales on 4 March 2013. The Act places a statutory duty on Local Authorities to prepare and submit a **Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)** to Welsh Government. These initial plans came into effect on 1 April 2014 for a period of three years up to March 2017. These plans outline the way Local Authorities intend to achieve aims and targets set by Welsh Government and which are outlined in the Welsh Medium Education Strategy.
- 1.2 To this end, Welsh Government has published several other key policy documents in the field of Welsh in Education:

Cymraeg 2050

This is Welsh Government's long term strategy for the Welsh language. It sets out the vision to create one million Welsh speakers, along with an increase in the use made of the Welsh language. Welsh Government acknowledges that Welsh medium/bilingual education is one of the main methods of ensuring that children are able to develop their Welsh language skills, and of creating new Welsh speakers. Consequently, the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan is considered to be critical in supporting the Government's vision to create a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

Education in Wales: Our Nation's Mission (Action Plan 2017-21)

This Action Plan notes the steps that are to be taken to implement the far-reaching amendments to the education system in Wales. The aim is to ensure that all learners benefit from a curriculum of the highest standard and that they enjoy teaching and learning that inspires them to succeed in a collaborative and innovative education community that's effectively led. Developing a Welsh medium provision improves Welsh teaching and learning for every learner who is at the root of these amendments, and the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan is, therefore, believed to be key to that.

The Welsh Language in Education: Action Plan 2017-21

Welsh Government's vision is to enable every learner to develop his/her Welsh language skills and use the language confidently in everyday life. To deliver the vision, several action steps will be necessary so that a sustainable provision is created for future generations. Six guiding principles are contained within, which will generate a common understanding of the role of the teaching and learning of Welsh, and teaching and learning through the medium of Welsh, at every school in Wales. The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan is, therefore, considered to be a means of supporting and delivering this vision.

The Gwynedd Education Language Strategy and other Welsh Government policy documents are interpreted in the context of the Gwynedd Education Language Policy and will, thereby, secure the outcomes (see Appendix 1). The Authority will ensure that the main elements are reflected in the Strategic Plan and are given due regard within.

Welsh Language Promotion Plan for Gwynedd 2018-2023

Furthermore, the Welsh Language Standards imposed on Gwynedd Council in accordance with Section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, requires the Council to create a five-year strategy explaining the way the Council intends to promote and facilitate the wider use of the Welsh language across the county.

This is the vision noted in section 3.2 Welsh Language Promotion Plan:

- Schools that give prestige and value the Welsh language and encouraging more use of the Welsh language as a medium of learning and socialising by continuing to implement the Language Charter and the Secondary Sector Language Strategy.
- An increase in the number of young people who choose to study and who gain qualifications or recognised accreditations through the medium of Welsh.
- More pupils continuing to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from primary to secondary school and post compulsory education.
- More extended learning opportunities offered to young people - on the format of work experience and apprenticeships with employers who give a prominent status to the Welsh language - that will develop young people's understanding of the need for Welsh language skills in the workplace.

The vision of this Priority Field is to be delivered via the Education Language Policy and the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan for which we will be accountable as part of implementing the Welsh Language Promotion Plan in Gwynedd 2018-23.

2. CONTEXT

- 2.1 In order to achieve Welsh Government's vision of a million Welsh speakers by 2050, the Government acknowledges that some changes need to be done to the way that Welsh medium education is planned.
- 2.2 The WESP Advisory Board by Welsh Government is continuing with the work of reviewing the legislation, and there will be no consultation on the proposed regulations until the beginning of 2019. Currently, the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans and Assessing Demand for Welsh Medium Education (Wales) Regulations 2013 notes that local authorities must submit amended plans annually.
- 2.3 For 2017/18, by putting weight on providing the existing plans, Welsh Government noted that local authorities can either submit updated action plans and/or the amended plan for them. It was noted that the plan(s) should include an update on progress against the WESP targets approved for 2017-20.

3. UPDATE ON GWYNEDD WESP 2017/18

- 3.1 In Appendix 1, the progress report on the implementation of the Gwynedd WESP for the year 2018/19 is submitted. The progress report will be submitted to Welsh Government following the Language Committee.
- 3.2 In Appendix 2, a copy of the Gwynedd WESP for 2017-2020 is submitted for the information and convenience of the Language Committee members.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to:

- Submit any observations on the contents of the progress report on the WESP that is intended to be submitted to Welsh Government