

MEETING:	Language Committee
DATE:	5th July 2016
TITLE:	Language, Work and Bilingual Services Report
AUTHOR:	Gwenllian Mair Williams Language Development Officer
PURPOSE OF REPORT	Present the report by the Working Group on the Welsh Language and Local Government, published June 2016 for the members' information.

1. Background information

1.1 The Minister for Public Services commissioned this report by the Working Group on the Welsh Language in Local Government Administration and Economic Development (“the working group on the Welsh Language in Local Government”) that were established to advise Welsh Ministers on the support needed for the Welsh language in the context of the programme for local government reform.

1.2 The working group decided, because of the time constraints, not to commission new research in this matter, but rather look at the evidence already gathered and the evidence presented by the group members and other individuals from prominent establishments in Wales.

1.3 The Working Group looked specifically at the language in key traditional heartlands in the north and west, and those areas with the highest percentage of Welsh speakers. Specific attention was given to Anglesey, Gwynedd, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire local authorities.

2. Content of the report

2.1 The language is discussed under 7 headings, and numerous recommendations are set out under each one.

1. Strategic Leadership
2. Local Leadership
3. A Bilingual Workforce
4. Training
5. Technology
6. Changing Behaviour
7. The Economy

2.2 The first three headings deal with leadership of some form, and the report emphasises the need for leadership, vision and clear commitment. It discusses the need to develop the language planning expertise within the Welsh Government, in order to look beyond community language planning and towards more strategic

planning. It also recommends that all head leaders/ Senior paid officials in local authorities (to include heads of education, children services and human resources) should have some proficiency in the Welsh language.

- 2.3 The section that deals with the bilingual workforce in particular deals with issues that have arisen more than once recently on a local level, namely the importance of meaningful continuity between education and the workplace and the need to look at the way in which we plan for the workforce of the future. The Working Group recommends that every local authority should "be under a statutory duty to undertake planning in terms of linguistic skills, and where required, to provide suitable training to meet those needs".
- 2.4 The next three sections (Training, Technology and Changing Behaviour) deal with those practical issues that will help establishments move forward to create bilingual workforces. Again, it touches on themes that have been raised on the local level, and it is encouraging to see the same discussions are being held on a national level.
- 2.5 The recommendations regarding the economy reiterate the ones presented in two recent Ministerial reports, which offered a detailed discussion of the language and economy and which recommended the development of a regional linguistic-economic strategy. The report also looks at the way local authorities can support linguistic prosperity through its local economic development plans.

3. The Recommendations

3.1 The report includes 14 recommendations that vary from the ones where the Welsh government themselves are expected to show leadership, and the ones it would be expected to be implemented by the local authorities.

3.2 The recommendations that are most relevant to Gwynedd Council include:

A4 Local Authorities, including in their function as Local Education Authorities, should be under a statutory duty to undertake workforce planning in terms of linguistic skills, and where required, to provide suitable training to meet those needs.

A5 c) The Welsh Government should adopt a single national standard Welsh language proficiency framework to be used by the whole of the public sector in Wales.

A9 The Welsh Government should place a statutory duty on Local Government to promote local economic development, and ensure consideration of the growth and prosperity of the Welsh language as part of this duty.

A10 The Welsh Government, in a full and equal partnership with Local government, should develop and implement a linguistic-economic strategy for the counties of Anglesey, Gwynedd, Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire and adjacent and relevant areas, based on the towns of Bangor, Aberystwyth, Carmarthen and Llanelli.

Any comments by the members would be welcomed.