



Complete Agenda

Democracy Service
Swyddfa'r Cyngor
CAERNARFON
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH

Meeting

EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time

10.30 am, THURSDAY, 13TH FEBRUARY, 2025

(NOTE: A BRIEFING SESSION WILL BE HELD FOR MEMBERS AT 10.00AM)

Location

Hybrid - Siambr Hywel Dda, Council Offices, Caernarfon and virtually on Zoom

*** NOTE***

This meeting will be webcast

https://gwynedd.public-i.tv/core//en_GB/portal/home

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(DISTRIBUTED 05/02/25)

EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP (18)

Plaid Cymru (12)

Councillors

Beca Brown
Iwan Huws
Gareth Tudor Jones
Gwynfor Owen
Huw Rowlands
Rhys Tudur

Jina Gwyrfai
Dawn Lynne Jones
Olaf Cai Larsen
John Pughe
Dyfrig Siencyn
Sian Williams

Independent (6)

Councillors

Elwyn Jones
Beth Lawton
John Pughe Roberts

Gwilym Jones
Dewi Owen
Richard Glyn Roberts

Ex-officio Members

Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council

Other Invited Members

CO-OPTED MEMBERS:

With a vote on education matters only

[vacant seat]	Church in Wales
Colette Owen	The Catholic Church
[vacant seat]	Meirionnydd Parent/Governors Representative
[vacant seat]	Dwyfor Parent/Governors' Representative
Sharon Roberts	Arfon Parent/Governors' Representative

Without a Vote

Elise Poulter	NEU
Gwilym Jones	NASUWT

A G E N D A

1. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

To receive any declarations of personal interest.

3. URGENT BUSINESS

To note any items that are a matter of urgency in the view of the Chair for consideration.

4. MINUTES

5 - 14

The Chair shall propose that the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 12/12/24 be signed as a true record.

5. GWYNEDD ECONOMY PLAN

15 - 22

To report on work to-date in developing a new Economy Plan for Gwynedd, inviting the input of Members on the content of this report and on any additional issues they believe are important in shaping the Plan.

6. EDUCATION LANGUAGE POLICY – THE ENGAGEMENT PROCEDURE

23 - 89

To present information on the engagement process in the context of the new Education Language Policy, and then report on the findings of the engagement.

7. IMMERSION EDUCATION SYSTEM

90 - 106

To provide an update on the evaluation process in the context of the Evaluation of the Immersion System.

8. SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS IN SCHOOLS SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION BRIEF

107 - 112

To adopt the investigation's brief and to elect members.

EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 12/12/24

Attendance:

Councillors: Councillor Cai Larsen (Chair)
Councillor Rhys Tudur (Vice-chair)

Councillors: Jina Gwyrfai, Dawn Lynne Jones, Elwyn Jones, Gareth Tudor Jones, Gwilym Jones, Beth Lawton, Dewi Owen, Gwynfor Owen, John Pughe Roberts, Richard Glyn Roberts, Huw Llwyd Rowlands and Sian Williams.

Co-opted Members: Colette Owen (The Catholic Church) and Elise Poulter (NEU).

Officers present: Geraint Owen (Corporate Director), Bethan Adams (Scrutiny Advisor) and Eirian Roberts (Democracy Services Officer).

Present for items 5 and 6: Councillor Dewi Jones (Cabinet Member for Education), Gwern ap Rhisiart (Head of Education Department), Debbie Anne Jones (Assistant Head of Education Department - Corporate Services) and Robert John Jones (Education Transport Manager).

The following were thanked for their service:

- Two former members of this committee, Councillors Dewi Jones and Llio Elenid Owen, were congratulated on their appointment as Cabinet Members.
- Karen Vaughan-Jones, Dwyfor Parent/Governor Representative.
- Former Cabinet Member for Education, Councillor Beca Brown. Reference was made to her wholehearted support for Foden's victims and her unwavering commitment to a thorough public inquiry into the matter. It was noted that the Chair would send her a message of thanks.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Iwan Huws; Sharon Roberts (Arfon Parent/Governor Representative) and Gwilym Jones (NASUWT).

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received.

3. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

4. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 17 October 2024 as a true record.

5. SCHOOL REVENUE BUDGETS

The Cabinet Member for Education, the Head of Education and the officers were welcomed to the meeting.

The Cabinet Member noted that:

- He too wished to echo the thanks to the former Cabinet Member for Education for her service and principled approach to undertaking the role over recent years, emphasising that he too would continue to follow the principled direction of Councillor Beca Brown in carrying out the role.
- As a former member of this committee, he hoped to form a professional relationship with the committee and wanted the scrutinisers to hold him and the Education Department to account.
- He wished to take the opportunity, as a new Cabinet Member, to apologise most sincerely for any suffering that took place at Ysgol Friars, Bangor. He further noted that the Council was fully committed to turning over every stone in order to understand exactly what went wrong at the school, and that we would do our utmost to ensure that this sort of thing never happened again.
- He would ensure that the Education Department and the Council responded fully and appropriately to any recommendations arising from the investigations currently underway.
- He called on the Welsh Government to commission a public inquiry to get to the root of what went wrong at Ysgol Friars.
- The Welsh Government's Draft Budget was published on 11 December and the Gwynedd settlement was inadequate and less than the national average. As such, the Council faced difficult decisions over the next few years.

Submitted – the report of the Cabinet Member for Education detailing School Revenue Budgets to ensure the committee's input and understanding of the impact of cuts, demography and grants on school revenue budgets.

The Cabinet Member set out the context and then gave members the opportunity to ask questions and offer observations.

Referring to paragraph 4.2.3 of the report, concern was raised that headteachers in the primary sector were reporting that they did not have the staff to offer specialist provisions and early interventions such as ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants). It was noted that children and young people's mental health problems were worsening and that early interventions of this kind were important in supporting pupil attendance and reducing referrals to external agencies such as CAMHS, which had long waiting lists. It was asked whether it was possible to look at alternative funding sources for this important work. In response, it was noted:

- That the point was a very valid one and that the work and the impact of the early intervention and child support work within the primary sector, and the secondary sector, was appreciated.
- That the work was taking place in schools, but that financial austerity meant that the opportunities and ability to offer sessions were decreasing.
- That the schools were looking at every possible avenue to be able to run these sessions, whether through group work, for example, rather than one-to-one work.
- That any additional grants available were allocated entirely to the schools to do the work, but as budgets shrank, the schools faced situations where it was

difficult, for example, to justify giving one child an ELSA session, and perhaps deprive the rest of the class of other provisions.

Referring to paragraphs 4.3.10 to 4.3.12 of the report, which elaborates on arrangements to fund support for a pupil with additional learning needs who moved school, it was asked whether the assistant moved with the pupil, or remained at the school. In response, it was noted:

- That the integration situation and the approach to supporting children with additional learning needs was currently changing in Gwynedd.
- That a decision was made during the current financial year to freeze the school integration budget, thereby doing away with the moderation panels and forums that used to allocate funding to schools in the form of hours for the appointment of temporary special needs coordinators.
- That historically, as a pupil left a school, the coordinator post at that school would come to an end, and those hours would be offered at another school.
- That the decision was made to freeze the integration budget this year in order to move to a new formula and a new way of allocating the funds, and also to try to rationalise the work for special needs coordinators in a school. Some schools had gained from that because the budget was frozen at the top of the wave, while other schools were at the bottom of the wave and regretted that the budget had been frozen in the first place.
- That the new model would take a snapshot of all the school's needs at a point in time and would allocate the integration funds for the year based on that. It was hoped that this would reassure staff that their job at the school continued should the pupil leave, and would also reassure the school in terms of planning the provision.
- That these changes did not mean that there would be any increase in the amount of money available, and if a child moved from one school to another, the schools would have to put up with that.
- That if a child came from outside the county, there was a pot of money available for children with more profound needs and to ensure that if a new case came forward, those needs could be met, but there would be nothing left in the funding pot afterwards.

It was asked what would happen to the capitation that schools received at the start of the academic year if a child was suspended early in the first term and moved to another school. In response, it was noted that the funding routinely moved with the child in the secondary sector, but that there would also have to be a discussion about the primary sector if the number of primary exclusions continued to increase.

It was emphasised that it was important that any salary increases were funded entirely from the centre.

It was asked how many Gwynedd schools only remained open because they fell into the safety net. In response, it was noted:

- That Gwynedd currently had just over 30 schools that fell into this category, and that this guaranteed a minimum of a headteacher and teacher.
- That there was a lower category than that, namely schools with fewer than 15 children, and that this guaranteed a minimum of a headteacher and assistant.
- That it was envisaged that Gwynedd would have five schools with fewer than 15 children next September, and that we currently had 16 schools with fewer than 30 children.

It was asked if it was time to look again at closing schools. It was noted that the question was asked in fairness to the children of the whole county, given that all the small schools of Bro Dysynni had already closed. In response, it was noted that it was necessary to agree an education strategy that looked at everything and set a direction for this field, and the input of the scrutinisers into the strategy would be appreciated when it was ready.

It was asked what the timescale was in terms of preparing the Education Strategy. In response, it was noted:

- That a number of engagement sessions had already been held with the heads of primary, secondary and special schools in relation to the direction.
- That a strategy had been prepared in draft form and would require the input of the new Cabinet Member.
- That following the engagement with the headteachers, there was an intention to go back to the schools to clarify what was envisaged as the way forward.
- That it was clear from the discussion with the schools that everyone agreed that the current system was unsustainable, but that no one agreed on the way forward.

It was asked how the consultation with the schools worked. In response, it was noted:

- That there had been no formal consultation with the schools to date in terms of any strategy, however engagement had taken place with them to listen to what people had to say about the way forward.
- That schools of the same size in the same area had been brought together as it was easier for people to speak openly in terms of their experiences with other headteachers who worked within the same context in terms of child numbers.
- That the exercise had been very valuable and a lot had been learnt about the mindset in the schools.
- That there had also been engagement with the secondary sector, but at more of an area level, and there had been a very open discussion with them too about the way forward. A discussion had also been held with the special sector as to the direction and it would also be necessary to go through the Strategic Forums, etc.

The Cabinet Member noted:

- That the desire was to bring the Strategy before this committee and through the correct channels when it was ready.
- That it was fully realised that this was a sensitive issue and it was wished to deal with this in the most sensitive way possible.
- That it was wished to assure the scrutinisers that the intention was to consult in full on the Strategy.
- That the data included in the report before this committee meeting showed that the current situation was unsustainable, as a result of 15 years of austerity and cuts.
- That there would be very difficult decisions to make in due course, but that the Department would do its best to be creative in finding solutions and would work with the councillors and the communities and people of Gwynedd.

It was noted that the county lost around 150 primary pupils each year and it was emphasised that this highlighted the need to have a strategy, or at least an interim strategy, in place. It was noted that the committee had scrutinised a draft strategy back in September 2023 and it was asked what had held the work back. In response, it was noted that because this would be Gwynedd's Education Strategy for the next 10 years, the Head of Education wished to have a document that not only highlighted the

headings and aspirations, but also detailed the direction and how those objectives were to be realised. The draft strategy submitted to the committee in September 2023 did not do this.

The report before this committee meeting was welcomed, as the alarming data in it enabled the scrutinisers to look at the problem in grim reality.

It was asked whether dates had been earmarked for the stages of the process of preparing and completing the Education Strategy. In response, it was noted:

- That the draft Strategy was to be finalised during the Spring Term, and consulted on at the end of the Spring Term/the beginning of the Summer Term.
- That other things were going to have to happen in the meantime and that would be visible over the coming weeks and months.

It was suggested that what we would face in the future would be fewer schools, fewer classes per year in those schools in the case of secondary schools, and those classes being bigger. Subsequently, it was asked how the plain and honest report before this meeting aligned with other reports and plans and the Gwynedd Yfory scheme, which mentioned offering education of the best standard, including access to a range of subjects, etc. It was asked whether it was propaganda to say that everything was wonderful. It was suggested that in the long term, we would witness a managed decline in the rural Welsh areas, with care homes in Dwyfor and Meirionnydd and schools in Arfon, and the young population in the centre of the county and the older population on the outskirts (a trend that had already started). In terms of the next few years, it was asked what impact all of this would have on the curricular range offered in the schools, specifically GCSE subjects such as French, Music and Computing, which were very important in enriching children's education. In response, it was noted:

- That the decline in the numbers of children was to be felt throughout Gwynedd, and not just in the rural areas. There had been a real decline in places like Caernarfon, Bangor and Bethesda.
- In terms of GCSE subjects, it was really challenging to maintain the desired range of subjects in schools for pupils in Years 10 and 11. It could be difficult to get enough pupils to choose the subjects to justify the cost of delivering the course. It was also a challenge to get specialists to teach the subjects. Since those specialists would not be able to teach their subject for five days a week, they would be extended to teach all sorts of other subjects, and not necessarily subjects of their choice.

It was asked whether consideration had been given to distance learning of traditional GCSE subjects such as French and Computing. In response, it was noted:

- That a scheme funded by the Welsh Government was already in place and was used by a number of schools in rural areas of Wales.
- That distance learning was not suitable for everyone and was thought to be more suitable for older and more mature children in terms of ability to concentrate on a task, etc.
- That a member of staff in the classroom and an online specialist were needed, so the costs despite being smaller, still existed.
- That to ensure the same experience for every child, everyone would be taught virtually, even if the specialist worked from another room in the same school as some of the pupils, but that didn't always meet with parents' approval.

The Cabinet Member noted that:

- He totally rejected the comments by a member about managed decline in rural Welsh areas and propaganda, and as a Cabinet Member, his priority was to

see Gwynedd Yfory give all the children of the county every opportunity possible.

- In having to re-structure and reconsider aspects, there was a real opportunity here to be able to provide a better education, and a wider range of education. It was also hoped that better provision and support could be looked at for children and young people with additional learning needs.

It was noted that the cumulative figures in terms of one school's budget for the next three years were concerning, and it was suggested that if that was the general situation across the whole county, we would be in quite a dire situation in about three years' time. In light of that, confirmation was requested that we would have a strategy that would work. In response, it was confirmed that the Strategy would work.

It was noted that sometimes reference was made to an Education Strategy and to a Schools Strategy, and assurance was sought that the two things were the same. Assurance was also sought that a draft strategy, and not the final strategy, would come before this committee in due course so that the scrutinisers could give their views on the content. It was further noted that Gwynedd had a very good Education Strategy about 15 years ago, which looked at schools across the county and formulated different options. However, nothing further had happened since then, and it was suggested that when opportunities arose, options such as federating schools, creating more lifelong learning schools or sharing a headteacher between two or three schools should be explored. In response, it was noted:

- That one Education Strategy existed and would include the drivers as to why we had to change and what our ambition was. It would also look at any opportunities that arose, how to respond to those opportunities in terms of the future of schools and how steps could be taken to share headteachers, etc. going forward.
- That the Education Strategy would be submitted to this committee in draft form.

It was asked whether schools that did not make full use of their inclusion money to include children, had a worse record in terms of excluding pupils than schools that made full use of the money, and perhaps gave a little extra from their main budget to ensure that children were fully included. In response, it was noted that:

- Since the closure of Ysgol Coed Menai and Bryn Llwyd Referral Unit in Bangor and Glan Wnion Referral Unit in Dolgellau, the secondary sector received around £1.2m of inclusion grant for the inclusion of children and to ensure that children were supported within schools, thereby reducing exclusions and improving attendance.
- Children's needs had changed over the years with schools now supporting more children with emotional needs and vulnerability in their ability to attend school, etc., so that there was little or no provision left for children with actual behavioural problems.
- Although children's needs had intensified, the grant had remained the same.
- The use of the grant was monitored to an extent. Further monitoring work was desirable because, in times of financial austerity, it could be tempting for many headteachers to use the money for other purposes within their schools, such as providing extra lessons to the higher tier. This was the sort of thing the officers would be asked to do next year.

It was asked whether there was a risk that some schools with a sixth form (which was funded by Medr – The Commission for Tertiary Education and Research) used money from their main budget to subsidise the sixth form. In response, it was noted that this could happen, but that it was up to school governing bodies to decide on the use of

their core funds. It was noted that it could also happen to the contrary with Medr grant funding subsidising the core budget to an extent.

Concern was expressed that Years 7-11 pupils could miss out if the school's core funds were used to subsidise the sixth form. In response, it was suggested that this was a matter for councillors who were members of school governing bodies to raise at their governors' meetings if they wished.

The Department was urged to try to ensure that additional learning needs schools were protected from any cuts once again, as they received far less money than other schools in Wales. In response, it was noted that while no promise could be given, the Department would do its best to ensure that.

It was noted that it was presumed that the reduction in child numbers would be significantly higher in Dwyfor and Meirionnydd compared to Arfon, which was more urban, and it was asked if it would be possible to share data on a school-by-school basis with members to see the extent of the decline in rural areas. In response, it was agreed to share the rolling data on child numbers across all sectors with members.

It was noted that some schools had managed to protect themselves from cuts in the past by using balances, but as their balances reduced, the situation would become more difficult. In response, it was noted:

- That a number of schools made use of balances to set budgets.
- That the Department advised schools on staffing changes well in advance and that the use of balances was helpful to facilitate the change.
- That schools were not allowed to set budgets using balances without having a meaningful discussion about their plans for the times when those balances ran out.
- That the conversation was becoming increasingly difficult as child numbers also fell.

The Department was thanked for the support given to headteachers going through the process of dismissing staff due to redundancy and also as they set their budgets year on year. In response, it was noted:

- That there was a lot of support and assistance available for the redundancy process, and that the unions and the finance, education and human resources officers were to be thanked for their exceptionally good work in supporting the schools.
- That the redundancy process now started in January, rather than November, so that the situation on the financial allocation was clearer.
- That there were still large balances in some schools and that this was good in the sense that those schools had been able to be prudent in their use of funding.
- That levels of balances in Gwynedd remained quite high overall, but not in all schools.

RESOLVED

- 1. To accept the report and note the observations.**
- 2. To ask the Education Department to share with committee members:**
 - (a) the rolling data per school;**
 - (b) regular updates on the development of the Gwynedd Education Strategy.**
- 3. That the Committee scrutinises the draft Education Strategy when timely.**

6. EDUCATION TRANSPORT

Submitted - the report of the Cabinet Member for Education:

- to explain the background and rationale for the historic overspending in education transport;
- to report on progress and the actions that have been taken in response to the situation; as well as
- to present options being considered in terms of future education transport arrangements to try to rationalise and reduce costs where practicable.

The Cabinet Member set out the context and then gave members the opportunity to ask questions and offer observations.

It was noted that it was recognised that there was a shortage of taxis in the Meirionnydd area in particular and that this was bound to be generating high costs for the Council. It was asked what was intended to be done in terms of that. In response, it was noted:

- That there was a shortage of transport providers in many areas which could lead to higher prices for provision as the driver or taxi had to travel from a greater distance to do the work.
- That the report referred to a number of practical steps that could be taken in relation to the situation and that the Department was looking at all possible options going forward.

With reference to the programme of work in paragraph 4.1.1 of the report which refers to revisiting the transport arrangements of Additional Learning Needs learners, the Department was asked not to put these children and young people in a box and to acknowledge that they had different disabilities, and not just physical disabilities. It was noted that children and young people with neurodiverse conditions needed to be considered, and to seek legal advice before formulating any criteria or plan for ALN learners. In response, it was noted:

- That the reference in the report to revisiting ALN learner transport arrangements was more to do with revisiting the timetable rather than the provision, so that provision could be tendered earlier for these children and young people in order to get the best price.
- That in terms of the wider comment on ALN transport, the needs of all children had to be considered of course and it was not thought that that would change in any arrangements that were made, but possibly that we were looking at a different and slightly more cost effective way of providing transport in the future.
- That a number of recent conversations had been held with Ysgol Hafod Lon in terms of identifying the needs of different children and identifying which children would be able to travel together, which children would not be suitable to do so and which children needed chaperones, etc.

It was noted that, looking at the plan, it had to be recognised that any minor change such as a taxi change could be harmful to ALN learners. In response, it was noted that this was going to have to be addressed going forward to ensure that the needs of the learners on the journey were met which is why, when going out to tender, we needed to be clearer about our requirements and expectations for those learners.

The Cabinet Member noted that:

- There was agreement with the comment that consideration also needed to be given to the needs of learners with neurodiverse conditions and that it was important to consult fully on this with experts in the field.
- Everything had to be done to avoid a negative impact on anyone, and to be flexible so that the routine could be adapted for individuals with different needs.

- If change had to be introduced, that change was to be communicated clearly and phased in so that the learner had time to become familiar with the change, and also be involved in the consultation.

It was noted that there was concern in south Meirionnydd that young people may have to pay for transport to Coleg Meirion Dwyfor and that the bus timetables did not correspond to the college day. In response, it was noted that there had been recent changes to the public transport timetables in Meirionnydd and that the Department would have to review the timetables again and see how locations could be better served in that part of the county.

Post-16 transport to the colleges was identified as being essential for young people in the Meirionnydd and Dwyfor area as there was no sixth form in the schools. It was suggested that the Cabinet Member for Education be requested to contact the Welsh Government in the context of introducing a free travel pass for young people 16-21 years old to reduce the pressure on the Council to provide free transport, and to facilitate travel to work, to college or sixth form. In response, the Cabinet Member indicated that he welcomed the request and that the young people of Gysda were also lobbying for a free travel pass to be introduced for young people.

With reference to paragraph 3.3 of the report, a further explanation regarding out-of-county transportation was requested. In response, it was noted that a very small number of pupils with profound needs attended educational specialist provisions across north Wales, and some with very profound needs travelled further than that. Taxi transport was provided to take them to the setting on Mondays and to bring them back home on Fridays.

It was asked why transport costs to special schools had doubled in a year. In response, it was noted that that was due to an increase in child numbers and provider cost.

It was asked whether the Council provided any non-statutory transport. In response, it was noted:

- That the Council's empty seats scheme was a non-statutory scheme that allowed anyone wishing to have a seat that was empty to pay for it, but as it was possible that that seat would not be empty the following year, that created problems for families and young people in terms of consistency and continuity of transport for individuals.
- That the other non-statutory element was the 16+ travel pass.

It was asked, as school budgets were under pressure, whether there was a risk that parents might try to move their children to a special school rather than keep them in a mainstream school, thereby creating more transport costs for the Authority. In response, it was noted that access to special schools was about the needs of the children rather than the desire of the parents and that there was a moderation panel and a very rigorous process for determining access to those schools.

It was noted that paragraph 3.5 of the report referred to a tendering process every five years for bus provision, but that paragraph 4.2 reported that there had been re-tendering to save money. It was asked whether that was fair to the local bus companies who had expected that their contract would last for five years. In response, it was noted that:

- As with any tender agreement, there was a clause within the documents that allowed the Council to re-tender the provision if circumstances changed, and that the providers were aware of those rights.

- The Council did not break any rules. There was possibly a knock-on effect on local companies, but the Council was required to provide a service in accordance with its needs.

It was asked whether it was possible to predict the extent of the reduction in child numbers over the term of the contract so that providers were aware when tendering that the demand for their service could diminish. In response, it was noted that the Integrated Transport Unit could predict up to a point, but circumstances beyond the Council's control could also change, for example, changes to public bus routes could abolish the need for the service as a public bus followed a similar route.

On a point of accuracy, it was pointed out that two figures in the table in paragraph 3.7 of the report needed to be corrected, and that the Department would send the correct figures to members.

RESOLVED

- 1. To accept the report, noting the observations, particularly the comment in respect of being aware of the specific needs of some groups of children when planning the provision.**
 - 2. To note the importance of the travel provision to the college for young people in Dwyfor and Meirionnydd.**
 - 3. To request that the Cabinet Member for Education contacts the Welsh Government in the context of introducing a free travel pass for young people 16-21 years old to reduce the pressure on the Council to provide free transport, and to facilitate travel to work, to college or sixth form.**
- 7. 2024-25 FORWARD PROGRAMME OF THE EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Submitted – the report of the Scrutiny Advisor inviting the committee to adopt a revised work programme for 2024/25 following a request from the Education Department to slip the 'Immersion Education System' item, scheduled for discussion at this meeting, to the 13 February 2025 meeting due to the evaluation of the system being carried out during this school term. It was noted that a draft report of the findings and any recommendations were anticipated to be available in the New Year. It was also noted that following consulting with the Chair, it was agreed to the request to slip the item to ensure that the item was scrutinised in a timely manner to enable scrutiny to add value.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and offer observations.

It was suggested that this Council was becoming more of an Arfon Council than Cyngor Gwynedd and a request was made for information on what the Council was doing to develop the economy of Dwyfor and Meirionnydd in particular. In response, it was noted that the item 'Gwynedd Economy Plan' was on the agenda of the 13 February 2025 meeting and that this could be one of the specific questions to ask the Department in advance.

The Chair noted that some members had already commented that no items on the economy had been included on the agenda for this meeting and he suggested that the item 'Gwynedd Economy Plan' appeared early on the agenda of the next meeting so that the subject could be duly addressed.

RESOLVED to adopt the amended work programme for 2024/25.

The meeting commenced at 10.30am and concluded at 12.10pm.

Chair

MEETING	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
DATE	13 February 2025
ITEM TITLE	Gwynedd Economy Plan
CABINET MEMBER	Cllr. Medwyn Hughes
AUTHOR OF THE REPORT	Osian Elis, Team Leader (Developing Businesses in Gwynedd) Sioned Williams, Head of Economy and Community Dylan Griffiths, Economic Development Service Manager

1. PURPOSE OF THE ITEM – WHY DOES IT NEED TO BE SCRUTINISED?

1.1. To report on work to-date in developing a new Economy Plan for Gwynedd, inviting the input of Members on the content of this report and on any additional issues they believe are important in shaping the Plan.

2. SUMMARY AND KEY ISSUES

2.1. This report outlines the steps taken by the Economic Development Service to develop a new Economy Plan for Gwynedd. In line with the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, which requires public bodies to consider the Five Ways of Working when developing new policies or strategies, the steps taken to develop the Plan are outlined according to the Five Ways of Working:

- Thinking for the long-term.
- Involvement of stakeholders and residents.
- Prevention.
- Integration with other strategic plans.
- Collaboration with partners.

2.2. Members' input is sought on the content of this report and on any additional issues they believe are important in shaping the Plan. Along with feedback from other stakeholders (Section 5.), the Committee's contributions will help inform the development of the initial draft of the Economic Plan.

3. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3.1. At the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee meeting on 25th January 2024, a report was presented on the Council's progress in delivering the third project priority under the "Prosperous Gwynedd" objective of the corporate plan, the Council Plan (See [Item 5](#)):

"Creating the best possible circumstances in Gwynedd for businesses and community enterprises to thrive, and support the people of Gwynedd into work."

In the report for Item 5, it was concluded that planning would be necessary for the period beyond March 2025, specifically in the form of a new Gwynedd Economy Plan. The [performance report](#) presented to Cabinet in November 2024 outlines the progress made on the work programme of the abovementioned project priority.

3.2. It means that the Council does not currently have a formal strategic plan for the development of Gwynedd's economy as a whole, though regeneration and tourism are addressed specifically in the Regeneration Framework, the Sustainable Tourism Economy Plan and the Slate Plan. The economy is also addressed in *the* Council Plan *under* the "Prosperous Gwynedd" objective, but this is within a Council-wide context. It requires a long-term, high-level plan specifically for the purpose of economic development, with a vision and approach that addresses the economy of Gwynedd as a whole.

3.3. Developing this type of plan is crucial given the anticipated changes in the business and investment programmes of the Welsh Government and the UK Government. This uncertainty is identified in the Council's corporate risk register. In this context, the Economy Plan will provide strategic direction tailored to the opportunities and challenges specific to Gwynedd, ensuring continuity regardless of shifts in regional and national funding arrangements. Additionally, the plan will serve as a key tool for engaging with strategic partners, clearly outlining Gwynedd's economic priorities, and securing the necessary resources and support to achieve them.

4. THINKING FOR THE LONG-TERM

4.1. To ensure the Plan's long-term relevance, the following issues have been identified:

4.1.1. The sectoral and employment profile of the economy in Gwynedd demonstrates a relatively narrow industry base. The public sector is the largest employer, with over a third (36%) of workers employed in public services – higher than the averages for Wales and North Wales. Agriculture, forestry, and fishing account for 19% of enterprises in Gwynedd, double the proportion in Wales and four times the UK average (5%), and accommodation and food services represent 13% of enterprises, twice the UK figure. These figures reflect the rural nature of the economy in Gwynedd, as does the relatively low share of enterprises (6%) in professional, technical, scientific, and administrative sectors (UK average: 14%) and the small proportion of workers (5%) in manufacturing.¹

4.1.2. Due to the high reliance on seasonal industries, a high proportion of workers in Gwynedd hold part-time jobs (2023).

¹ 2021 Census (ONS) – [Employment by industry](#); Office for National Statistics (ONS), dated 25 September 2024, ONS website, statistical bulletin, [UK business; activity, size and location: 2024](#).

	Part-time	Full-time
Gwynedd	41%	59%
Wales	34%	66%
UK	21%	69%

Source: [ONS Business Register and Employment Survey](#).

- 4.1.3. The percentage of people who are self-employment in Gwynedd (13%) is higher than the Welsh (8%) and UK (9%) averages.² Additionally, most businesses are small, with 77% of enterprises employing four people or fewer.³
- 4.1.4. Gwynedd's productivity lags behind Wales and the UK, with Gross Value Added (GVA) per capita at £20,950, compared to £22,380 for Wales and £30,221 for the UK.⁴
- 4.1.5. Partly as a result, Gwynedd faces low wages, with a full-time weekly salary of £573 (Wales: £636; UK: £682) and a gross household income of £17,430 (Wales: £18,028; UK: £21,679).⁵
- 4.1.6. Despite a lower unemployment rate than the Welsh and UK averages, Gwynedd experiences high levels of poverty and socio-economic disadvantage. According to the latest data of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) (2019), poverty is widespread across rural and urban areas in Gwynedd, with worsening deprivation since 2014 in some communities; and with parts of Bangor and Caernarfon ranking among the 10% most deprived areas in Wales.⁶ Gwynedd has the highest levels of fuel poverty in Wales and, reflecting the seasonal nature of employments, Universal Credit claims are higher in winter and lower in summer.
- 4.1.7. Gwynedd faces a major demographic challenge with an ageing population and significant youth outmigration. Between 2011 and 2021, the population aged over 65 grew by 8.6%,⁷ and in the period between 2001 and 2022, negative net migration among individuals aged 15-39 was equivalent to c. 3,600 leaving Gwynedd.⁸ This has led to the following decline in the working-age population:

² ONS Annual Population Survey (Oct. 2023 – Sept. 2024),

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157384/report.aspx>

³ Office for National Statistics (ONS), dated 25 September 2024, ONS website, statistical bulletin, [UK business: activity, size and location: 2024](#).

⁴ Gwynedd Council, *Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee Report* (2024):

<https://democratiaeth.gwynedd.llyw.cymru//documents/g4895/Pecyn%20adroddiadau%20cyhoeddus%2025ain-lon-2024%2010.30%20Pwyllgor%20Craffu%20Addysg%20ac%20Economi.pdf?T=10&LLL=1>

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Statistics for Wales, *Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2019, Findings Report* (2019). [Online]:

<https://www.llyw.cymru/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2020-06/mynegai-amddifadedd-lluosog-cymru-2019-adroddiad-canlyniadau.pdf>.

⁷ 2021 Census (ONS) – <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censuspopulationchange/W06000002/>

⁸ StatsCymru, [Internal migration statistics](#) (ONS).

Age Group	2011	2021	+/- %
Ages 16-24	16,723	14,260	-14.7%
Ages 25-34	12,532	13,127	+4.7%
Ages 35-49	22,808	18,659	-18.2%
Ages 50-64	23,720	24,655	+3.9%
Total working age (16-64 years)	75,783	70,701	-6.7%

Source: Cyngor Gwynedd, [Llechen Lân](#) (2024, p. 9).

It represents a reduction of c. 5,000 in the number of workers in Gwynedd. The working age population is likely to continue to fall, exacerbating existing recruitment challenges across the economy.

4.1.8. Gwynedd has the highest proportion of Welsh speakers (64.4%) in Wales and, according to the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities, has the highest proportions of Welsh speakers in the following industries:

- Public administration, education and health (84%).
- Agriculture (84%).
- Construction industry (74%).

The Commission states that any changes in these Industries could have structural impacts on the vitality of the Welsh language. As such, in terms of the relationship between Welsh and the economy, these industries are important – and there is an opportunity to increase the use and visibility of Welsh more widely across the economy.⁹

4.1.9. Advances in digital technologies, e.g., artificial intelligence, are likely to create new opportunities and challenges. It requires digital skills among employees and adequate broadband connectivity across the county. Access to high-speed broadband connectivity has improved in Gwynedd but remains relatively weak in some rural areas.

4.1.10. Gwynedd has strong potential in several high-value industries which either have a presence already or present opportunities for new developments. According to a report commissioned by the Council in 2020, the following industries were recognised:

- Creative and digital (e.g., audio and music, television and video production).
- Professional and advisory services.
- Green and clean industries.
- Life sciences.

⁹ Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities, *Empowering Communities, Strengthening the Welsh Language: The Report of the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities on communities with a higher density of Welsh speakers* (2024, pgs. 23. [Online]: <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2024-08/empowering-communities-strengthening-the-welsh-language.pdf>

- Advanced manufacturing.
- Aerospace.

4.1.11. Climate change is among the most significant challenges of our time. It will create economic problems for Gwynedd, requiring preventative action through decarbonisation and the promotion of green business practices.

5. INVOLVEMENT – INPUT FROM THE PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDERS

5.1. To identify the opportunities, challenges and issues facing the residents, communities and businesses of Gwynedd, as well as the Council’s strategic partners, we sought input from a wide range of stakeholders. The key messages gathered are outlined below:

5.1.1. The Ardal Ni Consultation held in 2022 provided insights into what matters most to Gwynedd residents, the challenges they face and the way in which they would like to see their local areas develop. Across Gwynedd, the following concerns regarding the economy were highlighted:

- Lack of high-wage and full-time employment opportunities.
- A fragile local economy and the need for greater business support.
- Rising poverty levels and the high cost of living.
- Youth migration and the lack of local opportunities for young people.
- Deteriorating high streets.
- A desire for a sustainable visitor economy.

Residents expressed a strong desire for a more prosperous and resilient economy – one that offers well-paid, full-time jobs while safeguarding the Welsh language and environment.

5.1.2. In 2024, the Council conducted a Business Survey to gather input from local businesses regarding their experiences, future intentions and challenges. A total of 130 businesses across 16 industries responded, with accommodation and hotel enterprises being slightly overrepresented (38.5%) among the respondents. The key findings include:

- 43.1% aim to grow their business, 23.1% wish to maintain their current position, while 13.1% anticipate closure.
- 36.2% have already faced recruitment difficulties.
- 65.7% expect future challenges in recruiting individuals with the right skills and experience.
- 40.7% cite rising energy costs as a major concern.
- 13% identify declining customer demand as a challenge.
- 29.1% express concerns over new Welsh Government and Council regulations.
- 28.5% seek marketing support.
- 21.5% require assistance with digital development.

- 16.2% request support for Welsh-language marketing, while 15.4% are interested in Welsh-language training.

5.1.3. A series of meetings have also been held with strategic partners inside and outside the Council, with the aim of identifying challenges and opportunities in the economic development field. This includes the main public bodies of the county, large employers and representatives of the private sector. This engagement is ongoing, but key themes emerging so far include:

- Short-term funding is a problem.
- The importance of maximizing the value and volume of public spending locally.
- Part-time and low-wage employment is a problem and contributes to high poverty levels.
- Potential to grow the size and productivity of existing businesses in Gwynedd.
- Potential for growth in high-value industries.
- Population ageing and youth migration pose challenges to the economy and the future of the Welsh language.
- The local economy must work for the benefit of Gwynedd's residents.

6. PREVENATION – PREVENTING PROBLEMS FROM ARISING OR WORSENING

6.1. Based on key findings from research and Public and stakeholder engagement, the Economic Development Service has identified a series of desired changes in Gwynedd's economy, to be incorporated in due course into the content of the *Economy Plan*:

- Diversify the economy by expanding into a broader range of industries, including high-value sectors.
- Improve transport and rural digital connectivity to enhance accessibility and economic opportunities.
- Unlock and support the potential of existing businesses and enterprises in Gwynedd.
- Increase per capita productivity through innovation and investment.
- Improve wages and reduce reliance on seasonal, precarious employment.
- Lower levels of poverty and socio-economic disadvantage across the region.
- Encourage young people to stay or return to live and work in Gwynedd, while also supporting older residents who wish to continue working and contributing.
- Foster an ecologically sustainable, low-carbon economy that supports environmental well-being.
- Enhance the use and visibility of the Welsh language in the economy and daily life.

This approach prioritises purpose-driven growth, not growth for its own sake; aiming to create an inclusive, sustainable economy that maximises benefits for the people of Gwynedd while protecting and strengthening the Welsh language and environment.

Ultimately, the goal is to develop the economy in a way that enhances the well-being of Gwynedd's residents.

7. INTEGRATION – ENSURING ALIGNMENT WITH OTHER STRATEGIC PLANS

7.1. To ensure that the Gwynedd Economy Plan aligns with other strategies, we have considered the broader strategic context within which the Plan will be located:

7.1.1. Within the Council, it means responding to the strategic direction set for the economy in the "Prosperous Gwynedd" objective of the Council Plan:

"Strengthening the economy and supporting the people of Gwynedd to earn a decent salary."

The sustainable development principles found in the plans that the Council is already implementing in the field of economy—The Sustainable Visitor Economy Plan, The Slate Plan, and the Regeneration Framework—should also be incorporated.

7.1.2. Conversations have also been had with the Council's Language Officers and the Procurement Unit to ensure alignment with the corporate Language Strategy and the new Procurement Plan currently in development. Similarly, the Local Public Service Board Programme Manager has been consulted to consider the Board's Wellbeing Objectives, specified Local Wellbeing Plan, 2023-28.

7.1.3. A formal assessment will be conducted in due course to evaluate the contribution of the Gwynedd Economy Plan to the Council's Seven Well-being Objectives, as specified in the Council Plan.

8. COLLABORATION – WORKING WITH PARTNERS

8.1. Collaboration will be important during the implementation phase of the Economy Plan in order to maximise its value.

8.1.1. Considerable engagement has already taken place to generate buy-in and interest in the Plan among partners. To this extent, conversations have been had with local, regional and national stakeholders, with the aim of including them throughout the lifetime of the Plan – e.g., major local employers, public bodies and higher education and further institutions, businesses and community initiatives, and the Welsh Government and the UK Government.

8.1.2. Given the growing emphasis on regional collaboration in the economic development field, particularly in North Wales through the Corporate Joint-Committee and the Ambition Board, but also in the West as part of the ARFOR Partnership, principles of joint working must be embedded throughout the implementation of the Plan.

9. IMPACT ON EQUALITY, THE WELSH LANGUAGE, AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC RESPONSIBILITY

9.1. Comprehensive equality and linguistic assessments will be prepared as appendices to the

Economic Plan in due course. The Council's Equality and Language Officers will be consulted to ensure these assessments are thorough and well-informed.

10. NEXT STEPS

- 10.1. Upon receiving feedback from Members, the Economic Development Service will begin drafting the Gwynedd Economy Plan, with the aim of presenting it to the Cabinet for adoption at its meeting on 8th April this year.

MEETING	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
DATE	13 February 2025
TITLE	Education Language Policy – the engagement procedure
REASON TO SCRUTINISE	To receive an update on the engagement process in the context of the Education Language Policy
AUTHOR	Rhys Meredydd Glyn, Head of Gwynedd Immersion Education System
CABINET MEMBER	Cllr Dewi Jones

1. Why does it need to be scrutinised?

- 1.1** This report is presented in response to a request from members of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee to receive a report on the engagement process in the context of the new Education Language Policy.

2. What exactly needs to be scrutinised?

- 2.1** This report is intended to present information on the engagement process in the context of the new Education Language Policy, and then report on the findings of the engagement.

3. Summary of the Key Matters

- 3.1** This report summarises the engagement process in respect of the Education Language Policy.

4. Background / Context

- 4.1** Cyngor Gwynedd has a long history of pioneering in the field of Welsh and Bilingual education and this pioneering has ensured that Gwynedd's young people within the local authority's schools have received wide-ranging opportunities to become fluently bilingual.

- 4.2** Gwynedd now has the largest number of Welsh speakers of any local authority in Wales, and also has the highest percentage of young people receiving their education in Welsh and bilingually. But at the same time, the linguistic changes taking place in the county, as well as changes in terms of the Welsh Government's influence on education in Wales, make it timely for us to consider reviewing Cyngor Gwynedd's education language policy and have a discussion about which elements of the current policy are working well and where any reforms or changes need to be made.

- 4.3** In order to hold this discussion on Gwynedd's language education policy, a series of meetings were conducted across the authority with a wide range of stakeholders to discuss how the current policy could be improved and strengthened in the context of the 2021 census results and the Welsh Government's current linguistic and educational expectations.
- 4.4** A series of meetings were held across the three regions over a two-month period from October to December 2024. We spent time with a representation from amongst primary, secondary, special and lifelong school headteachers.

Primary Schools:

Arfon: Our Lady's School, Ysgol Hiracl, Ysgol Llandygai, Ysgol Llanllechid, Ysgol Rhosgadfan.

Dwyfor: Ysgol y Gorlan, Ysgol Treferyth, Ysgol Llanbedrog

Meirionnydd: Ysgol Cefn Coch, Ysgol, Talsarnau, Ysgol y Traeth

Special Schools: Ysgol Hafod Lon and Ysgol Pendalar

Secondary Schools:

Arfon: Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen, Ysgol Brynrefail, Ysgol Tryfan and Ysgol Friars, Ysgol Dyffryn Nantlle

Dwyfor: Ysgol Botwnnog, Ysgol Eifionydd, Ysgol Glan y Môr

Meirionnydd: Ysgol y Moelwyn, Ysgol Ardudwy, Ysgol Tywyn

Lifelong Schools: Ysgol Bro Idris, Ysgol Godre'r Berwyn.

- 4.5** Pupils were also welcomed to the engagement meetings to discuss the language policy. Suitable and purposeful background documents were prepared for the age ranges of different learners. We also ensured that the voices of a cross-section of Gwynedd children and young people were listened to in the meetings. We selected children from schools in the Welsh language strongholds in Gwynedd, and also from the more Anglicized areas, including a school that is in the transitional category in terms of the school's Welsh-medium provision.

Primary School Learners: Ysgol Cymerau, Ysgol Bro Hedd Wyn and Ysgol Cae Top

Secondary School Learners: Ysgol Botwnnog, Ysgol y Moelwyn, Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen and Ysgol Tywyn

Special School Learners: Ysgol Hafod Lon.

- 4.6** An engagement meeting was also held for the following representatives:

Language Organisations:

Cylch yr Iaith

Cymdeithas yr Iaith

Dyfodol yr Iaith

RHAG – Parents for Welsh Medium Education

4.7 We also welcomed representatives from the **Gwynedd Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee:**

Councillors: Jina Gwyrfai, Elwyn Jones, Beth Lawton, Richard Glyn Roberts and Rhys Tudur

4.8 The following Councillors were also welcomed, representing the **Language Committee:**

Councillors: Menna Baines, Meryl Roberts, Elfed Wyn ap Elwyn, Alan Jones Evans and Olaf Cai Larsen.

4.9 A meeting was also arranged with representatives from the **Gwynedd Governors' Forum** and also a meeting with the Welsh Language Commissioner's officers.

4.10 Documents were provided to set a context for the discussions, and those documents were distributed in advance to all the representatives (see the Appendices):

1. The Welsh Language and Education Bill
2. Gwynedd Schools Language Policy 2021
3. Article – Golwg 360 'Government should focus more on attitudes to language according to Bangor University research' – Meilyr Jones

5. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

5.1 The aim of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act places a well-being duty on public bodies which is aimed at delivering the seven well-being goals by following the five ways of working.

5.2 The Act places a well-being duty on the Council to carry out sustainable development work by working in cooperation with the 'sustainable development principle'. This means that the impact on people in the future must be considered when making decisions.

5.3 In terms of **collaborating and involving** others, we have already held engagement sessions between October and December 2024, see 4.4 to 4.9 for more information.

5.4 Conducting the engagement process recognises the need to amend the current language policy in light of recent developments including the 2021 census statistics. Acting now provides an opportunity to respond to the situation and try to **prevent** further slippage in the number of Welsh-speaking learners aged 3-15.

- 5.5** Ensuring that the children and young people of Gwynedd develop into confident, bilingual citizens improves opportunities for them educationally, economically, culturally and socially in the **long term** and enriches their experience of living and working through the medium of Welsh in Gwynedd.
- 5.6** Empowering the county's Education language Policy is a solid foundation for developing bilingual citizens and complies with the status of the Welsh language in the context of Public Bodies.

6. Impact on Equality Characteristics, the Welsh Language and the Socio-Economic Duty

- 6.1** An Equality Impact Assessment is not required in response to the engagement work relating to the Language Policy. However, we will be expected to produce an Equality Impact Assessment on any decisions made by the Council as part of formulating a new Education Language Policy. We will give consideration to all the comments received as part of the engagement and amend the Education Language Policy and the Equality Impact Assessment as appropriate according to the comments received.

7. Next Steps

- 7.1** Following the engagement process the officers of the Education Department are working with Meirion Prys Jones to produce a draft language policy that will incorporate Gwynedd's ambition and be influenced by all the observations from the engagement.
- 7.2** It is intended to present the draft along with a specific strategy to support the implementation of the policy on 10 April 2025 at the Education Scrutiny Committee before submitting it to the Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet.

Appendices

1. The Welsh Language and Education Bill
2. The Gwynedd Schools Language Policy 2021
3. Article – Golwg 360 'Government should focus more on attitudes to language according to Bangor University research' – Meilyr Jones
4. Cyngor Gwynedd Language Policy – Meeting Context

Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill Bill Summary

September 2024



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Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill

Bill Summary

September 2024

Authors:

Osian Bowyer and Michael Dauncey

The Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill proposes changes to the way Welsh language education is planned and delivered, with an aim that all school pupils become independent Welsh language users by the time they reach the end of compulsory school age.

The Bill aims to support the Welsh Government's target of one million Welsh speakers by 2050 ("Cymraeg 2050"), which it places on a statutory footing. It seeks to strengthen the way Welsh language education – in both Welsh-medium and English-medium settings – is planned at a national, local and school level. It would also establish a means of describing and measuring individuals' Welsh language abilities.

This briefing summarises the provisions of the Bill, its background and what the Welsh Government hope to achieve. It is intended to support and inform the Senedd's scrutiny of the legislation.



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1. Introduction

The Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill was introduced to the Senedd on 15 July 2024.

The Welsh Government had made a commitment in its **Programme for Government** to “legislate to strengthen and increase our Welsh language education provision”. It was also a key feature of the **Co-operation Agreement** between the Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru between December 2021 and May 2024.

Introducing the Bill to the Senedd, Eluned Morgan MS thanked Cefin Campbell MS, who was the Plaid Cymru Designated Member during the period of the co-operation agreement, for “the close collaboration on the Bill.”

Setting out some of the details of the Bill, **Eluned Morgan MS noted the proposals** are “about giving every child in Wales a fair chance of becoming Welsh speakers”. The Bill would also set “firm expectations regarding Welsh language education across all schools, whatever the medium of education”.

The Bill’s **Explanatory Memorandum** (“the EM”) states that the key objective of the Bill is to contribute to the Cymraeg 2050 aim of one million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050 by ensuring:

all pupils are independent Welsh language users, at least, by the time they reach the end of compulsory school age.

The Bill proposes to **strengthen legislation around planning of Welsh language education to** “improve the linguistic outcomes of our pupils” including through a **National Framework for Welsh Language Education and Learning Welsh**.

It would also establish a **standard method for describing Welsh language ability** based on the **Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)**. The Bill designates **three categories of schools** based on their language and provides for respective **requirements to be set for the amount of Welsh language education provided by each category**.

The Bill also proposes to provide a **statutory basis for the target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050** and establish a **National Institute for Learning Welsh**. The new statutory body will be responsible for supporting people to learn Welsh throughout their lives.

The Welsh Government's case for why the Bill is necessary

The Welsh Government places the Bill firmly in the context of the **Cymraeg 2050 agenda**, under which there are two main targets:

- One million Welsh speakers by 2050; and
- an increase in the proportion of the population that speak Welsh daily and can speak more than just a few words of Welsh from 10% (in 2013 to 2015) to 20% by 2050.

As the **Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities has recently reported**, “education is the policy area with the greatest potential for creating new Welsh speakers” and “no other policy field has as much influence on the ability to acquire and use language”. The Commission also “came to the unanimous view” that “Welsh-medium provision in many Welsh-speaking communities is not intensive enough to sustain Welsh as a community language in the future” and urged that “huge steps forward will have to be taken”.

There is an increasing recognition that Welsh-medium schools will not be able to deliver the required numbers of Welsh speakers alone. This requires a transformation of the way Welsh is taught in English-medium schools. Cymraeg 2050 also includes an objective of transforming how Welsh is taught to all learners so that at least 70% of learners report by 2050 that they can speak Welsh by the time they leave school.

The **EM explains** that Cymraeg 2050 requires reviewing the legislation which underpins the Welsh language to “ensure it offers a strong foundation for promoting and facilitating the use of Welsh”. A combination of statutory and non-statutory mechanisms have already been used to further Welsh-medium education such as **Welsh in Education Strategic Plans** (WESPs), through which local authorities are tasked with planning their Welsh language education provision. However, as the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations (**CCWLSIR**) **Committee reported in May 2023**, the WESPs framework and architecture needs strengthening and reforming if the education system is to make the necessary contribution to the Cymraeg 2050 agenda.

The **Welsh Government's response to the CCWLSIR Committee's report** said its proposals would provide a “firmer basis for the planning and delivery of Welsh in education both nationally [through the National Framework for Welsh Language Education and Learning Welsh] and locally [through the revised system of Welsh in Education Strategic Plans]”.

The **Welsh Government concludes in the EM:**

Ultimately, if legislation is not made, there is a risk that there will not be sufficient progress towards the national targets set out in the Welsh language strategy, and that the Welsh Government's overarching aim of one million Welsh speakers by 2050 is not achieved.

The Bill at a glance

The **Bill (as introduced)** has 55 sections, arranged into six parts, and has two schedules.

- **Part 1** – Promotion and facilitation of use of the Welsh language
- **Part 2** – Describing Welsh language ability
- **Part 3** – Welsh language education
- **Part 4** – Planning Welsh language education and learning
- **Part 5** – National Institute for Learning Welsh
- **Part 6** – General
- **Schedule 1** – Types of Welsh language user and common reference levels
- **Schedule 2** – National Institute for Learning Welsh

The **Explanatory Memorandum** includes a section on the purpose and intended effect of the Bill, details of consultation undertaken (most notably the publication of a **White Paper** in 2023) and a summary of powers to make subordinate legislation including the Senedd scrutiny procedures they will be subject to.

The **Statement of Policy Intent** provides further details on the subordinate legislation that must or may be made under the Bill, while the **Explanatory Notes** (included as Annex 1 of the EM) are provided to assist those reading the Bill and are to be read in conjunction with it. The EM also includes a **Regulatory Impact Assessment** (RIA) which provides a summary of estimated costs and benefits of the Bill.

Schedule 1 of the Bill includes Table 1, which reproduces the summary of the common reference levels contained in **Appendix 1 to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment - Companion Volume (2020)**. However, it has been amended to reflect that it is a code for describing Welsh language ability.

There is also a power in section 5 of the Bill that enables the Welsh Ministers to amend the Table in Schedule 1 “in response to changes to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages”.

2. Summary of the Bill's provisions and policy intentions

Part 1 – Promoting and facilitating of use of the Welsh language

Section 1 of the Bill places the **Cymraeg 2050 ambition** “to increase the number of Welsh speakers in Wales to one million by 2050” on a statutory footing. Up until now, the target has been a policy aspiration set out in the Welsh Government’s Welsh Language Strategy. The Bill would place a duty on the Welsh Ministers to include the target to increase the number of Welsh speakers in any future Welsh language strategy.

Currently, **section 78 of the Government of Wales Act 2006** (“GOWA”) places a requirement on the Welsh Ministers to adopt a strategy setting out how they propose to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language. **The Welsh Government believes that the Bill** “aligns with, and expands on, the section 78 provision to strengthen the accountability of Welsh Ministers in setting, and responding to, specific targets”. While the Welsh Government notes in the **EM that it is “fully committed”** to the target of a million Welsh speakers, a target set in a strategy could be “diluted or abolished” altogether. By placing the target on a statutory footing, it is hoped that it’ll remove the risk of it being “watered down”.

In addition, the Welsh Ministers will be required to set targets to increase the social use of Welsh and its use in the workplace, whilst also establishing targets to increase the provision of Welsh language education. There are existing requirements on the Welsh Ministers to publish a ‘plan’ annually (section 78(9) of GOWA) describing the steps the Welsh Government will take to contribute to meeting the targets it has set. The Welsh Government hope that this annual plan will provide those sectors covered by the Bill, including Welsh learning providers, schools and employers, with “clear guidance” on the “steps to be taken to realise those targets”.

Reporting on targets and calculating the number of Welsh speakers

Section 2 and 3 of the Bill place new duties on the Welsh Ministers to report at least once every five years with an “analysis of the situation of the Welsh language in Wales”, and set out the manner for calculating the number of Welsh speakers.

The Bill gives the Welsh Ministers powers to make regulations that specify the basis of data to be used to calculate the number of Welsh speakers. There are several

sources of data currently available and used, including the **Annual Population Survey (APS)**, **National Survey for Wales** and the **Census**. These data sources often provide very different and divergent results on Welsh language ability. The **Welsh Government and the Office for National Statistics (ONS) have been working together** to understand the reasons for the divergence that has been identified in reported Welsh language skills.

Up until now, the Census has been considered the authoritative source of data on the number of Welsh speakers in Wales, and, according to **Cymraeg 2050**, is the “basis for our aspiration of a million Welsh speakers”. However, it is unlikely that the Census will be conducted in the same way in future. The **ONS is considering** options for “using other sources of data and providing more timely statistical information”.

Regardless of how the data is collated, provisions in section 3(2) make it clear that calculating whether a person is a Welsh speaker will be on the basis of self-assessment or a self-assessment in the case of children under 16, an assessment by a parent or carer, or any other method that the Welsh Ministers may specify in regulations.

The Welsh Ministers will be required to **publish guidance on assessments** “for the purpose of assisting individuals to complete assessments, including a self-assessment of their Welsh language ability”.

Reviewing the Welsh language standards

Section 4 of the Bill also places a duty on the Welsh Ministers to review the **Welsh language standards**, specified under section 26 of the **Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011**, within 12 months of publishing the Code describing Welsh language ability. One of the **aims of the provisions in section 4, according to the Welsh Government**, is to “embed the common reference levels in the way in which organisations subject to the standards plan the Welsh language skills of their workforce”. In undertaking a review of the standards, the Welsh Ministers must consult the Welsh Language Commissioner.

The new requirement to review the standards doesn’t place any obligation on the Welsh Ministers to amend them however. Any decision to amend Welsh language standards regulations would be subject to further consultation according to the EM.

Ultimately, the **Welsh Government says** that the provision will help “ensure the legal infrastructure supporting the Welsh language is coherent” and that the new

provisions in the Bill and the standards “intertwine and are compatible with each other”.

Part 2 – Describing Welsh language ability

Types of Welsh language user and common reference levels

Part 2 of the Bill seeks to establish a new framework for describing Welsh language ability. It’s based on the **Council of Europe’s Common European Framework of Reference for Languages** (“the CEFR”) and seeks to provide a single standard method for describing Welsh language ability.

Table 1 of Schedule 1 of the Bill specifies three types of Welsh language user (Proficient, Independent and Basic) and common reference levels which describe their ability in Welsh based on six levels (A1 to C2). These are grouped as follows:

- Basic user (A1 and A2);
- Independent user (B1 and B2); and
- Proficient user (C1 and C2).

The **CEFR was developed as a tool for practitioners** in the field of foreign/second languages and sought to provide a “coherent and comprehensive basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses and curriculum guidelines”. It was also a tool to assist with designing teaching and learning materials and the assessment of foreign language proficiency.

The Welsh Government says that public bodies and stakeholders currently **use different methods to describe and measure Welsh language skills**, and that this makes it “difficult to embed a single consistent regime for the purpose of language planning”. The use of the CEFR framework, **according to the Welsh Government**, would provide a “platform to improve consistency in the way Welsh language ability is recorded in data collection exercises”. This, it says, will eventually enable better “workforce planning and measuring progress towards Cymraeg 2050 targets”.

The **Welsh Government also claims that the proposals would provide** “learners, parents, teachers, and employers with a common understanding of the language ability expected at each stage of the journey towards learning Welsh”. This would, it says, help “facilitate continuity planning” as primary pupils transition to secondary school and beyond compulsory education.

While some bodies, such as the National Centre for Learning Welsh, are already

using the CEFR framework, it will be less familiar to others. This may lead to **“short-term disruption for some”** according to the Welsh Government, as well as some costs for those who will need to update their procedures to align with the new framework.

Sections 6 and 7 of the Bill place a requirement on the Welsh Ministers to prepare and publish a Code which describes Welsh language ability based on the CEFR. This should **set out how the common reference levels should be used** and describe the “specific characteristics of each reference level”. The Welsh Government hopes that the Code will establish a “standard method” for describing Welsh language ability based on the CEFR.

The Bill also provides the Welsh Ministers with a power to amend, by regulations, the Table in Schedule 1 where appropriate. However, the powers are limited to making changes where it is in response to amendments to the CEFR by the Council of Europe.

Part 3 – Welsh language education

This part of the Bill deals with schools’ Welsh language provision and how this is delivered at a school level. Part 4 provides for a new system of planning Welsh language education and learning at a national and local level (discussed in the next section of this briefing).

Schools’ language categories

Section 9 of the Bill provides that each maintained school, excluding special schools, is designated one (or more) of the following three language categories:

- “Primarily Welsh Language”;
- “Dual Language”;
- “Primarily English Language, partly Welsh”.

For the purposes of the Bill, “Welsh language education” means either the teaching of Welsh as a subject, or teaching and learning through the medium of Welsh. A school’s language category only applies to pupils of compulsory school age and therefore does not apply to a school’s sixth form or nursery provision.

A school’s language category will determine the amount of Welsh language education provided in the school (section 10 of the Bill) and the school’s “Welsh language learning goal” (sections 11 to 12).

Categorising schools in Wales by language is not new, although this would be the first time they are statutory. Maintained schools have had language categories on a non-statutory basis since 2007. **Up until 2021**, primary schools fell into one of five categories and secondary schools into one of four categories, although one of these (“Bilingual”) had four sub-categories. There was an attempt to simplify the categories with new **non-statutory guidance issued in December 2021**.

The non-statutory guidance sets out three categories for both primary schools and secondary schools. These are broadly the same as those formalised in the Bill, albeit with different wording: 1, English-medium, 2, Dual language and 3, Welsh-medium. There is a further sub-category within Welsh-medium for secondary schools who deliver the highest level of Welsh-medium provision: 3P, Designated Welsh-medium. There are two transitional categories between categories 1 and 2, and categories 2 and 3, with schools encouraged to progress along the language continuum.

In the EM, the Welsh Government says the non-statutory system has “generated enthusiasm among local authorities” and argues it is “now time to put the categories on a stronger footing”. It notes that schools are not required to follow the non-statutory guidance and it is difficult to robustly monitor if the requirements of the categories are being met. The Welsh Government also highlights the importance within the Bill of describing school language categories by outputs as well as inputs. The input is the amount of Welsh language education a school must provide, which is determined by its category (stipulated by section 10), while the output is the Welsh language learning goals in place for each category (sections 11 to 12).

Section 21 of the Bill requires local authorities to maintain and publish a register, giving the language category of each school it maintains and details of any schools that are temporarily exempt from the requirement to provide the minimum amount of education (explained in later sections of this summary.) The EM says a number of local authorities already maintain such information and this should not result in a significantly higher workload than at present.

Amount of Welsh language education provision

Section 10 of the Bill requires the Welsh Ministers to specify, in regulations, the amount of Welsh language education that schools in each category must provide. This will be in the form of a percentage of school sessions for pupils of compulsory school age over a school year, and as a range including a minimum.

Primarily English Language, partly Welsh schools will need to provide Welsh language education for a minimum of 10% of school session time. As stated earlier, this means either the teaching of Welsh as a subject or teaching other subjects through the medium of Welsh. The **Welsh Government says the engagement it has undertaken and statistical work available** “suggests that a minimum of 10% is realistic and fair given the challenges that exist due to a shortage of workforce with sufficient Welsh language skills”.

The EM also notes that the current non-statutory guidance is that English-medium schools should provide 15% of their provision in Welsh. However, this includes both curricular and extracurricular time and imposing a statutory requirement in relation to extra-curricular provision is felt to be impractical due to difficulties in monitoring. The inference given, therefore, is that a minimum 10% of curricular time is a similar expectation to 15% of curricular and extracurricular time.

Section 13 requires the Welsh Ministers to consider at least every five years whether to exercise the power to make regulations to increase the minimum amount of Welsh language education that a Primarily English Language, partly Welsh school must provide. The 10% is therefore seen as a minimum requirement which may be increased over time, provided there is an **“adequate workforce, dedicated resources and effective support”**.

The Bill does not stipulate the minimum amount of Welsh language education for Dual Language and Primarily Welsh Language schools, although these will also be subject to a range set out in regulations. In the **primary sector**, the current non-statutory guidance stipulates at least 50% in Dual Language schools and at least 80% in Welsh-medium schools (learners are immersed in Welsh up to age 7/end of Year 2). In **secondary schools**, the current stipulation for Dual Language schools is at least 40% of pupils undertaking at least 40% in Welsh, while in Welsh-medium schools it is 60% of pupils undertaking at least 70% (all pupils undertaking at least 90% in Designated Welsh-medium schools). All these amounts include both curricular and extracurricular time.

Schools’ Welsh language learning goals

Section 11 of the Bill establishes “Welsh-language learning goals” for schools in each category. These are further described at **paragraph 3.119 of the EM**.

The goals essentially relate to the Welsh language ability level (levels set out in Part 2 of the Bill) that pupils reach in each category of school.

The Welsh language learning goals will be that pupils reach the following levels by the time they finish compulsory education (age 16/end of Year 11):

- **Primarily Welsh Language** schools: pupils to be **“proficient”** Welsh language users, i.e. reach the **C1 or C2** reference level.
- **Dual Language** schools: pupils to be **“independent”** Welsh language users, i.e. reach the **B1 or B2** reference level. The Welsh Ministers will be able to make **regulations upgrading the goal at a future date so that pupils are expected to reach B2 for oral interaction.** (The EM (para 3.75) notes that Cymraeg 2050 places a clear emphasis on oral communication and this is therefore the priority area for Welsh language development.)
- **Primarily English Language, partly Welsh** schools: pupils to be **“basic”** Welsh language users, i.e. are at the **A1 or A2** reference level. Schools’ Welsh language education delivery plans (required by section 14 of the Bill and discussed in the following section of this briefing) will be expected to facilitate continuous improvement. The EM says that the expectation over time will be that the vast majority of pupils will reach A2. The Welsh Ministers will be able to make **regulations upgrading the goal at a future date so that pupils are expected to become independent Welsh language users,** i.e. reach the B1 or B2 reference level, and **B2 for oral interaction.**

The EM states that the timescale for upgrading the Welsh language education goals in Dual Language and Primarily English Language, partly Welsh schools will be based on “appropriate progression being made in these categories” and on “factors such as resources or workforce capacity”. The goals in the two categories will not necessarily be upgraded at the same time.

Section 12 of the Bill uses the provision in the **Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021** for the Welsh Ministers to make arrangements for assessment under the Curriculum for Wales, so that pupils make progress towards a school’s Welsh language learning goal. It also requires the Welsh Ministers to have regard to the Welsh language learning goals when keeping the Progression Code (issued under the 2021 Act) under review.

The Bill provides for Primarily English Language, partly Welsh schools to be granted temporary exemptions to the requirement to provide a minimum of 10% Welsh language education provision (sections 18 and 19 of the Bill).

Schools' Welsh language education delivery plans

Under section 14 of the Bill, school governing bodies must prepare a delivery plan known as a “Welsh language education delivery plan”. This will set out:

- the school's language category;
- the amount of Welsh language education provided at the time of preparing the plan;
- how the governing body will ensure that the school provides Welsh language education in accordance with its language category;
- how the school will promote late immersion education;
- the amount of Welsh language education the school intends to provide for the period of the delivery plan and how this will be maintained and increased when reasonably practicable;
- how, in pursuance of its Welsh language learning goal, the school will promote a Welsh language ethos and culture within the school; promote use of Welsh within the school; and facilitate continuous improvement in its Welsh language education;
- how the governing body will prepare for changing the school's language category, if it intends to do so.

The **EM explains that the aim behind delivery plans** is to “guide schools as they plan their Welsh language education at a practical level”. The Bill gives the Welsh Ministers the power to make regulations further detailing the form and content of such a plan. The EM adds that a template for delivery plans “would be useful” so schools “understand exactly what is expected of them”.

In preparing their delivery plans, the Bill requires school governing bodies to consult specified persons and have regard to the local authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). The school will have to submit their proposed delivery plan to the local authority (at least nine months prior to the start of the plan) who may approve it with or without modifications agreed with the governing body, or reject it and direct the governing body to reconsider it. If rejecting a school's delivery plan, the local authority must give reasons and specify by when the governing body must submit a further draft.

Schools must publish their approved Welsh language education delivery plan. Each delivery plan lasts for three school years. Governing bodies must review their school's plan during this period and submit any amended plan for the local

authority's approval. In amending their delivery plan, a school may not downgrade its language category (section 17).

Exemptions to the minimum amount of Welsh language education

The Welsh Government recognises in the EM that providing at least 10% of education in Welsh will be a “challenge for some schools, for reasons that may be beyond their control”.

Section 18 of the Bill provides for a school, when preparing or amending its first Welsh language education delivery plan, to apply to the local authority for a temporary exemption to the requirement to provide the minimum amount (initially 10%) of Welsh language education. The school's delivery plan must set out the reasons why it is not reasonably practicable to deliver the minimum amount and how it plans to be able to do so in future and when (this must be within the three year period of the plan). Such a temporary exemption is granted by virtue of the local authority approving the school's Welsh language education delivery plan with those caveats included.

Where a school feels it still cannot meet the minimum provision requirement when preparing its second Welsh language education delivery plan, it may seek a further exemption (section 19 of the Bill). If so, the school's draft second delivery plan must set out why this is the case and an updated proposed course of action for addressing this. If the local authority is not satisfied with the explanation, it may instruct the school to reconsider its delivery plan, however its approval of the plan will effectively grant the exemption. The local authority will have to report to the Welsh Government why it approved the school's delivery plan and details of any support offered to the school's governing body.

The **EM explains that the rationale behind sections 18 and 19** is that “it may not be reasonably practicable for some schools to provide the minimum of 10% when that requirement comes into force”. It adds that it may be useful for the Welsh Government to issue guidance to local authorities and schools outlining valid reasons for approving an exemption request.

Special schools

As stated earlier, there is no duty on special schools to provide a specific amount of Welsh language provision, nor to designate themselves a language category. However, they may do so voluntarily and the Bill still requires them to prepare a “Welsh language education plan” setting out the amount of Welsh language

education provided by the school and how they will promote a Welsh language ethos and culture, and use of the language in the school (section 20).

Late immersion education in Welsh

Section 22 of the Bill requires local authorities to encourage demand for late immersion education in Welsh and participation in it. Local authorities must take all reasonable steps to provide late immersion education that meets the demand for it. They must also arrange for information and advice to be provided about the availability of late immersion education to children and parents, schools and other specified persons.

For the purposes of the Bill, “late immersion education” means intensive education in Welsh to children aged over 7 who attend or want to attend a Primarily Welsh Language or Dual Language school. Its purpose is to allow latecomers to access Welsh-medium education at stages beyond Year 2, up to which point children educated in Welsh are fully immersed in the language. It is therefore a key part of supporting learners converting to Welsh-medium education from English-medium education, for example attending a Welsh-medium or Dual Language secondary school, having attended an English-medium primary school.

Part 4 - Planning Welsh language education and learning

This part of the Bill aims to ensure there is a joined-up approach to planning Welsh language education and learning at the national level, the local authority level and the school level.

The Welsh Government says in the EM the policy proposals behind Part 4 are “critical to the success” of the policy proposals behind Part 3 on school language categorisation and delivery plans. The Welsh Government also wants to establish a “clear line of accountability” between national, local and school levels.

National Framework for Welsh Language Education and Learning Welsh

Section 23 of the Bill requires the Welsh Ministers to prepare a framework, setting out how the Welsh Government will implement its Welsh language strategy (which it is required to have under section 78 of GOWA) in relation to Welsh language education, lifelong learning of Welsh and acquisition of the language. This framework will be known as the “National Framework for Welsh Language Education and Learning Welsh”. As the **EM explains, this is in order to ensure arrangements for Welsh language education and lifelong learning** are “designed

in an integrated way in one comprehensive framework”.

The National Framework must set out the steps the Welsh Ministers will take to promote and facilitate the use of Welsh by:

- **increasing** the provision of Welsh language education in schools;
- **improving** the provision of Welsh language education in schools;
- **promoting** education in Primarily Welsh Language and Dual Language category schools and increasing the number of pupils attending these schools;
- ensuring that **training, professional development and support** is available for educational practitioners so the necessary workforce is in place to deliver on targets set by the Welsh Government;
- **facilitating progression** in teaching Welsh as a subject and education through the medium of Welsh between pre-school and compulsory schooling, and between school and post-16 education and training.

The National Framework must cover teaching and learning of Welsh at all ages: childcare and early years education; compulsory schooling; tertiary education; in the workplace and in the community.

The Welsh Government must use the National Framework to set targets for local authorities for implementing the framework in their own area and which reflect national targets and ambitions. Such targets and ambitions may include increasing the number of pupils receiving education in Primarily Welsh Language schools, increasing the number of such schools, and increasing the provision of Welsh language education provided in Dual Language and Primarily English Language, partly Welsh schools. Local authorities must take all reasonable steps to meet these targets.

In setting such targets, the National Framework must include an assessment of the Welsh language education provided at the time in schools in each local authority, an analysis of the amount of Welsh language education needed in order to meet any target set, and an assessment of the number of education practitioners needed in each local authority.

The National Framework may also set targets on the National Institute for Learning Welsh (established under Part 5 of the Bill and discussed in a later section of this briefing) to increase the number of people over compulsory school age learning Welsh and improving the ability of those who are learning Welsh.

The Welsh Ministers must consult persons specified in section 26 of the Bill when preparing or amending the National Framework. They must also include information about the National Framework in the annual report they publish under section 78 of GOWA regarding the Welsh language strategy. They must also set out in the annual plan regarding implementation of the strategy, also published under section 78 of GOWA, how they will implement the National Framework.

The National Framework will cover a period of 10 years and the Welsh Ministers must review it and the targets within it at least every 5 years, amending the framework as necessary (section 25).

Local Welsh in education strategic plans

Section 28 of the Bill requires local authorities to prepare a “local Welsh in education strategic plan” that sets out how they will promote and facilitate Welsh language education and use of Welsh in schools. Local authorities’ strategic plans must also set out how they will take all reasonable steps to meet targets set by the National Framework on Welsh Language Education and Learning Welsh.

The arrangements for local Welsh in education strategic plans under the Bill will reform the existing system of Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs) established under the **School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013** and associated regulations. In its **2023 White Paper**, the Welsh Government signalled a “shift in mindset” to one where “the Welsh Ministers would set the local authority’s strategic aim for planning Welsh in education. The function of the local authority will be to plan and implement”. The White Paper proposed changing the title of WESPs to Welsh in Education Implementation Plans (WEIPs) to reflect that shift in mindset. However, the Bill retains the WESP title, albeit with “local” included. The EM refers to them as “Local Strategic Plans”.

The **EM explains that the purpose for these provisions in the Bill** is to “ensure that there is alignment between the national vision set out in the [National] Framework and the Welsh language education planning work undertaken at a local authority level”. The Welsh Government wants “the Local Strategic Plans to respond to the National Framework targets” and “school delivery plans to respond to the targets of the Local Strategic Plans”.

Shortcomings of the current WESPs system

There has been considerable scrutiny and review of WESPs and the legislative framework underpinning them, including Senedd Committee inquiries in **2015** and

2023, which highlighted a lack of means for the Welsh Government to realise its ambitions for Welsh in education. It was not apparent what Welsh Ministers could do if local authorities' WESPs were not ambitious enough or local authorities were not delivering on the plans they had in place. There was also an **independent review of WESPs** in 2017 and **formation of an Independent Advisory Board**, which led to changes in 2019 including an expectation on local authorities to pursue targets in line with Cymraeg 2050. However, as the **White Paper outlined**:

Despite these reforms following the Board's recommendations, the Board concluded that the current legislative structure no longer supported Welsh in education planning by local authorities to the extent necessary to respond to the long-term national ambition for the Welsh language to reach one million speakers by 2050.

Content of Welsh in education strategic plans

The Bill provides that a local authority's strategic plan must set out how the authority will:

- improve provision of Welsh language education in its schools;
- improve the process of planning the provision of Welsh language education in its area;
- ensure it has sufficient education practitioners working in its area;
- promote and provide information about the Welsh language education provided in Primarily Welsh Language and Dual Language schools in its area;
- meet its duties under section 22 of the Bill regarding late immersion education;
- facilitate progression in Welsh language education between nursery and school education, and between schools and tertiary education.

Local authorities' strategic plans must also include information on the education practitioners in their area and, in the case of future plans, a report on progress made in relation to the previous plan.

Process of making and approving local strategic plans

In preparing their plans, local authorities must have regard to the National Framework for Welsh Language Education and Learning Welsh. They must also consult specified persons including all schools and colleges in their area, Estyn, the National Institute for Learning Welsh (established by this Bill) and the Welsh Language Commissioner.

Local authorities' plans will have effect for five years, although they must set out

action to be taken over 10 years. This reflects a recognition over recent years that the current three year duration of WESPs is too short to have a meaningful impact. During the **CCWLSIR Committee's 2023 inquiry**, there were different views about the pros and cons of a longer period, for example 10 years. Stakeholders felt this would enable more effective long-term planning but that more regular reporting and monitoring was needed to provide the necessary accountability. **The Welsh Government says the 5 year period with a 10 year overview** “strikes the right balance between allowing flexibility to operate over the medium to long term, but with accountability from the requirement to report on progress made at the end of each plan”.

Local authorities must submit a draft of their local strategic plans to the Welsh Ministers, along with a summary of responses to their consultation and the local authority's response to that consultation. The Welsh Ministers may approve the plan with or without modifications agreed with the local authority, or reject it and direct the local authority to reconsider it. If rejecting a local authority's plan, the Welsh Ministers must give reasons and specify by when the governing body must submit a further draft. This is a similar process to the one the Bill puts in place between schools and local authorities regarding approval of a school's Welsh language education delivery plan (discussed earlier).

Welsh Government directions to local authorities to amend their plan

Local authorities must keep their local strategic plans under review (section 32). If the Welsh Ministers consider that a local authority is unlikely to meet a target in the National Framework, they may direct the local authority to consider amending its plan. In such cases, the local authority must either submit an amended plan for the Welsh Ministers' consideration or give reasons for not amending its plan.

Section 33 gives the Welsh Ministers the power to make further provision in relation to local Welsh in education strategic plans through regulations.

Part 5 – National Institute for Learning Welsh

Section 36 of the Bill establishes a new statutory body called the National Institute for Learning Welsh to “facilitate and support people of all ages to learn Welsh”. **The EM states that currently**, there is:

no single body providing strategic leadership for lifelong Welsh language learning. Consequently, support for learning Welsh is split across multiple organisations and partnerships resulting in a lack of continuity across the education sector and different workplaces.

The Welsh Government believes that maintaining the current system would make the overall aim of implementing a single Welsh language skills continuum harder. In addition, as the National Centre for Learning Welsh works on five-yearly procurement cycles, the **Welsh Government doesn't think this provides it with the** "appropriate certainty and longevity for a body that supports Welsh language learning – particularly if that support is extended to the compulsory education sector".

In its **White Paper consultation**, the Welsh Government proposed to expand and redefine the remit of the National Centre for Learning Welsh to "become a specialist body that supports lifelong Welsh language learning, including supporting schools". However, the **summary of responses** to the consultation showed that opinion was divided on the principle of centralising specialist support. Only 37% of respondents to the consultation agreed with the proposal, whilst 39% disagreed. Reasons for and against the proposal can be found in the **Welsh Government's summary of responses**.

The new body would assume the functions of the existing National Centre for Learning Welsh, which supports Welsh language learning for those over compulsory education age (16+). It will also acquire new responsibilities, including:

- planning the development of the education workforce for the purpose of improving Welsh language teaching;
- co-ordinating and commissioning research on teaching or learning Welsh;
- giving advice to any person on teaching or learning Welsh; and
- promoting collaboration between Welsh language learning providers and schools in Wales.

The Bill also enables the Welsh Ministers, by regulations, to add additional functions on the Institute, but these functions must relate to supporting people to learn Welsh or facilitate their progress.

Facilitating and supporting lifelong Welsh language learning

Section 37 sets out the core objectives of the Institute, which is to support people of all ages to learn Welsh and facilitate their progression. The new body will seek to ensure that people are aware that "school is not the only opportunity to learn Welsh" or to develop their skills.

Section 37 places various duties on the Institute to meet the objectives. These include:

- providing strategic leadership and direction to Welsh language learning providers;
- providing, or facilitating the provision of, Welsh language learning materials;
- making arrangements to provide opportunities to learn Welsh and improve levels of ability in the language amongst the education workforce, in the workplace, and to people over compulsory school age;
- developing and maintaining a national curriculum for Welsh language learning for learners over compulsory school age.

While many of the Institute's functions focus on people over compulsory school age, the **EM notes that** "one of the consequences of exercising these functions will be to support lifelong Welsh language education and teaching". It is not intended for the Institute to have a role in "providing courses or activities directly to pupils 3-16 in schools". Nevertheless, it is anticipated that the provision planned and organised by the new body will "improve provision for children 3-16 and bring the provision into line with Welsh learning skill levels".

Provisions in this section also give the Institute powers to co-ordinate and commission research on teaching or learning Welsh, as well as give financial assistance to any Welsh language learning provider (that is persons that teach Welsh or offer provisions teaching Welsh for people over compulsory school age) to aid teaching or learning of Welsh.

There are also general powers for the Institute to "do anything else" to support and facilitate people to learn Welsh if it "considers it appropriate to meet a target set by the National Framework on Welsh Language Education and Learning Welsh under section 23(7)".

Promoting equality of opportunity, innovation and collaboration

Sections 39 to 42 of the Bill sets out some specific areas in which the Institute will be expected to act. This includes increasing participation and reducing gaps in attainment in Welsh language learning among under-represented groups aged 16 and over. The Bill expands on the definition of under-represented groups as:

groups of people that are under-represented in Welsh language education as a result of social, cultural, economic or organisational factors.

The **EM states that the duty:**

reflects the importance of a Welsh language learning sector that meets the needs of people over compulsory school age and with different interests, competencies, needs and aspirations.

The Bill also places a requirement on the Institute to promote “raising standards” for the learning of Welsh, and the EM states that it will be “ideally placed to drive innovation and continuous improvement across the Welsh learning sector”.

Finally, the Institute must also promote collaboration between those with responsibility for improving the Welsh language skills of learners. The EM explains that this may include funding collaborative projects and working with learning providers to “develop more opportunities for aligning provision”. A significant element is the proposal for the Institute to promote collaboration “between Welsh learning providers and schools (that are not Welsh learning providers)”, along with tertiary education providers and employers in Wales.

Through its collaboration with different sectors, **the Institute would be expected to identify gaps in Welsh language skills and:**

prepare interventions targeted at specific workplaces, sectors, or geographical areas to improve the ability of bodies and sectors to deliver Welsh language services.

The **summary of responses to the White Paper consultation** noted that respondents referred to the need for collaboration between different sectors, particularly in order to ensure that “increasing the workforce in one sector does not have a detrimental effect on the workforce of a related sector (e.g. early years workers moving to schools to become teaching assistants)”.

Strategic plan and annual report

As a statutory body, the new National Institute for Learning Welsh will be required, under sections 44 and 45, to publish a strategic plan every 3 years, and report annually on the exercise of its functions.

In preparing its strategic plan, the Institute would be required to consult with the Welsh Ministers, the Welsh Language Commissioner, the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research, the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, Welsh language learning providers in receipt of funding from the Institute, and any other person or body they consider to be appropriate. The Welsh Government states in the EM that by ensuring broad input from these key stakeholders, that “all strategic plans will be interconnected with wider strategies”, facilitating greater alignment across

organisations in relation to learning Welsh.

The Welsh Ministers will also need to approve the strategic plan developed by the Institute, which the Welsh Government says will ensure that the “Institute’s vision and work plan is aligned with the wider vision of Welsh Ministers”.

Part 6 - General

Part 6 sets out some general provisions about the operation of the Bill and when provisions come into force.

Part 6 (with the exception of section 47 - Repeal of provisions in the *School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013*) and sections 1(1)(a) and 1(3) come into force when the Bill receives Royal Assent. Sections 1(4) and section 5 - Types of Welsh language user and common reference levels, come into force two months after Royal Assent.

Section 47 and all other provisions of the legislation will come into force on a day appointed by the Welsh Ministers in an order made by statutory instrument. Section 52 makes provisions in relation to the powers to make regulations under this Bill.

Section 46 requires local authorities and school governing bodies, in exercising their functions under Part 3 and 4 of the Bill, to have regard to guidance issued by the Welsh Ministers.

Section 47 amends Schedule 2 to the *School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013*. This means that the process for language medium alterations described in Schedule 2 to the 2013 Act no longer needs to be followed. Instead Part 3 of this Bill will now make provisions about changing the language medium of school teaching.

Section 48 adds Part 3 (Welsh language education) and Part 4 (Planning Welsh language education and learning) to the list of Education Acts set out in section 578 of the *Education Act 1996*. This enables effective co-ordination of education legislation, and the Explanatory Notes explain that the main effect on this occasion is it gives the Welsh Ministers powers to intervene if the governing body of a maintained school or local authority fail to comply with duties under the Bill, or exercise functions under the Bill in an unreasonable way.

Sections 50 and 51 make provisions in relation to the publication of documents and giving or sending notices, directions or other documents. It states that documents

must be in an electronic format, but also published in other formats.

Sections 49, 53 and 55 set out definitions for key terms in the Bill, consequential and transitional arrangements and a short title for the legislation.

Schedule 1 - Types of Welsh Language User and Common Reference Levels

The provisions in the Bill are supported by the CEFR framework included in Schedule 1. The Table provides a description of Welsh language ability, including type of Welsh language user and a common reference level (A1-C2).

This Table has been reproduced (in relation to the Welsh language) from the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages developed by the Council of Europe.

Schedule 2 - National Institute for Learning Welsh

Schedule 2 supports the provisions establishing the new National Institute for Learning Welsh in Part 5. It sets out the process for appointments and terms of the chief executive, chair, members of staff and non-executive members of the Institute.

It also imposes rules for meetings, committees and sub-committees and financial matters. Schedule 2 also confirms that the Institute is not to be regarded as a Crown body.

3. Powers to make subordinate legislation

The powers to make subordinate legislation under the Bill are listed in Table 5.1.1 in **Chapter 5 of the Explanatory Memorandum**. Table 5.1.2 lists powers to make directions, and issue codes and guidance.

Regulations

The Bill gives the Welsh Ministers **26 powers to make regulations and one power to make an order**.

- **16** of these are to be exercised under the Senedd's **draft affirmative**¹ procedure.
- **Eight** are to be exercised under the Senedd's **negative** procedure.
- One requires the draft affirmative procedure if amending primary legislation, otherwise it is subject to the negative procedure. This is the power to make provision that is incidental, supplementary or consequential provision or to make transitional, transitory or saving provision.
- Another one, the power to specify the planning period of the National Institute for Learning Welsh, requires the negative procedure when setting the first such period and subsequent three year periods and the draft affirmative procedure if changing the three year length of such periods.
- The power to make an order requires no Senedd procedure (this is the Commencement Order).

The Bill also provides for the use of an existing power to make regulations under the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 regarding assessment arrangements.

Directions, codes and guidance

The Bill gives **10 powers or duties to issue directions, codes, guidance and rules**. None of these require any Senedd procedure.

- There are three powers for the Welsh Ministers to give directions. There are also two powers for local authorities to give directions to the governing body of a school where the local authority rejects the school's first Welsh language education delivery plan or an amended delivery plan. A further power to give a

1 Under the draft affirmative procedure, the statutory instrument cannot become law until the Senedd votes to approve it and it is then made law by the Welsh Ministers. Under the negative procedure, the statutory instrument automatically becomes law when it is made by the Welsh Ministers, but the Senedd can vote to annul it within 40 days of it being laid.

direction is included for the National Institute for Learning Welsh regarding the delegation of its functions to its committees.

- There is a duty on the Welsh Ministers to prepare and publish guidance to assist individuals on completing self-assessments of their Welsh language ability. There is also a power to issue guidance to local authorities and schools on their functions under the Bill.
- The Welsh Ministers will have a duty to prepare and publish a Code describing Welsh language ability, based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.
- The National Institute for Learning Welsh will have a duty to make rules to regulate its own procedure.

4. Financial implications and consideration of other options

The **Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA)** within the Explanatory Memorandum sets out the Welsh Government’s estimated costs of the Bill and its consideration of other options.

The cost of the preferred option (the Bill) is **estimated at £103.2 million over a ten year period** (2025-26 to 2034-25). This is made up of £5.8 million of administrative costs in setting up several elements of the Bill, and £97.3 million of costs primarily to local authorities and schools in complying with their statutory duties under the Bill.

The £5.8 million of administrative costs include developing the Code to describe Welsh language ability, guidance and regulations, as well as developing the National Framework and setting up the National Institute for Learning Welsh. Other proposals within the Bill “build upon structures and practices already in existence”, such as the Cymraeg 2050 target, school language categories and WESPs.

The £97.3 million of compliance costs include schools preparing Welsh language education delivery plans, increasing their Welsh provision to meet Welsh language learning goals, and reforms to the current WESPs system.

The Welsh Government says there will be cost savings and benefits associated with the Bill but says “it is not possible to quantify these at this stage”.

Other options

In addition to the “preferred option” and doing nothing (the “business as usual” option), the RIA describes an “alternative option”. This was considered to determine whether a large proportion of the expected benefits of the preferred option could be delivered at a significantly lower cost.

The current business as usual situation was used as a baseline against which the impact of the other options was assessed for each part of the Bill. Details of this are provided in Table 1 (following paragraph 7.5) in the RIA. No figures are given for the cost of the alternative option other than a broad description of the financial impact as “high”, “medium” or “low”.

Cost scenarios

The **RIA sets out three scenarios** that the Welsh Government believe could materialise if the Bill becomes law:

- Scenario 1: Existing progress towards the goal that all pupils leaving statutory education by 2050 are able to speak Welsh independently with confidence is good. The Bill therefore simply supports this and ensures that good progress continues. The change brought about by the Bill is therefore minimal and costs are low.
- Scenario 2: Existing progress towards the same goal is not meeting expectations. The Bill therefore proves to be necessary to strengthen existing activities to better coordinate progress. The Bill will therefore make some changes and there will be some costs.
- Scenario 3: Progress is not on track and the Bill's provisions are substantially more ambitious than current practice. This means that there will be considerable changes required as a result of the Bill and therefore considerable costs.

The Welsh Government anticipates that scenario 2 is likely to occur and the estimated cost of the bill at £103 million over ten years presumably reflects this.

5. The Senedd's scrutiny

The Welsh Government issued a **written statement** upon the Bill's introduction to the Senedd on 15 July 2024 and an **oral statement** was given in Plenary on 16 July 2024.

There are four stages to the Senedd's scrutiny of Bills, which are explained in this **[Guide to the legislative process](#)**.

Stage 1

The Senedd's **Business Committee** has referred the Bill to the Children, Young People and Education (CYPE) Committee and set a deadline of 13 December 2024 for it to report on the general principles of the Bill (Stage 1 scrutiny).

The CYPE Committee is holding oral evidence sessions throughout September and October. It has also launched an **open call for evidence** on the Bill, which runs until 11 October 2024.

Further information on scrutiny at Stage 1 is available on the **[Bill webpage](#)**.

The Bill's provisions and financial implications will also be scrutinised by the **Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee**, and **Finance Committee**, which will report from their own perspectives.

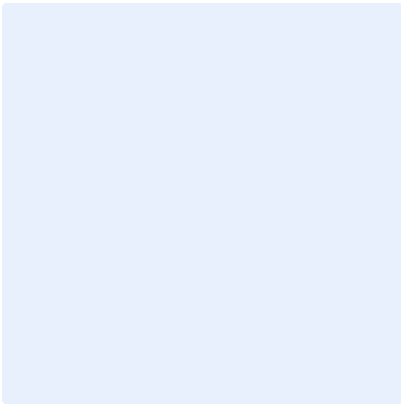
Stage 2 and beyond

Should the Bill proceed past its Stage 1 debate with Members of the Senedd supporting the general principles, it will be subject to amendment at Stage 2. These amendments will be considered by the CYPE Committee. The Business Committee's timetable for the Bill sets a deadline of 7 March 2025 for Stage 2 to be completed.

The Bill would then be subject to further amendment by all Members of the Senedd in Plenary (Stage 3) before a final vote on whether to pass the legislation (Stage 4).

GWYNEDD SCHOOLS LANGUAGE POLICY 2021

School



Date Adopted:

Review Date:

Signed on behalf of the Chair of Governors:

Date: _____

Background

Specific expectations are set by Gwynedd Council's Education Department to contribute to national strategies and legislation in terms of promoting and increasing the use of the Welsh language.

It is a requirement, under section 84 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act (2013), and to comply with the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) Regulations 2019, for all Local Education Authorities to prepare and submit a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, outlining the vision of Welsh medium education within the authority over the next ten years.

A statutory requirement is also placed on the Council under Section 44 of the Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011 to draft and publish county strategies outlining how they will contribute to the national aim set by the Welsh Government's Welsh Language Strategy, Cymraeg 2050, to increase the number of speakers throughout Wales and to increase the opportunities for people to use the Welsh language everyday. The Gwynedd county language strategy - Welsh Language Promotion Plan for Gwynedd 2018-2023 - sets the commitment and vision for the county, and the work of the Education Department and the WESP contribute to the aims of this county strategy.

Promoting the use of the Welsh language is also one of Gwynedd Council's improvement aims, with the Council's Strategic Plan stating that the aim is to see: "The people of Gwynedd taking advantage of opportunities to use the Welsh language in the community, the workplace and in accessing public services".

Therefore, this policy has been drafted in order to give a summary of the expectations placed on Headteachers and their schools in relation to promoting the use of the Welsh language, and to confirm the procedures that already exist in this context.

The policy is split into four sections, outlining best practice under the following headings:

- **Education Medium**
- **Social Use**
- **Recruitment and Appointment of Staff**
- **Administration and Communication**

Every Headteacher, in consultation with their staff and the Governing Body, are expected to approve and adopt this Language Policy.

It is the Headteacher's responsibility to ensure the success of the Language Policy in his/her school, and the headteacher is expected to provide clear guidance in order to establish a thorough understanding of the policy's aim and to ensure that the efforts of classroom teachers are reinforced by ensuring an appropriate Welsh ethos in the school.

THE POLICY'S GENERAL OBJECTIVES

The main aim of the Policy is to ensure that Headteachers, school staff and Governors are aware of the expectations to use and promote Welsh in all parts of the operation of schools in the county, and ensure that the rights of the pupils and the school's extended family to use Welsh when dealing with the school is always respected.

In implementing this policy, the school and governing body will ensure:

- that all pupils in the county possess appropriate linguistic skills in Welsh and English, and that this expectation is consistent across each school.
- that there is an appropriate provision to enable every pupil to develop bilingual proficiency. In this context, schools are expected to continue to foster the skills of those pupils who are Welsh first language, and introduce Welsh to those who are Welsh-learners.
- that all of the County's education establishments are expected to reinforce the Language Policy in their administration, social life and pastoral arrangements, as well as in the curricular provision.

Although the general aim of the policy in terms of the education medium is to develop bilingualism, the balance is weighted in favour of the Welsh language. This is especially true in the early years [nursery and in the years leading up to the end of the Foundation Phase] in order to set firm foundations for further development. For the other Key Stages, it is expected that a purposeful strategy is implemented to enable pupils from Welsh speaking and non-Welsh speaking households to develop their grasp of both Welsh and English. In this context, the emphasis placed on both languages at different times in the pupil's development will differentiate according to the pupil's linguistic background and the area served.

1. EDUCATION MEDIUM

GENERAL PRINCIPLE

All the county's schools should operate in a way that contributes to the aims and objectives of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, to increase and improve planning for Welsh medium education provision.

1.1 PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The expectation is the same for every primary school.

Early Years:

Primary schools are expected to set a strong foundation for the Welsh language ensuring that pupils are given the opportunity to learn Welsh as soon as possible.

Foundation Phase:

The foundation established at the nursery and reception stages should be built upon by continuing to develop pupils' grasp of Welsh, and begin the process of developing their English language skills. On a practical level, this means that most schools start introducing English formally as a subject during the final term at the end of the Foundation Phase. Welsh will be the school's official assessment language at the end of the Foundation Phase.

Key Stage 2:

The pupils' grasp of Welsh should continue to be developed giving attention to the development of their skills in both languages. In this context, schools are expected to make use of English as a medium as pupils move through KS2. The emphasis placed on both languages at different times in the pupil's development will differentiate according to the pupil's linguistic background and the area served. This arrangement will be expected to secure opportunities to develop the Welsh language across the curriculum in every area across the county. Pupils' progress in Welsh and in English are assessed at the end of the key stage.

In addition, schools are expected to ensure that pupils who are Welsh learners at KS2, learn Welsh as soon as possible, either by attending the Immersion Education System, or intense provision at school, for them to be able to fully follow the curriculum through the medium of Welsh / bilingually.

1.2 SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The expectation is the same for every secondary school.

Every pupil who has attained a firm Level 3 at the end of KS2 is expected to pursue a Welsh Language Study Programme [First Language] in order to ensure appropriate progression and continuation. There is also a need to ensure that every pupil studies Welsh as a subject until the end of Yr11 and sits appropriate external examinations and tests at the end of KS3 and KS4.

Schools are expected to build upon the foundations set in primary by ensuring that each pupil continues to develop skills in Welsh and English by using both languages as a learning medium to varying degrees. In this context, there is a need to use the information transferred about the linguistic attainment of each pupil by the Welsh Language Cluster Coordinators for purposeful linguistic planning to promote bilingualism. On a practical level, it will be necessary to act in the following manner:

- In the case of pupils with **Welsh language proficiency** but who require to further develop their grasp of Welsh and to improve specific skills in English [Cohorts A & B], it is expected that a vast proportion of their curriculum will be through the medium of Welsh. In addition, specific experiences will be planned across the curriculum for them to develop and improve their skills in English. In such cases it is expected that the time set aside for experiences in Welsh and English will roughly correspond to 70% : 30%.
- In the case of **pupils who need to develop and reinforce their skills** in Welsh [Cohort C1] the curriculum is planned in a way that will allow them to practice and develop the Welsh language across the curriculum. In such cases it is expected that the time set aside for experiences in Welsh and English will be at least 50%.
- In the case of a **minority of the pupils with appropriate proficiency in English but who lack appropriate skills in Welsh** [Cohort C2], emphasis is placed on planning opportunities across the curriculum to develop their oral skills in Welsh. In such cases it is expected that the time set aside for experiences in Welsh will be at least 30%.

The system described above, if implemented effectively in a school, will develop and increase the active bilingualism of learners and develop pupils' bilingualism. It is also expected that this will be a means to increase the number of pupils that sit KS4 examinations through the medium of Welsh.

In addition, schools are expected to ensure that pupils who are Welsh learners in the early years of KS3, learn Welsh as soon as possible, either by attending the Immersion Education System, or intense provision at school, for them to be able to follow elements of the curriculum through the medium of Welsh / bilingually.

PROVIDING FOR THE DIFFERENT COHORTS IN SECONDARY

The Language Policy defines the linguistic development of pupils in Welsh and English as they work towards the aim of achieving bilingualism. Secondary schools are expected to make use of the linguistic cohorts together with the language provision suggested to ensure pupils' bilingual development.

COHORT	Definition of the type of pupil according to linguistic ability.	The linguistic needs required to develop the pupil's bilingual skills.
A	Pupils with parallel age-related proficiency in Welsh and English.	Bilingual education across the curriculum to foster, reinforce and extend skills in both languages.
B	Pupils with age-related proficiency in Welsh but who need to reinforce some aspects of their English language skills.	Bilingual education with an emphasis on developing skills that are needed to enable the pupil to transfer to cohort A in due course.
C1	Pupils with appropriate proficiency in English but who need to reinforce some aspects in Welsh language skills	Emphasis is placed on extending the pupil's proficiency in the three attainment targets. Ensure that extra-curricular opportunities are used to develop the pupil's grasp of Welsh.
C2	Pupils with appropriate proficiency in English but who lack the age-related skills in Welsh.	Emphasis placed on oral and practical work through the medium of Welsh.
CH	Pupils without appropriate age-related skills in either language.	Careful and purposeful planning to develop essential skills in both languages.

The following are offered as further guidelines for consideration at individual school level.

1. Every school is expected to carefully provide the bilingualism of every pupil via intentional language planning.
2. Every school is expected to consider the methods/combination of the most suitable and appropriate bilingual teaching methods for their different situations. In order to ensure that appropriate use is made of Welsh and English as a medium, the following should be considered:
 - present some specific units/modules through the medium of Welsh and others through the medium of English (the appropriate balance has to be considered);
 - present some subjects through the medium of Welsh and others through the medium of English (the appropriate balance has to be considered);
 - introduce key vocabulary/worksheets in both languages (consideration has to be given if this is required in every subject or some subjects only);
 - translanguaging, namely read/watch aspects of a subject in one language and discuss or write in the other;
 - use both languages as media to a varying degree to reinforce both languages, particularly with Cohorts B, C1, C2, CH (the language has to be used intentionally and carefully in order not to mix both languages too much and unnecessary).
3. Every school is expected to offer a specific provision for learners (Cohorts C1 and C2), ensuring a sufficient link with the Welsh language across the curriculum.
4. Every school is expected to encourage all newcomers in Yr7 to attend an intensive course in the Immersion Education System as soon as possible. This should be reinforced with a provision at the school e.g. offering some of the practical subjects at least, at the start, through the medium of Welsh.

5. Every school is expected to establish a system to track and measure pupils' language development according to the Language Cohorts, to ensure progress in their language proficiency, so that everyone moves towards Cohort A on the language continuum.

2. SOCIAL USE OF WELSH

GENERAL PRINCIPLE

Every school is expected to gain positive attitudes amongst pupils and the workforce towards the language, creating pride and increase the use of the language within and outside the classroom.

The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan is a statutory document by Gwynedd Education Authority, and it is expected that every school will:

- Provide data regarding the language use and skills of pupils in schools, and data about workforce language skills.
- Work within the same framework to ensure learners who are confident to use their Welsh language skills in various contexts.
- The requirements of the Language Charter and the Secondary Language Strategy are incorporated as an integral part of the school Curriculum to achieve the requirements of the county language strategy - *Welsh Language Promotion Plan for Gwynedd 2018-2023*. To ensure that every learner develops his/her Welsh language skills for socialising, to prepare for the world of work, and to show positive attitudes towards the language. Embedding and expanding the informal use of Welsh is also an integral part of the Areas of Learning and Experience within the new curriculum.

3. RECRUITING AND APPOINTING

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Every school is expected to act in accordance with the Recruitment and Appointment Policy (2021) and to ensure that the Welsh language receives appropriate attention when advertising and recruiting for jobs.

It is expected that Governing Body appointment panels will be aware of the need to consider language needs when they appoint.

It is expected for Welsh to be noted as an essential/key skill for every post, and the exact level of linguistic skills needed to achieve the requirements of the post - *speaking and listening, reading, comprehension and writing* - are shown clearly in the Person Specification when advertising.

It is expected that individuals appointed will possess the linguistic skills that are noted for the post. If an individual is appointed, who does not possess the essential skills noted for the post in question, then they will be expected to commit to a training programme in order to improve their language skills.

Advertising

The Language Designation for the post is expected to be included in every advertisement in accordance with what has been determined for the type of post in the appendix *Language Framework and Job Designation List*.

Appointment

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher/Recruitment Panel to ensure that individuals appointed will reach the requirements noted for the post, or that they commit to work to attain those requirements.

If it is not possible to appoint someone with the necessary linguistic skills after advertising once, consideration can be given to re-advertising to receive applications from applicants who do not meet the language requirements immediately, but who are willing to commit to learn. Further guidance about this is available from the relevant Education Officers.

The Language Designations of the post itself will not be changed at all when re-advertising.

In such circumstances, it is expected that the advertisement will include the following wording:

We are eager to consider applications from individuals who, possibly, do not currently reach the language level of the post, but the successful applicant would be required to commit to either learn, or develop language skills to the required level within a reasonable timescale. The Council will provide support to achieve this.

In such circumstances, and as part of the appointment process if someone is appointed who does not meet the language requirements, it is expected that an appropriate support and training plan will be agreed and drawn up for the individual in agreement between the relevant Education Officers, the Head of Department and the post-holder, in order to close the gap between the individual's skills and the required skills for the post.

Training / Following appointment

It is the responsibility of the appointing Headteacher/Manager to ensure that they seek advice from the relevant Education Officers about available training as appropriate, and that the individual attends any identified training for them in order to develop their skills. Heads of Department/Managers are expected to monitor the individual's progress as part of performance management and continuous evaluation procedures.

4. ADMINISTRATION

GENERAL PRINCIPLE

All educational establishments in the county are expected to communicate with pupils, parents and the school's extended family bilingually, respecting the choice of language and the right of individuals to use Welsh when dealing with the school.

Although it is generally expected that information will be provided bilingually, it is also recognised that Welsh is the operational, natural language of schools and schools are encouraged to consider circumstances where it is appropriate to communicate only in Welsh.

Face-to-face and telephone contact

It is expected that it will be possible for the public to receive a full bilingual service at the receptions of each of the county's educational establishments.

A service through the medium of Welsh or bilingual should be offered when contacting via the telephone (with Welsh first), in a welcoming way, and any calls from the public should be answered in the same manner.

If the caller speaks Welsh, but the member of the administrative staff who answers the call is unable to speak Welsh fluently enough to deal with the matter in full, the member of the administrative staff should explain this after greeting the caller, and offer to transfer the call to another member of staff who will be able to deal with the matter in full in the caller's chosen language.

In cases where the officer who answers the call is a Welsh-learner, the officer is encouraged to use his/her Welsh to the best of his/her ability.

It is expected that messages on the school's answer-phone will be bilingual, with the Welsh message heard first.

Contact and written information

In all the county's educational establishments, any correspondence or written material - e.g. letter, circular, email message, text message, posters, pamphlets - intended for parents/guardians or the public in general, should be written in Welsh and English. This includes printed written material and material that is shared electronically with a parent/guardian.

It should be ensured that any messages sent electronically and by using apps treat Welsh and English equally.

It is expected that all official documents shared with the public in the school's name, whether produced internally or by an external body or organisation, will afford the same status to both Welsh and English.

It is expected that any social media accounts (such as Facebook and Twitter) will follow the same principles and present information bilingually, with Welsh appearing first every time.

At the same time, it is recognised that Welsh is the operational language of the school and it is expected that the school will give consideration to circumstances where using Welsh only or both languages would be more appropriate.

Meetings

In all the county's education establishments, it is expected that any meeting arranged will be held through the medium of Welsh, including internal meetings, meetings with members of staff, and meetings of the Governing Body.

If arranging a meeting with a pupil/parent/guardian to discuss matters regarding education or any other personal matters, it should be ensured that the meeting is conducted in the individual's chosen language. It is the responsibility of the school/headteacher to ensure that individuals have a right to discuss personal matters in their chosen language and that this is respected.

It is expected that the Welsh language will be the main language of public meetings held by any of the county's educational establishments.

Anyone is permitted to speak Welsh or English, as they choose, in a public meeting arranged by any education establishment in the county, and the school is responsible to arrange a simultaneous translation service to

ensure that those who do not speak Welsh are able to understand and contribute effectively to the meeting. Chairpersons of such meetings will be expected to address and hold the meeting in Welsh and encourage non-Welsh speakers to use the translation equipment to promote language choice.

Leaders in events or more informal meetings such as concerts, open evenings etc., are encouraged to greet the audience bilingually in order to include everyone.

Translation provision:

The Council's Translation Service can provide support in meetings and with documentation for Governors, to ensure that non-Welsh speakers can continue to play a full part in a meeting or event.

Consideration should be given to circumstances where translation provision is required to address the individual's language choice.

MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

The Policy's Implementation will be monitored as part of the general arrangements to monitor services.

With the support of Schools, the Authority will report annually to the Welsh Government on the implementation of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

A specific section will be included in the Annual Report of each school on the implementation of the Language Policy in schools.

The Governing Body is expected to review and approve the Language Policy in accordance with the annual system to review policies.

The government should focus more on attitudes to language, Bangor University research finds

Data from a Welsh language use survey shows low rates of language use among Welsh-speaking adults

By Meilyr Jones

Meilyr Jones is part of Bangor University's language attitudes research team. He says the government's over-reliance on education as a medium of language revival could lead to a situation similar to the one facing Gaelic...

Data from the Welsh language use survey shows low rates of language use among Welsh-speaking adults. This is a particular area of concern in government policies as the Cymraeg 2050 strategy aims to double the percentage of daily use of Welsh.

The reluctance to use Welsh depicted here is also reflected in the decline in intergenerational family transmission, which is perhaps the single most important factor to language survival. Research has highlighted that the government's over-reliance on education as a medium of language revival, without initiatives to tackle language use, particularly in the family, could lead to a situation similar to that faced by Gaelic.

The importance of attitudes

Regenerating a minority language must include a change in attitudes to the language. While the policymakers behind the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 strategy identify "normalising perception and use" as a key challenge to tackle, the Cymraeg 2050 strategy does not discuss the need to improve attitudes per se. Nevertheless, attitudes play a central role in successfully sustaining a language, which is why we believe that greater emphasis must be placed on improving attitudes to the language in Wales.

Our research looks at the relationship between explicit and implicit language attitudes and exposure to Welsh in north-west Wales. We have done this by comparing data about speakers' background from the Language and Social Background Questionnaire with the results of the Attitudes towards Languages (AToL) Scale and an Implicit Association Task.

Contribution of early exposure

Our results show that speakers have more favourable attitudes towards Welsh than English. Therefore, contrary to the current landscape of declining use and exposure to Welsh in Wales, bilingual speakers' explicit attitudes towards Welsh remain positive. Furthermore, speakers with more exposure to Welsh in primary school age have more favourable attitudes towards Welsh than those with less exposure, who tend to prefer English. These results demonstrate the importance of exposure to language in fostering positive, implicit attitudes towards Welsh.

Our results suggest that early exposure may do more than equip children with the language skills they need to use – a function that education, too, can successfully fulfil. What early exposure can provide beyond language skills is modelling the use of the Welsh language in a wide range of community contexts. This is in line with research in other areas – such as physical activity and sleep patterns – where behavioural modelling plays a fundamental role in influencing children's behaviour.

Implications

The lack of modelling that is part of some children's experience is therefore particularly relevant in considering the context of the decline in exposure to the Welsh language due to declining social use and intergenerational family transmission.

Given the Welsh Government's current target to double the use of Welsh in areas such as work and social situations, this suggests that preventing a decline in social use of Welsh and, in particular, intergenerational transmission within the family, is essential to improving implicit attitudes towards Welsh. It should be seen as a priority for Welsh

Government language policy. Doing this in areas such as north-west Wales, which is currently going through a linguistic shift, should be crucial.

If current patterns of decline continue, a decline in exposure could lead to less favourable implicit attitudes towards the Welsh language, highlighting the importance of exposure to the Welsh language in the home and community for the future vitality of the Welsh language.

Improving implicit attitudes towards Welsh is significant from a language revival perspective because implicit attitudes seem better predictors of normal behaviour than explicit attitudes, that is, the speaker's likelihood of using the language. Therefore, we suggest that implicit attitudes and their potential impact on use should receive more attention from Welsh language researchers and policymakers alike.

Work on future attitudes to language should involve direct and indirect approaches, particularly in other areas of Wales where there is less exposure to Welsh, and in assessing the vitality of language in general.

Engagement Meetings to discuss Cyngor Gwynedd's Education Language Policy

Over the coming months, Cyngor Gwynedd representatives will hold a series of engagement sessions to discuss Cyngor Gwynedd's current Education Language Policy. These sessions will be an opportunity to discuss and gather ideas and suggestions about the policy and to consider whether it needs to be revised in light of the results of the 2021 Census and a number of policy developments in language and education at a national level.

1. Background

Cyngor Gwynedd has a long history of innovation in Welsh and bilingual education and this innovation has ensured that Gwynedd's young people within local authority schools have received wide-ranging opportunities to become fluently bilingual. Gwynedd now has the largest number of Welsh-speakers of any local authority in Wales and here too the highest percentage of young people are educated in Welsh and bilingually. But at the same time, the linguistic changes taking place in the county, as well as changes in the Welsh Government's influence on education in Wales, make it timely for us to consider reviewing Cyngor Gwynedd's education language policy and have a discussion about which elements of the current policy are working well and where any reforms or changes need to be made.

In order to hold this discussion on Gwynedd's language education policy, the Council intends to hold a series of meetings across the authority with a wide range of stakeholders to discuss how the current policy could be improved and strengthened in the context of the 2021 census results and the current linguistic and educational expectations of Welsh Government.

2021 Census

According to the 2021 Census, **73,560 people** (aged 3 and over) were able to speak Welsh in Gwynedd, which equates to **64.4%** of the population. In 2011, the number of speakers in Gwynedd was **77,000** and the corresponding percentage was **65.4%**. Therefore, the proportion of people who speak Welsh in Gwynedd between 2011 and 2021 has reduced by 1%.

2. The linguistic profile of Gwynedd.

2021 census statistics show that **86.2%** of Gwynedd's 3-15 year olds can speak Welsh. Among the general population the percentage is significantly lower than that. At an all-Wales level, Gwynedd has the highest percentage of 3-15 year-olds who speak Welsh.

Looking at a wider platform, Gwynedd is more successful at maintaining its linguistic position (in terms of the Welsh language) than any other region in the world apart from Catalonia (10 million speakers). Therefore, Cyngor Gwynedd can take pride in its education language policy over the last few decades as the policy has played a key role in this linguistic success.

The development stages of Cyngor Gwynedd's current language strategy in education

Targets

- Ensure all pupils become fluently bilingual
- Plan to increase regular use of Welsh.
- Encouraging many more pupils to study through the medium of Welsh up to external exam level (16yrs)
- 100% of Gwynedd children have the opportunity to speak Welsh and use the language regularly.

3. Welsh Government Welsh Language and Education promotion policies

In reviewing Gwynedd's Education Language Policy, we must now look at a wider context than the role and work of Cyngor Gwynedd itself. The developments taking place in Welsh and bilingual education must now be considered at an all-Wales level as a number of statutory and innovative steps are taking place at a national level.

As part of the Education Legislation 2013, local authorities have been required to agree **Welsh in Education Strategic Plans** (WESP) with the Welsh Government. Cyngor Gwynedd's latest WESP was agreed in 2022 and is effective for the period 2023-2033. This document sets out the main current principles associated with Cyngor Gwynedd's education language policies.

<https://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/cy/Cyngor/Dogfennau-Cyngor/Strategaethau-a-pholisiau/Cynllun-Strategol-Y-Gymraeg-mewn-Addysg.pdf>

In 2016 the Welsh Government published its latest strategy for the Welsh language, a language strategy that will cover the next three decades to the year 2050: **Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh-speakers**

<https://www.llyw.cymru/sites/default/files/publications/2019-03/cymraeg-2050-strategaeth-y-gymraeg-v1-1.pdf>

The aims of Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh-speakers

	Aim	Target
1.	Increase the number of Welsh-speakers	1 million Welsh-speakers by 2050
2.	Increase the use of the Welsh language	Daily use of Welsh increasing from 10% to 20%

This strategic document emphasises the importance of increasing the numbers who can speak Welsh. It is also stressed that increasing daily use of Welsh is equally important. These aims align with the strategic aims Cyngor Gwynedd has been promoting for a number of decades.

Curriculum for Wales (2021)

Within the **Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021** which outlines the Curriculum for Wales it is noted that Welsh is also a mandatory requirement. The legislation that outlines the regulations relating to the new Curriculum for Wales states that there are (in addition to the four purposes of the curriculum) mandatory elements spanning the 3 to 16 year old learning continuum, which include the following:

- **Welsh**
- **English – from age 7.** *Headteachers and funded but non-maintained nursery education providers can exercise their discretion in deciding whether, and to what extent, they will deliver English to learners aged between 3 and 7. This is to facilitate the immersion process of early years learners in Welsh.*

Cyngor Gwynedd's education strategies are also expected to take into account the following Welsh Government documents:

- ***Our nation's mission: high standards and aspirations for all Welsh Government (2023)***
- ***School improvement guide: a framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability (Statutory in 2024)***

In all these documents, the local authorities and schools in Wales have a duty to plan appropriately for increasing the number of young people who can speak Welsh and who do so on a daily basis.

4. Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill

Another development is the Welsh Government's intention to put on the Statute Book legislation relating to the further development of aspects of Welsh Language Education. It is stated in the White Paper, published by the Government, that:

The Bill will take steps to enable all pupils in Wales to become confident Welsh-speakers through the statutory education system.

Key proposals include:

- ***Reflecting the target of one million Welsh-speakers in law***
- ***Establishing a statutory system of categorising maintained schools according to language***
- ***Over time, increasing Welsh language provision in maintained schools that are not already dedicated Welsh-medium schools***
- ***Reforming how local authorities plan Welsh language provision in schools to meet targets set by Welsh Ministers***
- ***Requirements on local authorities to pro-actively promote Welsh-medium education, including late immersion provision;***

It can therefore be seen that the Welsh Government expects to see an increase in the provision of education through the medium of Welsh over these next few years and that there is a statutory obligation for the local authorities to plan for this growth.

One of the intentions of the Bill is to turn the process of categorisation of schools into a statutory one and will be based on the provision and numbers of pupils who will receive Welsh-medium education in a school, up to the age of 16. Therefore, in the future all primary and secondary schools will fall into one of three categories. (The numbers 1, 2 and 3 are used to denote the categories.) In the primary, Category 1 will refer to schools that teach primarily through the medium of English, Category 2 to dual-language schools and Category 3 to schools that teach primarily through the medium of Welsh. In the secondary sector, there will also be 3 categories but the definition will be slightly different. There will be an emphasis on increasing the number of areas of learning available to be studied through the medium of Welsh and increasing the number of pupils taking courses up to the age of 16 through the medium of Welsh.

The Bill will also legislate on the following:

- A code to describe ability in Welsh that will be based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.
- The requirement for all school governing bodies to produce a delivery plan in relation to the Welsh language every three years which, among other matters, will require a school to identify how much Welsh language education is provided by the school in the context of the school's linguistic and educational category. All schools will be required to submit the plan to the local authority for approval.
- The requirement for Welsh Ministers to produce a National framework on Welsh Education and Learning Welsh.
- Amending parts of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013

- Establishment of a National Institute for Learning Welsh

Timetable of the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill

- Royal assent June 2025
- Consultation on the Code for Wales 2025
- National Institute for Learning Welsh established in 2026
- Further consultation on categorisation and delivery plan 2027
- Consultation on the national framework 2027
- Temporary exceptions to the new categorisation system terminating in 2036

5. Gwynedd Education Language Profile.

2021 census statistics show that **86.2%** of Gwynedd's 3-15 year olds can speak Welsh. This is a significant percentage higher than the percentage of Welsh-speakers among the general population, which is 64.4%. These numbers show that Gwynedd schools' Education Language Policy has had a very positive impact by increasing the number of young people who can speak Welsh within the county. Improving language skills is one way to measure policy success of promoting bilingualism. But for stable bilingualism to be successful, young people must have the confidence to speak both languages, using Welsh and English with complete fluency in both formal and informal situations.

What is clear is that planning must be intentional and cautious to maintain the bilingual proficiency of our young people. One of the most effective methods of doing this, as Cyngor Gwynedd's current policy clearly demonstrates is to give them opportunities to receive their education and extra-curricular experiences through the medium of Welsh. But is there room to expand that provision? The context set out above offers us a good opportunity to consider and discuss this.

The Immersion Education System

In order for the Welsh language policy to be inclusive, a specialist service is provided within the county, namely the Immersion Education System. The immersion system for newcomers is a strength here in Gwynedd. Since its establishment in January 2023 there are six strategic locations across the county providing a service for latecomers to acquire the Welsh language. Taking an intensive immersion course for a period of ten weeks equips learners with the skills necessary to enable them to blend in and thrive back in mainstream schools in a formal and informal context within Gwynedd's Welsh

and bilingual education system.

Nursery Education

All the nursery education settings within the Council's control are settings that teach children through the medium of Welsh. A firm foundation is set for the Welsh language here and it is ensured that every child is given a Welsh language, Literacy and Communication skills assessment on admission to and at the end of part-time nursery education and at the end of the Foundation Phase.

Additional Learning Needs:

All pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) in Gwynedd have access to Welsh-medium provision and services. This service is for all ranges and types of Additional Learning Needs. Pupils and their parents have access to a fully bilingual service.

Gwynedd schools language policy

Primary

The aim of the Language Policy is the same across all the county's primary schools, which is to develop the ability of all pupils to be confident in both languages by the end of year 6. Welsh is the official assessment language in the school at the end of the Foundation Phase. In years 3-6, the aim is to continue to develop the pupils' grasp of Welsh, giving attention to the development of their skills in both languages.

Secondary

Appropriate progression and continuation is expected in the language medium of teaching each pupil when transferring from primary school. Every pupil who has studied Welsh (First Language) as a subject in primary school is expected to continue to do so in secondary school, and to sit an assessment/examination in the subject at the end of Year 11. Every pupil who has been taught through the medium of Welsh in primary school is expected to continue to do so in secondary school, and to sit external assessments/examinations through the medium of Welsh.

Secondary schools build upon the foundations set in the primary by ensuring that each pupil continues to develop skills in Welsh and in English.

Additional Learning Needs

The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan ensures that children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN) receive equal linguistic opportunities from a bilingual education perspective.

Agenda Item 7

MEETING	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
DATE	13 February 2025
TITLE	Immersion Education System
REASON TO SCRUTINISE	Council Plan 2023-28 - A Welsh Gwynedd - To receive an update on the evaluation process
AUTHOR	Rhys Meredydd Glyn, Head of Gwynedd Immersion Education System
CABINET MEMBER	Cllr Dewi Jones

1. Why does it need to be scrutinised?

- 1.1 The vision for the system was scrutinised at the Committee meeting on 10 June 2021.
- 1.2 Committee members identified the need to scrutinise the implementation of the new system when timely.
- 1.3 An evaluation of the system following submitting the new arrangements in January 2023 will be held during the year.
- 1.4 A request was received from Councillor Rhys Tudur to scrutinise the impact of the cut in the number of days in the immersion period. Also, to look in detail at the timing of the immersion period as well as the language impact of the cut.

2. What exactly needs to be scrutinised?

- 2.1 This report is intended to provide an update on the evaluation process in the context of the Evaluation of the Immersion System.

3. Summary of the Key Matters

- 3.1 This report presents an update regarding the Evaluation of the Immersion System.

4. Background / Context

- 4.1 Gwynedd has always been recognised as a stronghold of the Welsh language, and the Council prides itself on its strong vision and ambition to ensure that all pupils in the county become bilingually proficient citizens and full members of the bilingual society of which they are part.
- 4.2 The county's Language Policy is the vehicle responsible for promoting this ambition in the county's schools, and to ensure that policy is inclusive, language immersion units were opened in Gwynedd forty years ago in 1984. At that time, there were four centres for immersing latecomers in the Primary sector. Following the huge success

of these centres, twenty years later a centre for Secondary learners was opened on the site of Ysgol Eifionydd. The primary and secondary centres have served and supported thousands of children to acquire the Welsh language over the years.

- 4.3** However, at their meeting on 16 July 2021, Cyngor Gwynedd's Cabinet Members decided that it was timely to reorganise these centres and create a new first-rate Immersion Education System to include six immersion units, three of which are for primary learners from years 2 to 4 and a further three centres transitioning between primary and secondary for learners from years 5 to 9. These centres were located in strategic areas linguistically across the regions, Maesincla and Tryfan in Arfon, Pwllheli and Eifionydd in Dwyfor and Dolgellau and Tywyn in Meirionnydd. In addition, a new staffing structure was adopted to include a Head, Deputy, 6 Teachers and 6 Senior Assistants.
- 4.4** A key factor behind this decision for change was the well-being of learners and the need for them to keep in touch with their peers and the mother school during the course. To this end, the immersion courses were modified to include one day every week in the mainstream with the support of immersion unit staff.
- 4.5** Following the Welsh Government's capital funding investment, the Immersion Education System in its new guise was established in January 2023. The System is considered fundamental to create new Welsh speakers in Gwynedd by:
- providing pioneering and outstanding immersion education to new-comers to the County which will enable them to thrive with their peers in our bilingual education system and consequently they will be able to blend into the Welsh and Welsh-speaking society of their local school without feeling that they are 'different' or excluded from the usual experiences of their peers;
 - providing support for families to embrace the Welsh language, support the education of their children, and benefit from cultural and community experiences through the medium of Welsh;
 - supporting and equipping our schools to nurture our learners' skills and confidence in the Welsh language;
 - supporting and equipping our schools to nurture positive attitudes towards the Welsh language.

5. Commissioning

- 5.1** Following a highly competitive process, the Bangor University Research Team was selected to evaluate the Immersion Education System in Gwynedd. See below for the research plan in its entirety. The 4 questions below highlight the lines of enquiry that will set a direction for the Evaluation.
1. How suitable and effective is the model in ensuring pupils' use of the target language when they return to the mainstream school? (4 days in the immersion units and a transition day in the mainstream)
 2. How effective is the model in terms of enabling learners to acquire Welsh adequately and to its full potential?

3. Are there opportunities to further strengthen the Welsh language in the Immersion System and in the mainstream Schools?
4. How suitable and effective is the model when considering pupils' well-being during the immersion period?

5.2 Research team: Dr Lowri Mair Jones (Principal Investigator), Dr Margiad Williams, Dr Anwen Jones, Professor Enlli Thomas.

6. Introduction

6.1 The aim of this comprehensive case study is to evaluate the impact and scrutiny of the provision of the current Immersion Education System to see if it delivers on the promise and provides pupils in Gwynedd with the necessary foundation to acquire Welsh when embarking on their linguistic journey to becoming new speakers.

7. Literary Review

7.1 Undertake a detailed literature review examining current international trends in language immersion education, focusing on the effectiveness of immersion models in promoting language acquisition and bilingualism. The literary review will frame the research methodology, including:

- Observation Tool Design
- Questionnaire Design
- Direction of Enquiry Design focus groups
- Thematic Analysis

7.2 Explore studies specifically relating to immersion programmes in Welsh and minority languages.

7.3 Identify gaps in current research that this study seeks to address.

8. Policy Review

8.1 Analyse relevant educational policies and initiatives relating to Welsh language immersion education and immersion education in minority languages within the international context.

8.2 Evaluate the link between policy objectives and the implementation of immersion programmes, identifying any challenges or barriers in implementing policies effectively.

9. Research Design

9.1 Case Study

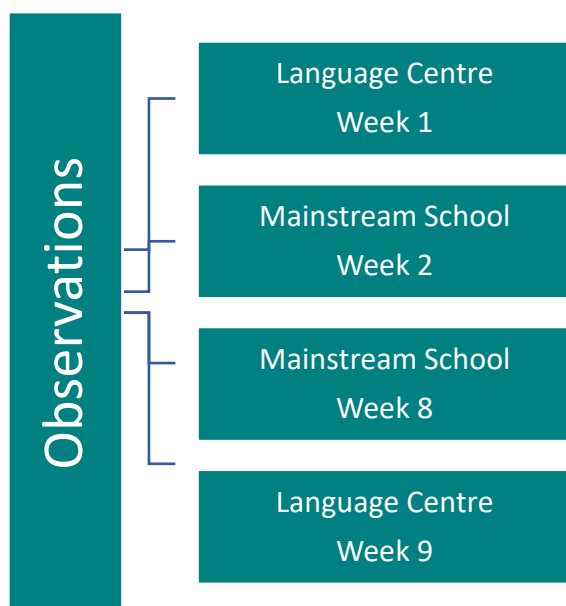
9.1.1 A detailed Case Study will be undertaken to be able to draw holistic data that will provide a comprehensive picture of the immersion model and its impact on pupils' language use, as well as the attitudes of parents, pupils and educators.

9.1.2 A structured case study drawing on natural data (Bailey, 1978) will be drawn up. The case study will involve mixed data collection, which will provide a detailed evaluation across the four immersion centres.

9.2 Step 1: Observations

9.2.1 Observe the journey of three pupils through the immersion model at the four different Language Centres. Each round of observation will consist of three formal observations, see Figure 1.

Figure 1 - Observation process of the Ten-week Immersion model



9.2.2 Observe pupils at four points within a ten-week period. Two of the observations will take place at the Language Centre and two observations will take place at the mainstream school.

9.2.3 Look at the following aspects specifically when observing to get a holistic picture of pupils' use of the target language in different contexts, along with different stakeholders' attitudes towards immersion provision.

- Develop an evidence-based Observation Tool to scrutinise the following:
- Relationship with peers
- Influences on language use in a formal and informal context

- Continuity of use of the target language when developing along the immersive journey
- Aspects of pupil well-being

9.3 Step 2: Focus Groups (Teachers)

9.3.1 A focus group will be held with centre teachers, and three focus groups will be held with mainstream school staff.

9.3.2 The focus group will examine the perceptions of Staff within the Immersion Centre and the Mainstream School of the efficiency of the immersion model and the development and well-being of pupils receiving immersion education as part of the 10-week model.

The focus group will examine educators' perceptions of:

- Pupils' use of the target language
- Effectiveness of the immersion model (4 days in the immersion units and transition day in the mainstream)
- Staffing Model
- Any other research lines that come up during the Case Study.

9.4 Step 3: Focus Groups of Pupils who follow the immersion programme

9.4.1 Conduct a focus group with three pupils involved in the immersion provision, exploring their experiences and perceptions of being part of the immersion programme. The focus group will explore:

- Attitudes towards the language
- Attitudes towards the immersion programme
- Attitudes towards attending two education settings for a period of time
- Attitudes towards informal use of the language
- Attitudes surrounding well-being.

9.5 Step 4: Questionnaire examining parental attitudes

9.5.1 We will share a questionnaire with parents/guardians, focusing on their perspectives of the immersion programme and their children's language development and well-being as they go through the immersion journey.

9.6 Step 5: Quantitative Data

9.6.1 Scrutinise available quantitative data, which shows the progress of pupils receiving immersion education in Gwynedd. Scrutinising this data will enable the researchers to triangulate any quantitative results against qualitative data, to produce a complete

and comprehensive case study of the immersion provision. It is shown in the table below how the research methods explore the research questions.

Research questions	Methods:
How suitable and effective is the 4-day model in the immersion unit and 1 transition day back in the mainstream, in ensuring pupils' use of the target language when they return to mainstream school?	Observations Focus Groups
How effective is the 4-day model in the immersion unit and 1 transition day back in the mainstream in terms of enabling learners to acquire the Welsh language adequately and to its full potential?	Observations Focus Groups Parents' questionnaire Quantitative data
Are there opportunities to further strengthen the Welsh language in the Immersion System and in the mainstream Schools?	Focus Groups Parents' questionnaire
How suitable and effective is the model when considering pupils' well-being during the immersion period? (4 days in the immersion units and a transition day in the mainstream)	Observations Focus Groups Parents' questionnaire

9.7 Data Analysis Methods

- 9.7.1** Present a comprehensive case study analysing the qualitative data through thematic analysis.
- 9.7.2** Draw on any trends in the quantitative data to offer a complete picture to answer the research questions.

9.8 Possible Outcomes

- 9.8.1** The final report will provide robust research evidence on the efficiency of the immersion model in Gwynedd, along with recommendations for potential developments and improvements in Gwynedd and beyond in the future.
- 9.8.2** The design of the research provides a comprehensive framework for investigating the effectiveness of the immersion model in Gwynedd, together with further considerations highlighted in the research questions.
- 9.8.3** The brief may be revised as needed during the implementation period to meet any unforeseen challenges or opportunities.

9.9. Cyngor Gwynedd's Expectations

9.9.1 To ensure value for money, we will ask council staff for support in communicating with the language centres to co-ordinate visits, and to share questionnaires / arrange interviews.

10. Timetable

	Action
August 2024	Literary and Policy Review, development of the observation tool and parent questionnaire
August-October 2024	Observations in Language Centres and Mainstream Schools
November 2024	Focus Group Interviews
December 2024	Data analysis
January–February 2025	Write the Report
March 2025	Submit a Complete Report

11. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

11.1 The aim of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act places a well-being duty on public bodies which is aimed at delivering the seven well-being goals by following the five ways of working.

11.2 The Act places a well-being duty on the Council to carry out sustainable development work by working in cooperation with the 'sustainable development principle'. This means that the impact on people in the future must be considered when making decisions.

11.3 In terms of **collaborating and involving** others, we have already held focus groups with Gwynedd's parents, learners, staff and school headteachers and received comments from individuals representing Language Organisations.

11.4 Conducting an evaluation of the Immersion System is **recognising the need to identify strengths and matters for improvement** to ensure the best possible service for Gwynedd residents.

11.5 Ensuring that Gwynedd's children and young people develop into confident bilingual citizens improves opportunities for them educationally, economically, culturally and socially in the **long-term** and enriches their experience of living and working through the medium of Welsh in Gwynedd.

11.6 Empowering the county's Immersive Education System lays a solid foundation for the development of bilingual citizens and conforms to the status of the Welsh language in the context of Public Bodies.

12. Impact on Equality Characteristics, the Welsh Language and the Socio-Economic Duty

12.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not required in response to the engagement work relating to the Evaluation of the Immersion System. However, it will be expected to produce an Equality Impact Assessment on any decisions made by the Council as part of evaluating the Immersion System. We will take into account all comments received as part of the engagement.

13. Next Steps

13.1 Following the Evaluation process, officers from the Education Department will produce an Action Plan to respond to the recommendations of the final report.

13.2 It is intended to submit the Improvement Recommendations Action Plan and detailed timetable to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee on 10 April 2025.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Additional Questions

Appendix 2 - Mainstream teacher and headteacher interview questionnaire

Appendix 3 - Focus Group Tool

Appendix 4 - Parent Questionnaire

Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee 13/02/25

Additional Questions.

- **What are the expectations about the levels? What are the reasons for the imbalance between those who reach the first level but not the second?**

The Benchmarks of the Oracy strand in the National Literacy Framework are used to measure learners' progress during and at the end of the immersion course. Achieving level 2 requirements requires a mastery of a combination of linguistic skills at a fairly independent level. As the learners' starting point varies and each individual is unique and develops at different speeds, not everyone in the cohort manages to achieve the requirement. However, almost everyone manages to achieve level 1 requirements.

- **How do you monitor and measure the impact of the reduction in the number of immersion period days on the linguistic habits of the remaining pupils in the mainstream?**

The final report of the Evaluation will address this question.

- **Are there arrangements in place in the schools to enable pupils to integrate? What is the aim and benefits of getting pupils back in school on Fridays?**

The aim of integrating the learners in the mother school in the mainstream is to protect the well-being of learners and provide them with the opportunity to maintain contact with the mother school and their peers. It is an opportunity for the school and the system to work in partnership in immersing the learners, and is an opportunity for the school's children to welcome the new arrivals to the school on a weekly basis as they grow in confidence on their journey as new speakers.

Our school teachers usually provide differentiated activities for children along with preparing scaffolding to support them in various curricular areas which allows the learners to integrate with their peers in the activity of the classes irrespective of their level of ability and understanding. A lot of hands-on activities also take place in our schools on Friday afternoons, e.g. sports, singing and the 'pŵn Aur' which is a golden opportunity for the children to join in the lessons from week to week with very little extra work for the teachers to prepare.

As this transition day is scheduled in advance, it is an opportunity for the mother school to adjust its timetable to provide opportunities for learners to assimilate their skills in Welsh step by step from week to week. It is extremely important that the whole school community is involved in the learners' language journey from the outset.

- **What was the rationale behind how the consultation took place before system changes were made? Was a language impact assessment held before the changes were made?**

The well-being of learners and the need for them to keep in touch with their peers and the mother school during the course was at the heart of Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet Members' decision (16/07/21) to re-structure the Immersion Units and create a new System. There was no requirement to carry out a Language Impact Assessment. The Welsh language was addressed as part of the Equality Impact Assessment.

Appendix 2 – The Immersion Education System item

Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee 13/02/25

Adapted from interview questions for Mainstream School Teachers (O'Duibhir, 2018) – Immersion Education

Learning Materials

1. What teaching and learning materials are available to you to support teaching the curriculum to immersion pupils through the medium of Welsh? How adequate are they in your opinion?
2. Describe how you get to know about the work being completed at the Immersion Centre and any resources that are available to you in supporting the pupils with Welsh in the mainstream?

Proficiency and Attitudes towards learning the language

I would now like to ask you some questions in relation to the children's proficiency in Welsh.

3. How satisfactory do you think the children's proficiency in Welsh is at the end of the 10 weeks immersion programme?
4. How does their language proficiency compare to native speakers of a similar age? There is room to ask follow-up questions if necessary, e.g. Is it a concern?
5. What strategies, if any, do you use to encourage the children to speak Welsh?
6. What guidance do you give to other pupils to support the new speakers at the mainstream school?
7. Can you describe to the best of your ability the contact/exposure the children attending the immersion centre get to Welsh outside of school?
8. How would you describe these children's attitudes towards learning Welsh?

Curriculum and Communication Consistency

9. Can you describe the kind of discussions that take place in your staff team meetings within your school in relation to supporting pupils in Welsh for returning to the mainstream school on Fridays?

10. How do you communicate and work with the immersion centre to support pupils with their work in the mainstream school on Fridays to ensure they can return, contribute and follow the curriculum and their classwork in the mainstream?

11. How do you know about the language work and the level of work being completed at the Immersion Centre in order to refer to it on Fridays?

12. What do you think are the challenges you face in trying to support the pupils when returning from the centre on Fridays to learn in your school/classroom?

Professional Learning

13. Can you identify any professional learning opportunities that are available to you and the school staff in terms of supporting the well-being and development of the pupils attending the immersion provision upon returning to the mainstream school?

14. Can you identify any professional learning opportunities that are available to you and the school staff in terms of developing your teaching methods to support the immersion pupils with the language?

The Immersion Model

15. Describe the strengths of the model for the 10-week immersion provision?

16. And can you describe any weaknesses to the 10-week model from your experience?

17. What are your thoughts around the model in terms of supporting the well-being of pupils who are part of the immersion provision (10 weeks and Fridays)?

Do you have any further comments you'd like to share that would be relevant to our research?

Thank you very much!

Appendix 3 – The Immersion Education System item

Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee 13/02/25

Focus Group to understand pupils' experiences and feelings about learning Welsh in the immersion program.

Introduction and Consent

My name is [name], and I'm from Bangor University. I'm here to learn about your experience with learning Welsh. There are no right or wrong answers, so please feel free to share what you really think.

Consent Process

(Read through the information sheet and assent form, guiding pupils through ticking each box and signing their names.)

Experiences with Learning Welsh

Feelings Check-in:

How do you feel when you're learning Welsh? (Use happy, neutral, and sad faces to guide responses.)

Summarise responses and ask questions based on the response cards.

I can see that (number) of you feel (description) about learning Welsh?

Can you explain why you feel (description)?

Further Questions

What do you enjoy most about it?

Is there anything you don't enjoy?

Where do you use Welsh?

When you use Welsh in school, where do you use it? On the playground? Do you use your Welsh at home?

Do you use Welsh in your school on a Friday? When you use Welsh in your main school, where do you use it? On the playground?

Feelings Check-in

How do you feel when you use Welsh in different places,
in school
at home?

When you are out doing things?

Parties?

Shopping?

Thoughts on the Welsh Immersion Program

How do you feel about the way Welsh is taught in your lessons?

Can you describe what a typical day in the Welsh immersion centre is like for you?

What do you think about coming to the unit for Welsh lessons?

Is there anything you like about it?

Is there anything you'd change or don't like?

Feelings Check-in

How do you feel about being in the unit and learning Welsh there?

How do you feel about returning to your normal school on a Friday?

Can you explain why you feel (description).

Impact and Feelings about Learning Welsh

Do you think learning Welsh has helped you in other subjects?

If yes, can you give an example?

Feelings Check-in

How does learning Welsh make you feel about doing other schoolwork?

How has learning Welsh in the immersion centre helped you in different places?

Has it helped in your normal school? How

How about outside of school? If so, how?

Or at home? If so, how?

Feelings Check-in

How do you feel when you use Welsh outside of the immersion centre in your normal school?

General School Experience

Final Feelings Check-in

I want you to think about these things when you are in the immersion centre first.

How do you feel

On your way to the immersion centre?

When you're in the classroom in the centre?

When you're doing your schoolwork?

When you're on the playground?

When you think about your classmates?

When you think about your teacher?

When you think about school in general?

And now can you answer the questions about your normal school, when you go there on a Friday?

How do you feel

On your way to school?

When you're in the classroom?

When you're doing your schoolwork?

When you're on the playground?

When you think about your classmates?

When you think about your teacher?

When you think about school in general?

Appendix 4 – The Immersion Education System item

Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee 13/02/25

Parent Questionnaire

Background information and language practice at home

1. Which language unit does your child attend? (please circle)

Maesincla

Llangybi

Tywyn

Eifionydd

2. Which school year are they in? _____

3. How long have you lived in Wales? _____

4. Which languages do you speak? _____

5. Which languages do you use at home? _____

6. Which languages do your child speak? _____

Welsh language learning

7. What do you think about your child learning Welsh in the language unit?

8. Do you think there is a value in learning Welsh? (please circle) Yes No

9. Why do you think this? _____

10. What are your main concerns about your child attending a Welsh language unit?

11. Does your child ever need assistance with homework completed through Welsh?
(please circle) Yes No

If yes, who helps them? _____

12. Have you noticed your child using more Welsh at home? (please circle)

Yes No

13. When out in the community, have you noticed your child using more Welsh since attending the language unit?

Yes No

14. Have you noticed any changes to your child's wellbeing since attending the language unit? (please circle) Yes No

If so, what changes? _____

15. In general, how would you rate your child's enthusiasm when attending (tick one box on each row):

	Very enthusiastic	Somewhat enthusiastic	Rarely enthusiastic	Not enthusiastic
The language unit				
Mainstream school				

Please explain your answers to the question above

Agenda Item 8



Mi allwch ddarllen y ddogfen yma yn Gymraeg hefyd. Ewch nôl i'r dudalen we, a chliciwch ar y botwm iaith ar dop y dudalen.

MEETING	EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE	13 February 2025
TITLE	Safeguarding Arrangements in Schools Scrutiny Investigation Brief
PURPOSE OF THE REPORT	To adopt the investigation's brief and to elect members
AUTHOR	Bethan Adams, Scrutiny Advisor

1. Safeguarding arrangements in schools were scrutinised at the Committee's meeting on 18 July 2024. There was an informal discussion after the meeting as to the possibility of holding a Task and Finish Group or Scrutiny Investigation into the field. It was concluded that further discussion should take place at the Committee's informal meeting on 5 September 2024 where concern was expressed by members present about the implementation of the safeguarding arrangements within our schools.
2. At the Committee's informal meeting on 9 January 2025, a draft brief was considered for the scrutiny investigation. A scrutiny investigation looks in depth into a subject and gathers evidence which includes listening to people's experiences over a period of around 6 to 9 months.
3. The Scrutiny Forum (a meeting of scrutiny chairs and vice-chairs) has a role to advise on the prioritisation of scrutiny investigations within the context of the resources available. At the meeting of the Forum on 29 January 2025, consideration was given to the draft brief and the investigation was prioritised.
4. See the draft brief of the investigation attached to the report, as an appendix.
5. The main question that the investigation will address is:

'Are the safeguarding arrangements in the county's schools appropriate and implemented consistently?'
6. The investigation will consider the authority's current arrangements in terms of safeguarding in schools and the arrangements in a sample of schools. It is intended to decide on the schools which will be included in the sample at the first meeting of the investigation, considering factors such as different sizes, different areas and a mixture of urban and rural schools. Consideration will also be given to the schools' Estyn inspection schedule when choosing schools for the sample, especially in terms of whether they have been recently inspected.
7. It is intended to share the school visits between the investigation members. Should a member of the investigation be a school governor, they would not visit that school or influence the findings of the members who have visited the school.
8. At the Committee's informal meeting on 9 January 2025, members were invited to express an interest in terms of being members of the investigation. It was concluded that an e-mail should be sent to all Committee members asking the members to note which school governing bodies they are a part of. It was emphasised in the e-mail

that members must ensure that they have completed the 'Safeguarding Children and Adults Training' to be a member of the investigation.

9. A maximum of five members can be part of the investigation and, in accordance with the Council's Constitution, the membership must include representation from no less than two different political groups. Given that this matter is in the field of education, it is believed that it would be appropriate for one co-opted member with a vote on education matters only, to also be part of the investigation.
10. **The Committee is asked to:**
 - (i) **adopt the brief.**
 - (ii) **elect members to undertake the work of the investigation.**

**SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION –
SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS IN SCHOOLS**
Draft BRIEF

A	<p><u>What matter is being considered?</u></p> <p>The item 'Safeguarding Arrangements in Schools' was added as an additional item to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee's annual work programme after the annual workshop at the request of scrutiny members.</p> <p>The arrangements were scrutinised at the Committee's meeting on 18 July 2024. There was an informal discussion after the meeting as to the possibility of holding a Task and Finish Group or Scrutiny Investigation into the field. It was concluded that further discussion should take place at the Committee's informal meeting on 5 September 2024 where concern was expressed by members present about the implementation of the safeguarding arrangements within our schools.</p> <p>The Cabinet has approved and adopted a 'Response to Offending Plan' at its meeting on 21 January 2025, which includes investigations and further work to ensure safeguarding arrangements, among other objectives. The response plan looks broadly at a number of different areas, and the scrutiny investigation – safeguarding arrangements in schools is included as one of the work streams in the Plan. The investigation will look at current safeguarding arrangements in schools.</p> <p>Additionally, following positive discussions between the Children’s Commissioner, officers and Cabinet Members in November, and a further meeting between the Chief Executive and the Commissioner on the 9th of December, the Commissioner was invited to contribute to the Response Plan with an offer for her officials to be part of the process to monitor progress on the various work streams. This discussion continues with very positive dialogue.</p>
B	<p><u>Aim of the Investigation</u></p> <p>The main question to address is:</p> <p>‘Are the safeguarding arrangements in the county's schools appropriate and implemented consistently?’</p> <p>It is intended to do this by asking the following key questions:</p> <p><u>Research and establish facts:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the requirements including guidance in newsletters and guidelines on 'safeguarding requirements' in schools? <i>(Legal Services)</i> • What are the safeguarding arrangements for schools in Gwynedd? <i>(Council's internal experts in safeguarding, Education Department regarding safeguarding policies)</i> • How does the collaboration between schools/the Education Department and the Children Department work? <i>(Internal council experts – Education Department and Children Department + responses of questionnaire to schools)</i>

**SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION –
SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS IN SCHOOLS**

Draft BRIEF

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the findings/views of Estyn (the regulators in the field) on arrangements in Gwynedd schools? (<i>Authority's arrangements</i>) • Are there examples of good practice nationally, and what would top-quality safeguarding arrangements look like in schools? (i.e. how could good arrangements be ensured). • What do the schools say about their safeguarding arrangements and the support by the authority - are there specific themes? (<i>results of the annual questionnaire from schools</i>) <p><u>Sample of schools</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do the arrangements work in practice in the schools? <p>Focus on the following specific schools: 6 primary schools (of the 78) 3 secondary schools (of the 12) 1 all-through school (of the two) 1 special school (of the two)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the findings/views of Estyn (the regulators in the field) on arrangements in Gwynedd schools? (<i>the arrangements of the schools from the sample</i>) • What do the schools themselves say about their safeguarding arrangements? - (<i>schools' annual questionnaire on safeguarding</i>) <p><u>Visits:</u></p> <p>Talk to Governors (including the designated safeguarding Governor), Head and Staff (including the designated Safeguarding Officer) in each setting.</p>
C	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>Background documentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2020 - Supplementary guidance for inspecting Safeguarding by Estyn - Estyn Report 2023 - about the authority - Cyngor Gwynedd's Safeguarding Policy - Safeguarding Strategic Panel and Operational Safeguarding Group's Terms of Reference - Safeguarding Children in Gwynedd Schools Model Policy - Reports/Safeguarding Policies for schools visited - Latest reports from Estyn - Annual questionnaire 'schools safeguarding'
CH	<p><u>Gathering Evidence</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - External expert in the field

**SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION –
SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS IN SCHOOLS**

Draft BRIEF

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Council's Internal Experts in the field <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Safeguarding officers (Statutory Director of Social Services, Head of Children and Supporting Families Department, Referral Team (Children Department), Assistant Head of Safeguarding and Quality - Children Department; Safeguarding and Wellbeing Quality Leader, Education Protection and Wellbeing Officer - Education Department) o Head of Education Department o Legal Services - In 11 schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Governors (Responsible/designated governors for safeguarding) o Head o Staff member with designated safeguarding responsibility within the school o Staff 		
D	<u>Analysis</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Weigh up the evidence gathered from those interviewed - Consider research information and background information 		
DD	<u>Writing the Report</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Note main findings supported by evidence - Note the recommendations for short-term outputs - Note recommendations and longer term outputs - Discuss and agree upon the draft Report with leaders of the work within the Council - Submit the Final Draft Report to the Scrutiny Committee for observations and endorsement - Publish the Final Report 		
E	<u>Action Plan</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cabinet/Cabinet Member/Education Department to produce an action plan in response to the recommendations - Invite the Cabinet Member for Education and officers to discuss the action plan jointly with the Scrutineers 		
F	<u>Track Progress</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An update to enable the scrutineers to assess progress. 		
FF	<u>TIMETABLE</u>		
	What	Lead	Date
1	Adopt the Brief	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee	13 February 2025
2	The Investigation Members' First Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Context – Cabinet Member for Education, Head of Education Department, Corporate Director of Social Services and Legal 	Investigation Members and Lead Officer	10 March 2025

**SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION –
SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS IN SCHOOLS**
Draft BRIEF

	Service - Select schools to include in the sample		
3	Meeting to consider safeguarding arrangements in schools and the Authority's arrangements	Investigation Members and Lead Officer	17 March 2025
4	Meeting to consider: - Views of Estyn on the Authority's arrangements - Good practice - School responses to questions about safeguarding in the annual questionnaire from the Authority	Investigation Members and Lead Officer	31 March 2025
5	Consider reports/information about the schools in the sample and formulate questions for them	Investigation Members and Lead Officer	7 April 2025
6	Visit the schools (11 schools)	Investigation Members and Lead Officer	May / June / July 2025
7	A meeting to discuss the visits	Investigation Members and Lead Officer	August 2025
8	Meeting to draw up findings and draft recommendations	Investigation Members and Lead Officer	September 2025
9	Analysis and Draft Reports	Investigation Members and Lead Officer	October 2025
10	Final Draft Report - Meeting to share the scrutiny investigation's final draft report with the Head of Education and the Cabinet Member	Investigation Members Lead Officer Corporate Director	November 2025
11	Submission of the draft report to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee	Chair of the investigation	11 December 2025