

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET



Report to the Cabinet

Meeting Date: 28 March 2017
Cabinet Member: Councillor Gareth Thomas
Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn
Contact Officer: Garem Jackson
Contact Number: 01286 679 489
Item Title: Council Plan 2017/18
Young people's social use of Welsh [P9]

1 DECISION SOUGHT

The Cabinet is asked to commit £40,000 of extra funding in order to implement the Secondary Language Strategy to lead to a further increase in pupils' social and curricular use of Welsh.

2 REASON WHY DECISION IS NEEDED

Some initiatives contained in the Council Plan 2017/18 require resources in order to fulfil the objectives of the project.

The Leadership Team wishes to individually assess every project applying for extra resources.

3 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this project is to ensure strong progression and to build on the success of the innovative Welsh Language Charter project which is implemented in Gwynedd primary schools and which has now been extended nationally. Following positive reports on the success of the Language Charter in Gwynedd, the Welsh Government requested that the specialisation and good practice in Gwynedd be used to extend the project to other areas in Wales.

In order to ensure solid progression for the Primary Language Charter project, and to continue to improve the Welsh language skills of our young people, during 2016/17 a Secondary Language Strategy was developed which provides clear guidance on how to set about planning intervention in order to improve awareness and increase the use of the language among young people in the secondary sector.

The Strategy incorporates the recommendations of the Trywydd company report (a report commissioned to conduct a survey into the situation of the Welsh language as a social language among young people in Gwynedd secondary schools), the Secondary Language Practices Support Project, the Recommendations in the Report by Alun Charles, the Welsh Government Strategy: a million Welsh speakers by 2050 and the Welsh Government Framework to increase the use of Welsh by children and young people. The Strategy sets out clear expectations and guidance for the county's secondary schools on techniques to change language practices and the various ways of influencing pupils' social language inside and outside school.

The extra resources are needed in order to fund the post (initially a one-year secondment) of 'Secondary Language Charter Co-ordinator', to:

- support the 14 secondary schools to implement the main priorities of the Strategy
- prepare and implement comprehensive training programmes for secondary teachers on the methodologies of bilingual teaching and learning
- further promote the benefits, advantages and usefulness of bilingualism so as to strengthen pupils' motivation to develop into persons who are effortlessly fluent in both languages.

The responsibilities of the post are noted below:

- Lead, promote and support the work of all Gwynedd secondary schools to implement the Secondary Language Charter, nurturing specialisation, increasing understanding of the essentials of language planning, together with establishing methods of monitoring, gathering data, gauging impact and accrediting the implementation of the Language Charter.
- Lead and collaborate with the county's schools to raise pupils' standards of attainment in relation to the Welsh language.
- Provide appropriate training for different tiers of the workforce.
- Contribute to the work of ensuring that the Authority responds to the requirements and principles of the:
 - Welsh-medium Education Strategy
 - Welsh Government Strategy: a million Welsh speakers by 2050
 - Welsh Language in Education Strategic Plan
 - Authority's Language Strategy and Strategic Plan.
- Responsibility for developing, leading and promoting the Authority's policy within the context of Gwynedd Secondary Schools' Welsh Language Charter.
- Responsibility for determining standards of work and establishing procedures with all members of the secondary schools' workforce that will lead to developing pupils' ability and confidence to become proficiently bilingual.
- Responsibility for leading and co-ordinating meetings of the 'Secondary Language Working Group' task and finish group and undertaking an active role as a member of that group.
- Responsibility for implementing, promoting and supporting schools' work in relation to fulfilling the requirements of the Language Charter,

interpreting this within the context of children's social use of Welsh and raising the standards of educational achievement.

- Plan, provide and commission appropriate training for different tiers of the workforce when responding to the requirements of the Language Charter.
- Responsibility for developing and nurturing skills and specialisation in language planning and language awareness among the workforce.
- Nurture links between schools that will encourage effective and strategic collaboration to promote and support the work of practitioners across the secondary sector.
- Lead and provide specialist knowledge about the essentials of language planning; research and evidence in the field; and offer practical support to schools on methods of gauging the impact of language use.
- Provide advice and support for schools to enable them to prepare a portfolio of sufficient and clear evidence that will confirm the aim of the Language Charter.
- Establish and manage the process of monitoring and accrediting the work of schools.
- Responsibility for establishing an information library of data and evidence of the influence and impact of implementing the Language Charter on children's social use of Welsh.

4 REASON AND JUSTIFICATION BEHIND THE DECISION

Receiving the extra resource from the Council would allow strong continuation and progression for the project and would ensure that Gwynedd continues to lead in innovative work across the north and nationally.

5 NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

The extra resource is needed to implement the Strategy from 1 April 2017.

6 ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO MAKING THE DECISION

N/A.

Statutory Officers Comments

Chief Executive:

Moving forward in implementing the Secondary Language Strategy and to lead to a further increase in pupils' social and curricular use of Welsh is very important to the Council and therefore this request for funding needs to be approved to implement this further.

Chief Finance Officer:

There will be several requirements/meriting consideration that will compete for the Transformation Fund's scarce resources, and the Cabinet members will decide on

how the relevant applications will be prioritized.

At the full meeting held on 2nd March 2017, when "bids" were approved for additional resources to meet unavoidable pressures on services, I mentioned that the Council's main priorities, developmental issues in order to make a difference, would be funded and commissioned through the 'Strategy Plan' procedure. It is at the Cabinet members discretion, with the Chief Executive's guidance, to prioritize use of the Transformation Fund for this purpose.

Following the Cabinet's decision on 22 November 2016 to approve transfer of £635k to the Transformation Fund, I confirm that adequate provision to realise the submitted plans for consideration at the Cabinet Meeting held on 28 March 2017, and that there are further reserves available for other projects that could become apparent/be developed and reach the Cabinet for future approval.

Monitoring Officer:

No comments regarding propriety.