

MEETING OF THE	LANGUAGE COMMITTEE
DATE	9 July 2019
TITLE	<i>Consultation Draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plans Regulations (Wales) 2019 and guidance</i>
PURPOSE	Share information and consider the observations of members as part of the process of creating a formal response to the consultation
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1. BACKGROUND

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

Cymraeg 2050

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

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

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

amendments, and the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan is, therefore, believed to be key to that.

The Welsh Language in Education: Action Plan 2017-21

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

2. CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

- 2.1 In order to achieve the Welsh Government's vision of a million Welsh speakers by 2050, the Government acknowledges that changes are needed in the way that Welsh medium education is planned.
- 2.2 An independent Advisory Board was established between May 2018 and March 2019 to consider the changes required to the legislation to support the vision of *Cymraeg 2050*. The Board concluded that the existing structure maintaining the statutory planning of Welsh medium education provision through the WESPs no longer supports the long-term ambition for the Welsh language.
- 2.3 As a result, between 30 May 2019 and 2 September 2019, the Welsh Government is holding a consultation period on *Draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plans Regulations (Wales) 2019 and guidance: [Consultation Document](#)*

3. THE PROSPECTIVE CHANGES

- 3.1 The main changes considered in respect of the consultation document are now outlined below:
 - Extending the duration of a WESP from the current 3 year cycle to 10 years
 - Remove the duty to plan on the basis of the results of parental demand assessments
 - Duty on local authorities to set their own ambition for the next 10 years and plan Welsh medium education provision on the basis of a clear target
 - Expectation for this target to be calculated in line with the methodology presented in statutory guidance
 - Changes to the content of WESPs (including better link between vision and target).
 - Move to a continuous form of monitoring and evaluating progress: Concise annual monitoring report

- Draft guidance aimed at offering local authorities with practical support and direction to prepare a plan

3.2 It is intended to present further details on these changes and the relevant considerations for Gwynedd through a powerpoint presentation in the Language Committee meeting itself.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to:

- Submit any observations to be included as part of Gwynedd's formal response to the consultation on the *Draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plans Regulations (Wales) 2019 and guidance*