

Equality Impact Assessment

See the *How to do an Equality Impact Assessment sheet* for assistance to complete this form. You are also welcome to contact Delyth Williams, Policy and Equality Officer on, ext 32708, or DelythGadlysWilliams@gwynedd.llyw.cymru for further help.

I Details

I.1 What is the name of the Plan in question?

Immersion Education System towards 2032 and beyond

I.2 What is the purpose of the Plan that is being created or changed? What changes are being considered?

The Education Department has developed a new vision for immersion education provision in Gwynedd.

Learners new to Gwynedd, who do not speak Welsh, will go through a process of language immersion, which is, to follow an intensive course of learning Welsh currently run by the Language Centres. The existing Language Centres are responsible for immersing learners in Welsh to enable them to acquire the language sufficiently to enable them to flourish in our bilingual education system thereafter. The immersion system for latecomers to Gwynedd takes place in one of 5 Language Centres located on the sites of some of our Primary and Secondary schools. The first primary Language Centre was opened in Caernarfon in September 1984, and there are now three other primary Language Centres in Dolgellau, Llangybi and Penrhyndeudraeth, as well as a Secondary Language Centre established in Porthmadog in 2004.

There is no doubt that the language centres have been successful over the last few decades in ensuring that learners succeed in acquiring the Welsh language and succeeding in integrating into Gwynedd's bilingual education system.

However, the Education Department believes that there is a case for changing the current immersion provision in Gwynedd, building on the success of the language centres.

As a result, the Cabinet Member for Education's vision for the Immersion Education System for 2032 and beyond is:

"My vision is to have a Welsh-medium and bilingual education system that puts the needs of all our learners at the heart of our provision.

I would like to see a flexible immersion education system, which provides first class education and training, supporting new learners to successfully acquire the Welsh Language, as well as ensuring high quality provision, experiences and support through the medium of Welsh that responds to the needs of the learners and their families, and will enable them to develop as independent and confident bilingual

learners and to succeed and thrive. ”

Learners under the current system attend the primary centres for twelve weeks, and the secondary centre for eight weeks. According to a summary report on a recent pilot undertaken at one of the County's primary immersion centres, it was noted that the procedure for admitting pupils to the primary age centres was not clear, and it was found that the procedure reported in the individual centres varied quite a lot. Some were there because they were latecomers to Gwynedd, others were there to get a little boost with their reading and writing skills, but were completely fluent in their ability to speak the Welsh language. Others at another centre had already been at the centre the previous educational year, but had gone back to school at that time and had the opportunity to come back. The report details that some learners arrive at the centres because they are "generally weak" in their educational ability.

The summary report highlights that there is a clear lack of understanding of the learner referral procedure and in deciding who is eligible to attend. Due to the lack of clarity in the procedure for admitting pupils to the centres, it is difficult at present to come to a firm judgment when measuring pupils' progress against their ability at the beginning and end of their time at a language centre.

The main cause for change and the need for a new vision for Gwynedd's immersion education system can be summarized into the following areas, and are expanded further below (Point 2.4):

- *Putting the needs of learners central*
- *Modernising the provision*
- *Working in partnership*
- *An opportunity to create an excellent learning environment*
- *New opportunities arising from Covid-19*
- *Lessons learnt*

Therefore, by looking at the case for change, our vision for learners that are newcomers is that they receive:

“Access to an excellent immersion education system that provides flexible and sustainable learning experiences of a high standard that equips them as independent learners who have the information and Welsh Language skills to enable them to move forward.

To provide an effective transition from immersion education to the local school, ensuring a high standard of experiences and support through the medium of Welsh, that responds to the needs of learners and their families to enable them to succeed and thrive.”

1.3 Who is responsible for this assessment?

Debbie A W Jones, Education Corporate Services Manager

1.4 When did you begin the assessment? What version is this?

May 2021

2) Implementation

2.1 Who are the partners that you will have to work with to carry out this assessment?

- Gwynedd Language Centre staff
- Teacher Union and Assistants' representatives
- Gwynedd Primary and Secondary Head teachers
- Schools Budget Forum
- Union Forum
- Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
- Language Committee
- Learners

2.2. What steps have you taken to engage with people with equality characters?

The Education Department has undertaken a period of engagement with key stakeholders on the new vision for the immersion education system towards 2032 and beyond.

As part of this engagement, a meeting was held to present the new vision to the Teachers and Teaching Assistants Unions along with a special meeting with the language centres staff on 27 May 2021, with an opportunity for staff to consider the vision and comment by 21 June 2021.

As part of the engagement also, the new vision was presented to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee on 10 June 2021, along with the Language Committee on 22 June 2021 in order to receive elected members' views on the vision, together with an opportunity to scrutinize on it.

As part of the engagement, the new vision was presented to the head teachers of all Gwynedd secondary schools on 16 June 2021, together with all Gwynedd primary school head teachers on 17 June 2021 for their comments.

As part of the engagement, 2 focus groups were held with current learners of the immersion education system in our language centres on 22 June 2021 to find out their views as service users on the new vision.

As part of the engagement, the new vision was presented to the Schools Budget Forum for consultation on the new funding regime for the immersion education system towards 2032 and beyond.

2.3 What was the result of the engagement?

Following a period of engagement on the new vision for Gwynedd's immersion education system

towards 2032 and beyond, the following comments were received as part of the engagement process:

Gwynedd Language Centre staff comments

A presentation on the new vision was presented to the staff of Gwynedd Language Centres on 27 May 2021, with an opportunity to submit comments by 21 June 2021.

In response to the new vision, staff made the following comments:

- We welcome the capital investment of £ 1.1m to ensure a first class learning environment and an increase in the number of immersion education sites.
- The intention of appointing a head and deputy for the service was welcomed, which would lead to a much more effective and efficient service, as well as ensuring consistency of service. It will also be a means of ensuring a close partnership between the provision and the schools, by being able to respond positively and efficiently to the needs of the schools. However, it was noted that staffing each site with a teacher and a teaching assistant would be a cause for concern.
- Concerns were noted about reducing the length of the primary immersion course from 12 weeks to 8-10 weeks, as well as reducing the number of days from 5 days to 4 days a week, in terms of its effect on learners' linguistic progress.
- Concern was expressed about the challenge of ensuring appropriate support for learners when attending school for 1 day each week, although staff agreed with the purpose of this 1 day of enabling learners to maintain contact with their local school, their peers and ensuring their well-being.
- Although blended learning offers many possibilities, blended learning brings with it many challenges in terms of the technology itself, a suitable and practical space within the schools, setting a timetable, as well as inconsistency between learners. Blended learning is not the same as the experience of face-to-face learning, especially when practising spoken language and gesture.
- Concern was expressed about the age range of the merger of primary and secondary learners of years 5-9.
- The need for more detail on some elements of the vision was also noted, and that it would be beneficial for staff to receive early clarity on some of these issues.

Comments by Gwynedd' Head Teachers of Primary and Secondary schools

A presentation on the new vision was given to Gwynedd's secondary head teachers on 16 June 2021, and to primary head teachers on 17 June 2021.

In response to the new vision, the head teachers submitted the following comments:

- Recognized the challenge of striking the right balance between ensuring intensive immersion to enable learners to acquire the Welsh language as quickly as possible, as well as enabling newcomers to settle and remain in their schools and create new peers.
- It was noted that there is an opportunity for Language Co-ordinators and Heads of Welsh Departments in the secondary schools to contribute their expertise in developing the detail for realizing the vision for the immersion education system towards 2032 and beyond.
- The proposal to amalgamate primary and secondary learners from years 5-9 of the immersion sites was welcomed.
- The primary head teachers welcomed the vision and investment, and in particular the intention to establish new immersion education sites in Tywyn and Bangor.
- The proposal to co-fund the new system was supported, but the primary sector emphasized that this should not happen at the expense of resources in schools.

Education and Scrutiny committee and Language Committee comments.

A report was presented to the Education and Scrutiny Committee on the new vision for the immersion education system towards 2032 and beyond on 10 June 2021, as well as the Language Committee on 22 June 2021.

The report presenting the new vision was accepted by members of the Scrutiny Committee and the Language Committee together with a request for the Cabinet Member for Education to consider the comments made by the committee members during the discussions, namely:

- Recognition of the Language Centres success over the years in ensuring that learners acquire the Welsh language.
- Agreed with the intention to strengthen accountability as part of the new vision.
- Supported the intention to equip the school workforce to support learners to make further progress in building confidence and acquiring the Welsh language.
- The proposal to establish an immersion education provision in Bangor was supported.
- The Education Department was asked to provide more detail on the immersion education system when available.
- There was a variety of views on the funding source of the immersion education system, with some members supportive of the intention that schools would contribute, thus increasing accountability and joint ownership of the system between the Education Department and the schools, but others expressed the wish that the Council corporately should finance the funding gap due to the fact that the Welsh language is one of the Council's main priorities.

The meeting concluded with a unanimous vote in favour of the new vision by the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee and Language Committee, with a request to provide more detail on the immersion education system when available.

Comments by Learners

2 focus groups were held with current language centre learners on 22 June 2021. Representation from years 5 and 6 of Cefn Coch language centre and a group of secondary language centre learners contributed brilliantly in a session that discussed a series of questions in response to a presentation on the new vision for the Immersion Education System towards 2032 and beyond.

Learners answered a series of questions asking their views on the proposal to invest and open new immersion sites, the new weekly timetable, the idea of putting primary and secondary language learners together, and what role does technology play in helping learners acquire the Welsh language.

All 15 learners made a valuable contribution to the conversation, and it is important to note that their language ability is a credit to the current language centres.

Agree or disagree with the new vision

- Of all learners (primary and secondary), 8 learners indicated that they agreed with the vision. 5 of the secondary indicated a neutral view, with only 1 disagreeing with the new vision.
- One learner noted in particular that there were good elements to attending the immersion site for 4 days a week, then 1 day each week at the local school, but the idea of feeling

overwhelmed with the local school' work on the 1 day was a cause of concern.

- Another learner noted that technology can help someone to better learn a language, but that investing in hard resources such as books and games was still a good idea.

Things that can contribute to helping Learners learn Welsh

- One learner in the primary focus group noted the importance of his parents learning Welsh at the same time, which would be of great help to him.
- Learners in the primary focus group commented that the idea of spending 4 days in the immersion education site, and one day at school was a 'great' idea. It would mean being able to continue learning Welsh and continue making friends at their local school.
- One girl in the primary focus group noted her desire to see the length of a day at the immersion site extended.
- Learners' comments at the secondary language centre focused slightly on the experiences during COVID and the lockdown periods. We received comments about poor WIFI connection, and unsuitable rooms being given to learners at their local schools when trying to join lessons on TEAMS.
- However, we received comments about how good technological resources like Google Classroom are for homework and supporting language learning.
- Technology allows learners who do not speak English to be able to communicate and be involved in lessons through apps like Google translate etc.
- 10 learners voted that including resources and technology as part of language learning is a good idea. 2 disagreed stating that they preferred hard resources, singing and acting techniques.

Learners' views on opening new immersion sites in Bangor and Tywyn

- Secondary learners traveling across the county to Eifionydd' secondary language centre noted that opening new sites in Bangor and Tywyn was a good idea. 5 voted in favour, and 2 indicated a neutral opinion.
- A number of comments noted that opening new sites offers opportunities to reduce time spent travelling in taxis. A comment was also made stating that establishing new sites makes no difference to someone in Nefyn or Aberdaron who still have to travel a long distance.
- In the primary focus group, this change was not one that was of great interest to the learners. 3 of them stated that opening new immersion sites at the new locations was a good idea, 1 remained neutral, while 3 disagreed.

Offer a new weekly timetable to immersion education in Gwynedd

- Enthusiastic comments were received on the proposal for a week-long timetable where

learners spend 1 day each week at their local school from the primary learners.

- This would allow them to continue to make friends and learn the language at the same time.
- However, one learner gave a very insightful comment: *“We’re here for 8-9 weeks, if we go back 1 day a week, that’s 8 or 9 days we’d lose learning Welsh”*.
- 5 agreed with the new timetable, but 3 stated that they disagreed with the proposal.
- In the secondary age group, there was general opposition to the proposal. This was reflected in their preference for stability after lockdown and the continual effects of COVID on the learners. Comments were made stating that it is important to learn the language properly before going back to the local school to continue with the rest of their studies and subjects.
- Everyone understood that the new timetable was intended to give learners the opportunity to settle and make new friends, but a stable routine was more important to the secondary learners.

Learners' views on sites that would include primary and secondary learners together

- Secondary learners thought that primary learners were immature and having siblings on the same site would be problematic.
- Having young learners would make it difficult for teachers to prepare for everyone.
- The 7 members of the secondary focus group disagreed with the proposal.
- In the primary focus group, 5 agreed with the proposal, 2 remained neutral and 1 disagreed.
- The learners from the Tywyn and Bangor areas would not have to travel as far to Eifionydd’ secondary immersion site.
- Siblings would be able to stay together if they preferred, although they could be separated during lesson time.

2.4 What other information informed the way you operate?

The main cause for change and the need for a new vision for Gwynedd's immersion education system can be summarized into the following areas, which are expanded further below:

- Putting the needs of the learner at the centre
- Updating and modernise the provision
- Working in partnership
- Opportunity to create a first class learning environment
- New opportunities arising from COVID-19
- Lessons learned from the Pilot Scheme implemented at the request of Cabinet.

Place the learner's needs at the centre

- The need for the system to promote the achievement and welfare of Gwynedd newcomers to acquire the Welsh language while keeping in contact with their local school and peers at the same time.
- The need for the system to be able to assist parents and carers to understand the value of Welsh-medium education to support their children.

Modernise the provision and make it contemporary

- The need for the system to respond to the needs of the learners and the curriculum.
- The need to invest in the current infrastructure, which includes digital resources.

Working in partnership

- The need for the Education Department and schools to work in partnership and take joint ownership of the immersion education system.
- The need for the immersion education system to provide guidance, support and resources to schools to enable them to support learners to make further progress in terms of their Welsh language confidence/skills.

An opportunity to create a first-class learning environment

- An opportunity to invest £1.1million of Welsh Government Welsh-medium education capital grant into the immersion education system, improving the learning environment and infrastructure.

New opportunities as a result of COVID-19

- Blended learning provision i.e. the Language Centres provided blended learning as a result of the numerous lockdowns, namely face-to-face teaching at school, live learning sessions via Teams, together with work on Google Classrooms. This was recognised as excellent practice by Estyn.
- The schools are asking for immersion education expertise and resources to support the Welsh language to be disseminated across the system.

Lessons learnt as a result of the Pilot Scheme

- The pilot highlighted the need to consider the wellbeing of learners, and maintain contact with their peers; many find it difficult to fit back into their local school after a period at a centre.
- The need to strengthen the relationship with schools to enable further increases in support for language development.

The objectives underpinning the vision are detailed in **Appendix 1**, namely:

- Teaching and Learning
- Learning Environment
- Curriculum
- Support for Learners
- Financial Resources

In order to achieve the vision, purpose, aim and objectives, we hope to invest £ 1.1m of the Welsh Government's Welsh-medium education capital grant into our immersion education system in Gwynedd, to ensure a first-class learning environment, and state-of-the-art facilities for 21st century learners and educators.

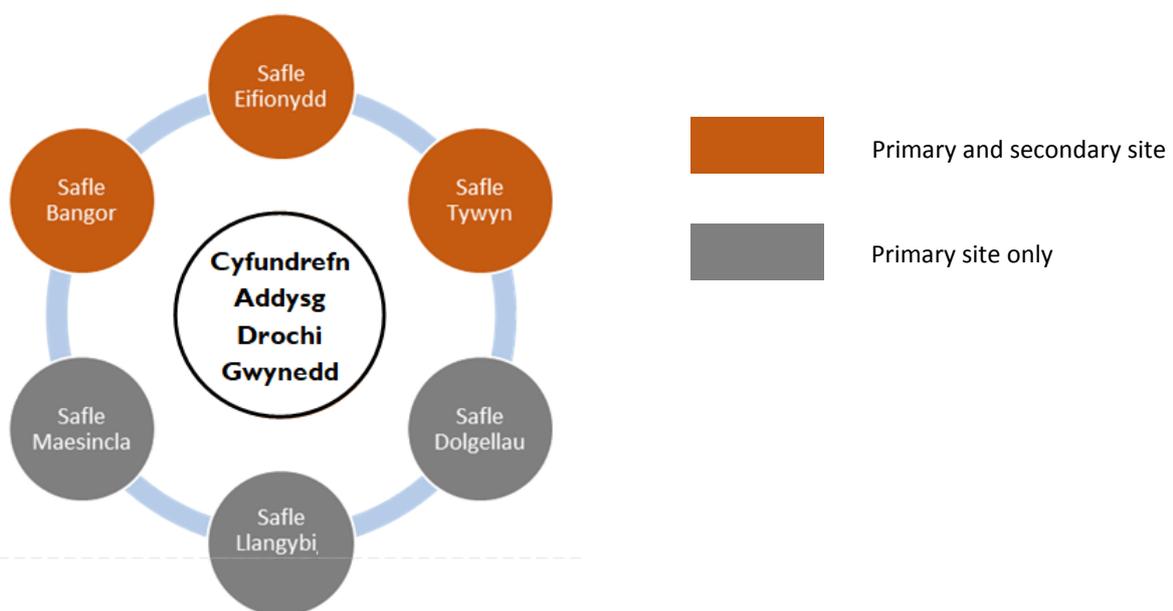
This capital investment will be a means of establishing 2 completely new immersion education sites in Gwynedd located in strategic areas of the county and areas of linguistic significance, namely Tywyn and

Bangor. It is also intended to improve the facilities at the Eifionydd immersion education site, which is again strategically located right in the middle of the county. These 3 immersion education sites will offer joint primary and secondary provision bridging years 5-9.

We also intend to relocate the Dolgellau Language Centre to a larger site in order to offer the provision to more children, and the Dolgellau site along with Llangybi and Maesincla will provide immersion education for years 2-4 of the primary schools.

In the new system, an immersion site will not continue on the Ysgol Cefn Coch site, however, new entrants in that area will be allocated to immersion education system sites in Tywyn, Dolgellau, Eifionydd or Llangybi, based on the site closest to the learners.

As a result of the investment, 6 sites will offer provision for primary age learners and 3 sites will offer secondary aged learners with flexibility between sites according to demand.



Detail the vision for the new immersion provision

In the new system, the primary and secondary on-site immersion education provision would be 4 days a week, for a period of 8-10 weeks. This would ensure that the immersion provision can be fully maintained for the 3 school terms.

Learners would attend their local school for 1 day each week, which would allow learners to continue contact with their local school, ensuring continuity of their Welsh immersion education there, and full access to the curriculum.

For 1 day a week, when learners attend their local school, immersion education staff would be available to assist the learners in the schools. They would also be able to assist at the other immersion education sites, provide remote support to provide guidance to schools to support learners, as well as creating and providing resources in response to need in Welsh medium education and immersion education more generally.

For the remaining period of each term where we see learners returned to their local schools,

immersion education staff will implement a full program of blended learning, namely face to face teaching in school, live learning sessions through Teams; as well as distance learning through Google Classrooms to secure additional support for learners to help them make further progress in acquiring Welsh in school.

2.5 Are there any gaps in our evidence that need to be gathered?

We have held discussions and engaged on the new vision for the immersion education system towards 2032 and beyond.

If Cabinet supports the new vision, the Education Department will undertake further work on the details of implementing the vision from September 2022 onwards.

3) Identifying the Impact

3.1 What impact will the new Plan have on people with equality characteristics? The Council must give due regard to the impact any changes will have on people with equality characteristics.

Characteristics	What type of impact? (delete those irrelevant)	In what way? What is the evidence?
Race (including nationality)	Positive	The new vision states that the new provision will increase the number of immersion sites available to learners, with more learners having access to immersion education closer to their local school than the existing provision. It is therefore anticipated that the outcome will be better and therefore no negative impact on non-Welsh speaking latecomers from the rest of the UK or other countries.
The Welsh language	Positive	There is no change to the purpose and essence of the existing language centres as a result of the new vision for the immersion education system towards 2032 and beyond. The vision is an attempt to build on the solid foundations already in place. It is intended to increase the number of sites that will provide immersion education, which will be a means of ensuring that learners can attend the immersion provision that is closer to their home and local school. The new provision offers a new weekly timetable, which will mean that learners will attend the nearest immersion education site 4 days a week, spending 1 day at their

		<p>local school.</p> <p>This is an effort to ensure a better relationship between the immersion provision and the schools by co-owning the education and language acquisition of those learners who are new to Gwynedd.</p>
Disability	Positive	<p>One of the principles of the new vision is to ensure that it does not impact on the availability of new entrant to the provision (i.e. that the same number or more learners access the service). It is therefore anticipated that the outcome for new entrants will be the same, whether or not they have a disability.</p> <p>A positive element of the new vision is the establishment of two new sites in Bangor and Tywyn, which will offer primary and secondary immersion education. In addition, the existing secondary language centre that is located in a cabin on the Ysgol Eifionydd site will move to a new facility on the Ysgol Eifionydd site.</p> <p>We plan to spend £ 1.1 million of capital funding from the Welsh Government, which will enable us to upgrade and invest in our infrastructure. There will be opportunities to ensure that all learners, whatever their needs are considered when upgrading and investing in new buildings and resources.</p> <p>The opening of new Immersion Sites in Bangor and Tywyn for secondary and primary learners can have a positive impact on the hours learners travel to and from the provision on public and private transport. This would benefit all learners, those with and without a form of disability.</p>
Gender	None Identified	<p>No impact on service users is anticipated.</p> <p>It was noted in a previous equality assessment when the language centres faced a restructuring process that all current language centre staff are women. The previous consultation suggested the need to restructure due to a budget shortfall, and therefore the previous consultation highlighted the potential for loss of specialist, well-paid jobs for women, including replacing those jobs with lower paid jobs.</p> <p>We are currently engaging and seeking a decision on the new vision for the immersion education provision, and if Cabinet decided to approve the new vision, this would enable the Education Department to add further detail in order to realise the vision by September 2022.</p>

		Despite the lack of detail at present, there is the potential for new jobs to be created with the opening of two additional language immersion sites in Bangor and Tywyn.
Age	Positive and negative	<p>It is anticipated that the outcome for new entrants will be the same or slightly different from what they are currently experiencing. We acknowledge that children and young people are the current service users of the language centres, and the proposed immersion education system, and this is the only feature mentioned by users.</p> <p>Having a new provision that increases the number of sites and the number of learners accessing a combination of primary and secondary immersion education co-located on some of the sites will mean that learners travel less and will potentially be able to be grouped with learners of similar and / or different age range and linguistic ability.</p> <p>The new provision enables the service to be flexible to the needs of the service and learners as required. Having more sites offering secondary immersion education in Bangor and Tywyn would make it fairer for those of secondary school age, significantly reducing the travel time of those learners on transport.</p> <p>A potential strength of the new provision is the ability to be flexible by separating or co-locating sibling learners. Currently, siblings that do not get along are separated into other classes, but the establishment of two new secondary (and primary) sites provides the staff the opportunity to separate siblings depending on the situation. On the other hand, the new system can co-locate the family on one site if learners do not wish to be separated for reasons such as shyness and confidence.</p> <p>Staff and learners during the consultation period noted that it is sometimes challenging to have siblings of different ages in the same class all day every day in a language centre. The lack of maturity of some primary learners is cited as a reason for the secondary learners not wanting to include on one site with the primary learners.</p> <p>Flexibility and more immersion sites within a reasonable traveling distance enable separation for the benefit of the individual learners if necessary, or vice versa.</p>
Sexual orientation	None Identified	<p>No impact on service users predicted with this equality feature.</p> <p>As the new service will continue to follow the anti-</p>

		bullying, equality, equal opportunities and any other relevant policies.
Religion or belief (or lack of belief)	None Identified	No impact on service users predicted with this equality feature. As the new service will continue to follow the anti-bullying, equality, equal opportunities and any other relevant policies.
Gender reassignment	None Identified	No impact on service users predicted with this equality feature. As the new service will continue to follow the anti-bullying, equality, equal opportunities and any other relevant policies.
Pregnancy and maternity	None Identified	No impact on service users predicted with this equality feature. As the new service will continue to follow the anti-bullying, equality, equal opportunities and any other relevant policies.
Marriage and civil partnership	None Identified	No impact on service users predicted with this equality feature. As the new service will continue to follow the anti-bullying, equality, equal opportunities and any other relevant policies.

3.2 Does the policy or service affect their General Duties under the Equality Act 2010? The Council must pay attention to the way any change affects these duties.

General Duties of the Equality Act	Does it have an impact? (delete those irrelevant)	In what way? What is the evidence?
Remove illegal discrimination, harassment and victimisation	yes	One of the principles of the new vision is to ensure that it does not affect the availability and entry to new entrant (i.e. that the same number or more learners can access the service). The new vision proposes increasing the number of sites. More learners would access the service, and would have the opportunity to acquire Welsh to enable them to assimilate to the bilingual society in Gwynedd, and to take full advantage of educational provision and experiences in line with the Education Departments' Language Policy.
Promoting equal opportunities	yes	The new vision sees more learners accessing the language service, and having the opportunity to acquire Welsh to enable them to assimilate to the bilingual society in Gwynedd, and to take full advantage of educational provision and experiences in accordance with the Education Departments' Language Policy.

		<p>It was noted in the previous consultation on restructuring the language centres in Gwynedd that the loss of a specialist, well-paid job for women (in the previous context), replacing them with lower paying jobs have a negative impact on women. The new vision does not detail the staffing structure of the new system at this point.</p> <p>However, it can be assumed that opening two new sites in Tywyn and Bangor enables the opportunity to create new specialist jobs. In addition, the new vision would be an investment in strategically and linguistically challenging parts of the county.</p>
<p>Encouraging good relationships</p>	<p>yes</p>	<p>One of the principles of the new vision is to ensure that it does not affect the availability and entry to new entrant (i.e. that the same number or more learners can access the service). Therefore, the change would not have an adverse effect, as there would still be equal opportunity for new entrants. The new vision would mean that more learners would access the service, and have the opportunity to acquire the Welsh language to enable them to assimilate into the bilingual society in Gwynedd, and take full advantage of the provision and educational experiences in accordance with the Education Departments' Language Policy. Enabling the newcomers to acquire the Welsh language would ensure that they are able to foster good relationships with peers and the bilingual community in Gwynedd.</p> <p>The new vision suggests that learners spend 4 days a week at the immersion education site, followed by 1 day at their local school. This can have a very positive impact and their ability to continue to settle and become embedded in their local schools, while continuing to deepen their language acquisition skills in the immersion sites the rest of the week.</p> <p>The primary and secondary learners noted a difference of opinion on this new procedure, noting that returning to their secondary school for one day a week caused them to worry about the workload they would face when returning on a weekly basis.</p> <p>The concern was noted, but with the addition of detail to the provision in due course, these concerns could possibly be mitigated.</p>

4) Analysing the results

4.1 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, positive impact on any of the equality characteristics or the General Duties and what is the reason for this?

We believe that the new vision for the Immersion Education System in Gwynedd towards 2032 and beyond is likely to have a positive impact on any of the equality characteristics or the General Duty, given the availability of provision for the learners may be improving or staying the same.

Considerable effort is being made to try to ensure better co-operation and joint ownership of Welsh education for those learners new to Gwynedd between the schools and the immersion education system.

Our overriding principle is to put the welfare of learners at the centre of everything. And so investing and securing better resources that improve the experience of all learners, opening new sites and changing the weekly timetable of learning is an effort to improve the learning environment and the Welsh learning experience for the newcomers to Gwynedd, whatever their background, age, ability, gender, race and nationality.

4.2 Is the Plan therefore likely to have a substantial, negative impact on any of the equality characteristics or General Duties and what is the reason for this?

Setting a new vision for the Immersion Education System in Gwynedd towards 2032 and beyond is not likely to have a negative impact on any of the equality characteristics or the General Duty, due to the availability of the provision learners may be improving or staying the same.

Our aim is to see learners settle, embed and acquire the Welsh language here in Gwynedd. Changing the service offers opportunities to continually improve opportunities to build meaningful relationships with peers and teachers, as the schools and the organization take ownership of learners wellbeing and education from the outset.

4.3 What should be done?

Select one of the following:

Continue with the plan as it is robust	Yes
Adapt the plan to remove any barriers	
Suspend and abolish the plan as the detrimental impacts are too large	
Continue with the plan as any detrimental impact can be justified	

4.4 What steps will you take to reduce or mitigate any negative impacts?

As a result of engaging with staff and the unions, as well as engaging with a wide range of stakeholders, it was noted that there has been historical praise for the success of the language centres over recent

decades in ensuring that learners acquire the Welsh language.

The new vision was supported by a unanimous vote in a meeting of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee and the Language Committee. It was agreed that the vision offers an opportunity to strengthen accountability and it complements the intention to equip the school workforce to support learners to make further progress in their schools during and beyond their time at the immersion education site. The Education Department has been asked to submit more information when it becomes available.

There was also a variety of views on how to fund the new immersion education system, with some members supportive of the intention that schools would contribute. This would increase accountability and joint ownership of the provision between the Education Department and the schools. However, some also expressed their wish that the Council should corporately finance the funding gap due to the fact that the Welsh language is one of the Council's main priorities.

In a series of stakeholder engagement meetings, we invited comments and views on the vision and possible solutions within the proposed change.

The new vision seeks to rectify and build on the successes of the language centres as they are at present.

By investing £1.1million of capital funding to establish new immersion education sites in locations such as Bangor and Tywyn, we anticipate reduced travel across the County, and hope to see better co-operation throughout the school term between the new provision and the schools that together are key to supporting the newcomers to acquire the Welsh language successfully and confidently.

4.5 If you do not take further action to remove or reduce negative impacts, explain why here.

Not relative

5) Monitoring

5.1 What steps will you take to monitor the impact and effectiveness of the plan (action plan)?

Through engagement with staff and the existing unions and learners of the provision, as well as stakeholder engagement, we are ready to listen and consider any comments and ideas put forward. At this point, our intention is to share the new vision with our users, and other partners involved with the Welsh language in Education and our communities.

We have no evidence to prove or disprove the effects of the new vision on provision, and therefore we will put in place robust arrangements to communicate and monitor the impact of any change on the quality of existing language centre' provision as a result of adopting and implementing the new vision.

We will also regularly seek the views of members and service users, and adjust the impact assessment as necessary to reflect the views and any additional information received.

We intend at the request of stakeholders to report on any additional detail in due course.

6. The Welsh Language

6.1. How does your proposal ensure that you operate in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011), to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English, and that every opportunity to promote the Welsh language is taken (beyond providing bilingual services) and increase opportunities to use and learn the language in the community?

This proposed new provision builds on past successes. Therefore, the new vision is intended to strengthen and invest in the Welsh language.

The £ 1.1M investment allows modernisation of the service for the 21st Century – something that will improve the teaching environment and experience of acquiring the Welsh language for Gwynedd's newcomers.

6.2 What other measures or changes could you include to strengthen or change the policy / practice so as to have a positive impact on people's opportunities to use the Welsh language, and to reduce or prevent any detrimental impacts that the policy/practice could have on the Welsh language?

The vision proposes the opening of two new immersion sites in strategic parts of the County. The vision also includes upgrading the immersion provision located in Ysgol Eifionydd.

By increasing the number of immersion sites and offering secondary education at more than one site, we believe that the new vision offers more newcomers the opportunity to receive immersion education that is closer and more connected to their local school.

The new weekly timetable is deliberately offering better transition opportunities and transferring learners with their new Welsh from the immersion site to their local school. The purpose of this is to increase the opportunities for staff in the immersion sites and schools to take ownership and encourage the successful language acquisition journey of learners from the immersion site onwards towards their mainstream education.