

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET



Report to the Cabinet

Meeting date: 27 July 2021

Cabinet Member: Councillor Cemlyn Williams

Contact Officer: Rhian Parry Jones

Contact Number:

Item Title: Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032

1 DECISION SOUGHT

- 1.1 The Cabinet is asked to approve the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan Draft 2022-32, to enter a period of public enquiry in 2021 Autumn term. The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan will be implemented as a statutory document from September 2022 until 31st August 2032.

2. REASON WHY DECISION IS NEEDED

- 2.1 Welsh Government states the requirement to consult for no less than 8 weeks with the following persons:
- neighbouring local authorities
 - heads of all schools maintained by the authority
 - the governing bodies of all schools maintained by the authority
 - all further education sector institutions within the area
 - in respect of any foundation school or voluntary school in the area, the person responsible for appointing governors; if the school has a religious character, the relevant religious body
 - The Welsh Language Commissioner (within the meaning of section 2 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011)
 - The Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (within the meaning of "Early years development and Childcare Partnership" in section 119 of the Act 1998)
 - Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales
 - providers of initial school teacher training
 - such organisations providing services to children and young people as the local authority considers appropriate;
 - such other persons or bodies as appear to the local authority to be appropriate

It is a requirement under section 84 of the School Standards and Organisation 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, that outlines the vision for Welsh medium education within the authority over the next ten years, as well as the main strategic objectives for this period.

3. INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 The purpose of The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan is to outline a vision of a Welsh and bilingual education system that places the needs of our learners at the heart of our provision.
- 3.2 These first plans came into effect on 1 April 2014 for a period of 3 years to March 2017, and the Plan was updated for the following three years. Due to the unprecedented circumstances of the Covid-19 Pandemic, their duration were extended by one additional year. This new Plan will be operational for a period of ten years from September 2022 to 31st August 2032.
- 3.3 The Strategy is interpreted in the context of Gwynedd Council's Language Policy thereby achieving the outcomes. The Authority will ensure that key elements are reflected upon and appropriately addressed in the Strategic Plan.
- 3.4 The Plan sets a clear vision and direction for ensuring that Gwynedd's learners attain the highest standards to maintain the language, culture and economy locally.

4. REASON AND JUSTIFICATION BEHIND THE DECISION

- 4.1 Approving the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan will enable the Welsh Government to monitor how local authorities respond to and contribute to the need to implement the aims of the Strategy by:
- ensuring that all stages of local authority education processes take full account of Welsh-medium education;
 - expanding Welsh-medium education, where required, on the basis of better planning;
 - ensure that Welsh-medium education support services are delivered on a consortia basis;
 - improve standards and extend the use of Welsh among children and young people;
 - demonstrate progress against the specific targets of the Welsh Medium Education Strategy.
- 4.2 Approving the Strategy in the context of Gwynedd Council's Language Policy will achieve the seven outcomes outlined in it:

WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN: OUTCOMES	
1	More nursery children/3 year olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh
2	More reception class children/ 5 year olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh
3	More children continue to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another
4	More learners study for assessed qualifications in Welsh (as a subject) and subjects through the medium of Welsh
5	More opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school
6	An increase in Welsh-medium education provision for learners with additional learning needs (in accordance with duties determined by the ALN Act)
7	Increase the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and teach through the medium of Welsh

5 NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

The steps that are part of the present unofficial consultation process:

WHEN	WHO
27 May 2021	Education Management Team
9 June 2021	Primary Headteachers
9 June 2021	Secondary Headteachers
22 June 2021	Language Committee
27 July 2021	Cabinet to approve public consultation
27 July 2021 – 1 September 2021	Consider and incorporate comments from informal consultation

Proposed timetable of the public consultation and next steps:

WHEN	WHO
13 September 2021 – 15 November 2021	Public Consultation
15 November – 13 December 2021	Consider and Incorporate consultation findings.
13 December 2021	Cabinet adopts Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.
January 2022	Present Welsh in Education Strategic Plan to Welsh Government.
March 2022	Accept comments from Welsh Government.
March 2022 – Mai 2022	Consider and incorporate comments from Welsh Government.
June 2022	Cabinet adopts Welsh in Education Strategic Plan to Welsh with any adaptations.
June 2022	Present final draft of Welsh in Education Strategic Plan to Welsh Government.
1 September 2022	Welsh in Education Strategic Plan becomes operational.

6. ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO MAKING THE DECISION

- 6.1 Document discussed in Primary and Secondary Head Teachers' Forum meetings -09/07/21
Document discussed in Language Committee - 22/06/21

7. STATUTORY OFFICERS' COMMENTS

7.1 Statutory Finance Officer:

The report's author has confirmed that there are no financial implications arising from this report, as the Education Department will operate their Welsh in Education Strategic Plan from within the relevant grants' resources. Consequently, I have no observations to add from a financial propriety perspective.

7.2 Monitoring Officer:

As set out in the report the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan is now a statutory document, one of the consequences of this is that there are consultation and confirmation processes to be followed in order to produce the Strategy. It is important therefore that the Cabinet is content with the draft document before moving onto the next formal stages.