

## Appendix 3

**A formal period of public engagement was held over a period of six weeks between January 7th, 2026, and February 25th, 2026.**

Participants were given the opportunity to identify what they supported (**liked**), as well as the elements about which they had concerns or comments (**disliked**), in relation to the content of the Model Education Language Policy. This was done in the context of the following categories, with the option to respond either to the policy as a whole or to the sections that were most relevant to the participant.

- Pre-school
- Nursery to Year2
- Year 3 to Year 6
- Secondary
- Special Education
- Transitional Schools
- Immersion Provision

54 responses to the engagement document were received. Some responses focused on only one category and others responded to more than one category:

Participants were given the opportunity to indicate the capacity in which they were responding.

Participant	Number
Parent	13
Governor	3
Staff Member	3
Other	27
Not noted	5

3 responses were received from organisations.

### **Summary of Responses by Category**

#### **1.1: Pre-school**

**Support:** Strong support was expressed for the principle of 100% Welsh-medium provision, along with a commitment from Cyngor Gwynedd to ensure that all pre-school settings in the County deliver all activities through the medium of Welsh.

**Considerations:** Concerns were expressed about the lack of specific reference to expectations in relation to private provisions within the model policy, and the need for clarity on how these provisions would be monitored to ensure that Welsh is a medium of education in all pre-school settings in the County. The need to increase Welsh-medium pre-school provision was also noted. In addition, one concern was raised that the proposed changes could lead to an adverse impact on non-Welsh speakers.

#### **1.2: Nursery – Year 2**

**Support:** Support was expressed for the principle of 100% Welsh-medium provision, with recognition that immersion education enables children to develop Welsh skills quickly. School staff were supportive and expressed that developing bilingually was educationally beneficial. While challenges are recognised in aiming for Welsh as the sole medium of education, it was emphasised that the Model Policy strengthens the status of Welsh as the norm and builds firmly on the current statutory pre-school provision.

**Considerations:** Concern was expressed about the lack of reference to a requirement to ensure that all governors are fluent in Welsh. Concerns were raised that the lack of immersion education provision before Year 2 could undermine the Welsh ethos in classrooms.

It was noted that pupils should be able to use their chosen language during playtime and suggested that any sense of enforcement should be avoided to prevent negative attitudes towards Welsh. In addition, concern was expressed about a lack of flexibility for children from non-Welsh speaking households, and a feeling that 100% Welsh medium provision is too strict and may limit pupils' participation in extra-curricular activities.

### **1.3: Years 3-6**

**Support:** Strong support was expressed for the model policy, including support for its aims and principles, and recognition of its impact in terms of strong development in the Welsh language.

**Considerations:** Concern was expressed that some pupils may find it difficult to seek help and that a lack of use of English to explain concepts may disrupt the educational development of some learners. Concern was raised that learning through Welsh puts extra pressure on pupils who need support.

One view was noted that the policy restricts the choice of children and parents, and it was suggested that the model policy should be one that addresses bilingual education.

### **1.4: Secondary**

**Support:** Support was expressed for the principle of strengthening and maintaining the Welsh language, with recognition of the importance of keeping it alive. It was noted that learning opportunities in Immersion Centres are working well, and that the model policy supports better progression between the primary and secondary sectors, building on solid foundations laid in primary. It was suggested that giving schools the flexibility to decide which elements of the curriculum are taught through English can support a more natural and consistent use of Welsh, enriching pupils' learning experiences.

**Considerations:** Concern has been expressed that the Welsh language is currently being treated less favourably in some cases. It was noted that a very high level of Welsh-medium provision (95-100%) would need to be ensured to prevent further decline in the language and therefore that the policy needed to be strengthened. Calls were made for more support for immersion pupils after they return to their schools, with an emphasis on ensuring that all pupils who do not speak the language have access to the immersion regime. Concerns were raised that there was a lack of flexibility in the choice of language for pupils and parents. Specific concerns about the impact on learners were identified, including difficulty in understanding complex subjects through the medium of Welsh and additional pressures particularly at GCSE level. Concerns were expressed about pupils being forced to sit exams or use Welsh in certain contexts, and the possibility of a negative impact on their English skills in the future.

In addition, concern was noted that the Policy could create potential barriers to attracting teachers to teach across all subjects.

It was suggested that consideration should be given to establishing a Welsh and English language stream in schools.

Concerns were raised about pupils' language rights, impact on language choice, and the possibility of discrimination against non-Welsh speakers.

### **1.5 : Special Education**

**Support:** Support was expressed for the principle that the provision of ALN through the medium of Welsh should be available to all learners. The importance of clarifying that pupils can change their language medium during their educational journey was noted, and that an early choice of English-medium education, for example at the age of six, does not mean that the same medium must be followed throughout their education.

**Considerations:** Concern was expressed that the model policy may lead to unfavourable discrimination towards pupils with Additional Learning Needs (ALN). It was also noted that there was a lack of adequate detail in the Policy, limiting clarity regarding its implementation.

### **1.6: Transitional Schools**

**Support:** The discussion on transitional schools was welcomed, noting the opportunity they offer to support language transitions and facilitate pupils' language development.

**Considerations:** Concern was expressed about a lack of information for parents, as well as a potential impact on pupils' confidence. It was also noted that some pupils leave transitional schools without adequate Welsh language skills. It was noted that Welsh First Language pupils in transitional schools may face disadvantages in terms of language development, connection with their identity and local community and that the use of Welsh in these schools needs to be strengthened.

It was suggested that the Authority should hold an open discussion with parents and consider providing free transport to Welsh-medium schools, to ensure that pupils are not left without the ability or confidence to use Welsh fluently.

### **1.7: Immersion Provision**

**Support:** Support was expressed for the immersion provision, with recognition that it can be an effective way of enabling learners to develop their Welsh skills.

**Considerations:** Concern has been expressed about a lack of support for pupils after the immersion period, with support often being provided too late, particularly to Year 10 pupils, thus affecting their ability to reach their educational potential. It was also noted that there was a lack of resources in the additional support offered.

### **1.8: Like/dislike about the model policy.**

**Support:** Full support was expressed for the Policy, with emphasis on the importance of the Welsh language in Gwynedd as a key priority for the future, as well as the benefits of bilingualism and the role of the policy in strengthening cultural identity.

The value of the opportunities for pupils to live their lives through the medium of Welsh was noted, and a recognition that the objectives of the model policy are clear in trying to ensure that Welsh is a natural language in the daily life of all pupils.

The Policy was described as a progressive and clear one that puts the Welsh language in its rightful place in the education system and one that empowers individuals of all ages to take pride in the language.

**Considerations:** Concern was expressed that the model policy does not consider research findings, including Cognitive Load Theory, and its potential impact on the educational progress of pupils, particularly vulnerable pupils, who learn through a second language.

A clear timetable was called for to support the language development of new speakers. The need for adequate resources to implement the objectives without putting too much pressure on pupils, families and staff was emphasised.

Concerns were expressed about the lack of choice of medium of education, the shortage of Welsh-medium teachers for some subjects, and the potential wider implications such as attracting families and workers to the area. Concern was noted about the impact on the ability of non-Welsh speakers to participate fully in school life, and a feeling of discrimination against them.

### **1.9: Potential issues or impacts that should be considered, and which have not already been addressed by the Council.**

**Support:** Support was expressed for the model policy, stating that it supports the rights of people who are treated less favourably. The importance of monitoring and ensuring consistency across all schools, areas and age groups was emphasised to ensure the success of the Policy, along with an expectation to see an increase in the numbers and percentages of Welsh speakers in Gwynedd by 2031.

It was noted that Welsh education should be provided to ensure that pupils are confident and fluent in Welsh, enabling employment opportunities locally and supporting the economy. It was also suggested that the Welsh language should be the main medium of internal communication in all schools in Gwynedd.

In addition, the need for schools' Welsh Education Delivery Plans to be regularly monitored by the Authority was emphasised, and that the Policy needs to be strengthened to support the strategic aim of increasing the

number of Welsh speakers. It was suggested that the Policy should also clearly explain the steps towards transforming schools into Welsh schools, along with a clear progress report on this work.

**Considerations:** Concern was expressed that the model policy could have a negative impact on some, particularly pupils in transitional schools, with a risk of inter-school movements which could create community tensions and increase negative attitudes towards the Welsh language. Calls were made for bilingual provision in schools to meet the needs of pupils. Concerns were also raised about resources and support for ALN pupils, the ability of non-Welsh speaking parents to support their children's learning, the potential impact on pupils' progress and wellbeing, as well as the challenges of recruiting a suitable workforce. In addition, concern was noted that the Policy could limit the higher education and employment opportunities of some pupils, creating a disadvantage for Gwynedd learners. It was suggested that the proposed approach does not promote equal rights and that bilingual teaching should be considered.

### **1.10: The effects that the model Policy would have on opportunities for people to use Welsh, and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English.**

**Support:** Strong support was expressed for the model policy, with the view that it enhances Welsh ethos of the County and helps young people to appreciate the value of the language. The importance of ensuring that pupils understand Welsh as a privilege was noted, and that standards need to be maintained and strengthened. It was emphasised that the Policy is likely to have a positive impact on the Welsh language, contributing to higher levels of bilingualism and improving opportunities for pupils. It is also seen as a step forward towards achieving linguistic equality. The need to monitor the impact of the Policy was noted including the use of the Welsh language in the daily life of the school and collecting data on numbers sitting Welsh and English medium examinations.

In addition, the importance of increasing opportunities to use the Welsh language outside the classroom and raising staff awareness of the importance of the language, was noted. It was also suggested that further clarity should be provided regarding the process and expectations for schools moving towards more Welsh-medium provision, to ensure transparency and a clear accountability framework.

**Considerations:** Concern was expressed that enforcing the Welsh language could lead to less motivation among pupils to learn it and make it less viable as a community language. Concerns were noted that there was a lack of opportunities to use the Welsh language outside of school.

It was noted that there was a need to ensure that non-Welsh speaking pupils do not feel that they are being treated less favourably.

Concerns were expressed about the impact on educational and career opportunities, with a call for greater emphasis on English in some educational contexts.

### **1.11. How could the model policy be formulated or modified to ensure that it has positive effects, or more positive effects on opportunities for people to use Welsh, and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English.**

**Support:** It was suggested that the model policy should strengthen communication standards by encouraging Welsh communication primarily when communicating with parents and reducing reliance on digital translation. The value of creating opportunities for schools in English-speaking areas to collaborate with schools in Welsh-speaking areas to share good practice and support language development was emphasised.

The importance of encouraging Welsh pupils to take part in community activities to promote the language and increase its use outside of school was noted.

It was suggested that Welsh history and the Welsh language need to be taught to all pupils to improve understanding of the status of the language and challenge prejudices.

Support was expressed for the development of early education provision within school structures, rather than relying on the private sector.

The need for a robust and effective monitoring system was emphasised, with support for schools where outcomes need to be strengthened, and opportunities to increase the use of Welsh. There were calls for an increase in the percentage of Welsh language education in primary schools. The importance of fully

implementing the model policy and continuously monitoring its impact was noted, as was the ability to strengthen it according to the results.

Considerations: It was noted that the educational well-being of pupils and the practical value of the language should be prioritised, and that the "homework gap" affecting pupils from non-Welsh speaking households should be addressed.

It was suggested that the model policy should focus on creating natural and informal opportunities to use the Welsh language rather than enforcing it, and that Youth Services and work placements should be included to strengthen pupils' understanding of the value of bilingualism.

The need for a suitable "safety net" for ALN pupils was emphasised, as well as the recognition of the role of late immersion or transitional streams to support academic progress.

A call was made for more flexibility within the policy, including offering schools' full choice or choosing a language for external examinations.

In addition, concerns were raised about the impact of the Policy on the preparation of pupils for studies outside Wales, and a view that this wider context needs to be considered in planning.

### **1.12: Impact of the Model Education Language Policy on people facing socio-economic disadvantage?**

Support: The view was expressed that people from all backgrounds can learn Welsh and that opportunities to do so should be available to everyone. It was noted that learning and using Welsh can bring socio-economic benefits, open wider work and career opportunities and improving employment prospects, including access to jobs with higher skill levels and pay.

It was emphasized that bilingualism can contribute to cognitive development and ultimately support the movement of individuals out of socio-economic disadvantage.

It was noted that creating a fully bilingual society can help reduce inequalities, ensuring that all children have the same opportunity to develop Welsh language skills and take advantage of future opportunities.

Considerations: Concern was expressed that transport costs to Welsh-medium schools can create a significant barrier for low-income families, reinforcing findings, that in some areas, Welsh is seen as the most accessible language for certain social groups. It was noted that some families had relocated to ensure their children could receive Welsh-medium education.

It was suggested that the model policy could limit pupils' horizons rather than extend them, with wider concerns about the potential impact on poverty and socio-economic inequality in Gwynedd. Concern was expressed that it could negatively affect migrants and other vulnerable groups.

It was noted that pupils are not always able to travel far to access immersion provision, and that this could exacerbate existing inequalities, as pupils from less favoured socio-economic backgrounds are generally less likely to access Welsh education and develop Welsh language skills.

### **Conclusion**

The results show mixed opinions among participants. Significant support was expressed for Welsh-medium education but a minority of participants express concerns about the implementation of the model policy.

The main areas that need further attention in the opinion of some individuals are:

- strengthen support for learners who are less confident in their language skills.
- consider expanding immersion provision.
- addressing concerns about the educational development of pupils in the secondary sector.
- improve clarity in communicating the aims and principles of the Policy.

It is noted that the predominant considerations relate to the period of secondary education.

Overall, there is a strong consensus that the Welsh language is important to the future of Gwynedd and that the Model Education Language Policy should support all pupils effectively