



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

# Rapid review of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans – 2017–20

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by Aled Roberts

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## **Audience**

Local authorities; regional consortia; public bodies in Wales; third sector bodies in Wales; educational organisations in Wales; organisations working to promote the use of Welsh; organisations working with families, children and young people, and communities; and other interested parties.

## **Overview**

In March 2017, the Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language announced that Aled Roberts would undertake a rapid review of the current system for Welsh-medium education planning including the 2017–20 Welsh in Education Strategic Plans.

## **Action required**

Interested parties to note the content of the review and act accordingly.

## **Further information**

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## **Additional copies**

This document can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at [gov.wales](http://gov.wales)

## **Related documents**

*Welsh-medium Education Strategy* (2010)

*Cymraeg 2050 – A million Welsh speakers* (2017) Welsh language strategy

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## Background

- 1.1 This report has been prepared following a statement by Alun Davies, Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language in the National Assembly on the 14 March 2017. I was asked to carry out a rapid review of the current regime for planning Welsh language education across Wales.
- 1.2 I was asked to make recommendations on how to develop the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs) as well as offering recommendations on individual plans drafted by local authorities and subsequently submitted to Welsh Government. Those views have now been shared with local authorities.
- 1.3 The content of this review therefore is my independent and personal reflection on the 2017-2020 Welsh in Education Strategic Plans. These views have been formed following my discussions with Local Authorities, Welsh Government as well as other stakeholders involved in the planning of Welsh medium education.
- 1.4 I would like to thank local authorities for meeting with me and for the way that they have worked with me during the course of this rapid review. Furthermore, it must be acknowledged, that the review took place during a busy period due to the local elections. All discussions have been open, honest and constructive and this report reflects those discussions.
- 1.5 It is now for Welsh Government and its partners to evaluate and consider the content of this review and the recommendations I have made.

## Introduction

- 1.6 The report recognises the findings and recommendations of two reports already published. Namely the report by the National Assembly for Wales' Children and Young People Committee published in December 2015, and the report on Welsh in Education Strategic Plans published by Estyn in September 2016. These reports describe the full history of the plans since the publication of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy by the Welsh Government in April 2010. I continue to share the concerns already expressed within these reports and fully support their recommendations. This is not an attempt to repeat the contents of those reports but to set a clear direction for the future.
- 1.7 The plans provided for the 2017-2020 planning round generally show that a great deal more needs to be done if we are to reflect the aspirations within the Welsh Government's 2010 strategy, let alone the more ambitious requirements of the Government's new strategy to reach a million Welsh speakers by 2050. If anything this ambition demands that the time for preparing reports is over and that we now need sound planning and effective action by the Welsh Government, local government and all stakeholders if we are to achieve the goal.
- 1.8 Turning to the individual plans, in his statement of 14 March 2017 the Minister admitted that some of them showed a lack of ambition. It is evident in *Cymraeg 2050*, published on 11 July 2017, that our activities in the short term, and during the first five years in particular, need to reflect the extent of the ambition.
- 1.9 It must be recognised that change is required. It is clear to me that change is needed not only regarding the ambition of individual plans but within the legislative framework established by Government. Change is needed to the regulations and the guidance deriving from the legislation which will inevitably lead to changes in stakeholders' responsibilities and what they are expected to achieve.
- 1.10 There are three options available to Welsh Government when considering the individual plans: accept the plan, accept the plan with amendments, or reject the plan. Although there has been some confusion in the past as to the implications of rejecting any plan, legislation indicates that the Welsh Government must write a plan on behalf of the local authority and submit it back to the local authority for implementation. My intention in meeting with each of the local authorities was therefore to discuss the gaps or obvious weaknesses in the plans whilst hoping for recognition that some further adaptation to the plans would be required.
- 1.11 Many of the plans are very weak in seeking to create any demand for Welsh-medium education. Without significant amendments there is little purpose in accepting many of these plans in their current form. There is of course a fundamental flaw under the current statutory framework in taking this course of action as it leads to the Welsh Government having

to prepare a plan on behalf of the authorities, which would then be unlikely to receive a positive response. The plan would be prepared by an official within the Welsh Government with perhaps little local awareness and knowledge. Ultimately would a local authority prepare plans for capital investment reflecting the Welsh Government's stance over their defined local priorities and needs?

- 1.12 From my experience of local government, it is clear to me that it would be futile to impose a plan that has been written in Cardiff or Llandudno Junction on any local authority. This is especially so if we are to gain the lost ground in terms of the language. We need to build strong partnerships that challenge and make clear that each county has an important part to play in implementing the strategy while reflecting each authority's individuality and recognising that the linguistic baseline in each authority tells a different story.
- 1.13 I have provided feedback on each of the plans to the individual local authorities. These include suggested changes that would strengthen their plans.
- 1.14 When taking into consideration the nature of my discussions I sincerely hope that further discussions with Welsh Government officials are positive and constructive. This should enable local authorities and their stakeholders to agree on any changes so that robust plans are in place as soon as possible.
- 1.15 Ultimately, however, if these further discussions do not yield an increase in ambition, I believe it is now time for the Welsh Government to reject individual plans. I very much hope that that will not happen following the positive discussions that have taken place thus far.
- 1.16 It is clear to me that we need major changes to the way we plan if we are to succeed in reaching the goal by 2050. This rapid review has been carried out within the context of legislative requirements and guidance which are totally inadequate. If the Welsh Government is to realise its aim of a million Welsh speakers by 2050 there is also a need to change the way in which different departments within Welsh Government perceive and share this vision. Clear leadership at both the national and county level is essential for the strategy to be realised.
- 1.17 There is a need to review and change the current legal regime – there is a need to create a framework enabling local authorities to plan strategically over a longer term rather than the current three year period. There is also a need to create a planning framework where the aspirations at local level reflect the Welsh Government's ambition, requiring local authorities to plan on that basis. Where plans have not responded adequately to the challenges, sending the plan back for it to be re-written by the local authority and its partners would be far more preferable than the Welsh Government doing so.

- 1.18 I sincerely hope that local authorities and the forums' members across Wales will accept that this report and the recommendations are meant positively and constructively. Over the summer period, there is an opportunity for Welsh Government officials to meet with local authorities to discuss my comments as well as the Government's own views in the hope that there will be a willingness to adapt the plans.
- 1.19 For some plans, there is a greater need for adaptations than with others. In my view, these further discussions will provide an opportunity for the plans to be strengthened in order to secure a positive start over the next three years for the Welsh Government's strategy to secure a million Welsh speakers by 2050. If the discussions are not fruitful then the plan should be rejected.

## Context

### Welsh in Education Strategic Plans

- 1.20 One of the main aims of the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 was to build on the previously non-statutory Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESP) by putting them on a statutory basis.
- 1.21 The Bill placed a duty on every local authority to consult on their Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, to draft a plan and to publish it so that the Welsh Ministers may approve and monitor it. The Bill states that Welsh Ministers provide regulations for the WESPs including provisions for consultation.
- 1.22 Local Authorities are required to prepare and submit their Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs) to the Welsh Ministers, demonstrating how they will aim to achieve the outcomes and targets for Welsh-medium education in their locality.
- 1.23 The WESPs include seven outcomes setting out how local authorities will be expected to improve Welsh-medium education in their area:

**Outcome 1:**

More seven-year-old children being taught through the medium of Welsh

**Outcome 2:**

More learners continuing to improve their language skills on transfer from primary school to secondary school

**Outcome 3:**

More 14-16 year old students studying for qualifications through the medium of Welsh.

**Outcome 4:**

More 16–19 year old students studying through the medium of Welsh in schools, colleges and work based learning.

**Outcome 5:**

More learners with higher skills in Welsh

**Outcome 6:**

Welsh-medium provision for learners Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

**Outcome 7:**

Workforce planning and Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

## **National overview per Outcome**

- 1.24 During the course of this review, I met each local authority and have studied and analysed each of their plans. I provided each local authority with its own feedback. This section summarises, on a national level, my impression of the plans against each outcome.
- 1.25 Firstly, I note that no Outcome exists for pre-school provision. I believe it is essential to introduce an outcome focussing on the strategic growth in pre-school provision. As the Welsh Government has introduced national targets for growth in the sector there must be an outcome that measures and analyses the plans of local authorities, Mudiad Meithrin and others at local level. This growth would then influence the targets needed in the current Outcome 1.

### **Outcome 1: More seven-year-old children being taught through the medium of Welsh**

- 1.26 Measuring the number of children aged seven years of age who are being assessed in Welsh at the end of the foundation phase is a simple but effective way of measuring growth. Currently, however, the numbers are merely projections based on those children currently in nursery and reception classes who will be assessed in Welsh at the end of the three year period. As national targets are set reflecting the aspirations of Welsh Government these also need to be interpreted at the local level through the adoption of local targets, with a resultant increase in provision.
- 1.27 I believe a pre-school outcome should be adopted as Outcome 1 with a target to increase Welsh-medium pre-school provision in each area. This would then include a further target for the transition rates between pre-school and foundation phase. The number of children who are assessed in Welsh at seven years of age would then form Outcome 2, with each outcome re-numbered accordingly. Thereafter the percentage transferring between primary and secondary and then sitting examinations will increase based on the percentages successfully transitioning through the key stages.

### **Outcome 2: More learners continuing to improve their language skills on transfer from primary school to secondary school**

- 1.28 It is clear that we must target more effectively those local authorities that need to increase the numbers transferring from primary to secondary school education. Change in some areas is needed where there has been a significant decrease in those receiving their education through the medium of Welsh between KS2 and KS3.
- 1.29 It is likely that any change within the current system for categorisation would simplify the process in respect of moving schools along the

language continuum. This would enable a more focused discussion with local authorities.

- 1.30 A protocol is required in some local authorities where there would be an expectation on schools to ensure that children who have had their primary education through the medium of Welsh, continue to study Welsh as a first language. This would be despite some schools being unwilling to do so if the new policy impacts on the grades of pupils who would be certain to gain an A\* in GCSE Welsh second language.

### **Outcome 3: More 14-16 year old students studying for qualifications through the medium of Welsh.**

- 1.31 More effective tracking is needed to understand why the numbers studying two or more GCSEs and five or more GCSEs through the medium of Welsh has fallen within the lifetime of the current plans. A campaign may be needed to influence some parents' thinking in terms of the value of bilingual education and that English skills are equally as strong in the majority of Welsh medium schools as they are in other schools.
- 1.32 Discussion is needed with the WJEC with regard to bilingual schools' policies where the evidence suggests a discrepancy between the number of pupils who sit examinations through the medium of Welsh and those who are registered for examinations through the medium of Welsh.

### **Outcome 4: More 16–19 year old students studying through the medium of Welsh in schools, colleges and work based learning.**

- 1.33 It is now clear that a change in the arrangements for the 14-19 Networks has affected the offer available for students to continue to study in Welsh from the age of 14.
- 1.34 Further education provision is not included within the WESPs at present and discussion is needed on how to ensure that the sector's plans will be driven more effectively giving consideration to the legal status of the colleges. There is a need to ensure further education sector representation on the county forums.

### **Outcome 5: More learners with higher skills in Welsh**

- 1.35 It is difficult to understand what influence the forums have to increase the numbers who are studying higher level Welsh within our schools and colleges, as a first language or second language. Perhaps now is the time for a robust discussion with Qualifications Wales with regard to changing the way the language is taught going forward. If the numbers being entered for higher level qualifications continue to fall then we need to be aware of the implications upon the prospects of achieving the targets set under the Strategy for 2050. This will also affect the

prospects of achieving the numbers required to teach in Welsh in our schools.

- 1.36 Local authorities need to plan post-16 provision more strategically while taking into account the impact of transport policies on the possible numbers in traditional Welsh-medium sixth forms, compared with the further education colleges where some colleges provide free transport. Welsh Government should make a clear statement on transport policy.
- 1.37 Consideration should be given as to whether it would be more appropriate to adopt an outcome on the number of post-16 learners who continue to study in Welsh, be that in school or college pursuing academic or vocational routes. Alternatively this could be introduced as an additional outcome.
- 1.38 There is a need to improve community based provision and after school activities for children and young people in the Welsh language. At county level, the provision offered by the Urdd, Mentrau Iaith and the local authorities is inconsistent at present. Good practice should be shared and strategic partnerships should be encouraged to strengthen the position within this planning period. The Welsh Government's ambition is clear - we need to move away from arrangements which often reflect historical patterns of funding rather than any strategic planning.

#### **Outcome 6: Welsh-medium provision for learners Additional Learning Needs (ALN)**

- 1.39 No data is collected on a national level at this stage to measure Welsh-medium provision available to pupils with additional learning needs.
- 1.40 There is a mixed picture at local authority level. It is clear that stimulating regional working is necessary where learner numbers within individual authorities make it difficult to justify intensive provision.

#### **Outcome 7: Workforce planning and Continuous Professional Development (CDP)**

- 1.41 Very few authorities plan their workforce strategically based on existing language skills and need. Language assessments should be essential ensuring that policies for recruitment and training are clear and measurable. Unless this happens, there is little point in continuing with this outcome based on the level of action within these and previous plans.

# Key findings

## Commitment

- 1.42 The majority of stakeholders are eager to contribute to the Welsh Government's ambition to secure a million Welsh speakers by 2050. It is clear however that we need clear impetus and leadership at the national level if we are to achieve the goal. There is a need to agree on activities and criteria at a local authority level which are then driven and monitored nationally. If Welsh Government decides to set national targets and criteria in order to reach the goal in 2050, then similar targets and criteria must be agreed for each local authority across Wales.
- 1.43 Welsh Government and the majority of stakeholders accept that the education system plays a key role in creating the Welsh speakers of the future. In that regard it is disappointing to report that the situation has not moved on since the Estyn report on WESPs in 2016<sup>1</sup>. Estyn noted that there was a need for a stronger partnership between the Welsh Government and local government in order to strengthen the targets for growth securing an alignment with the Welsh Government's vision, which was not as ambitious at that the time.

## Working in partnership

- 1.44 There needs to be stronger, more open and challenging partnership between Welsh Government and all the partners while developing the WESPs especially in setting targets and agreeing outcomes.
- 1.45 A stronger more open partnership would enable robust discussion between all stakeholders leading to purposeful and practical targets at the local level that would feed into achieving the Government's aspirations at a national level. The arrangements will depend on the structures adopted by the Welsh Government for the implementation of their *Cymraeg 2050* strategy.

## Consultation processes

- 1.46 All local authorities have consulted with the relevant stakeholders and the majority of them have developed their WESPs taking into account the guidance provided by Welsh Government though some plans remain weak despite having done this. .
- 1.47 The report by the National Assembly for Wales' Children, Young People and Education Committee and Estyn's report both noted inconsistencies in terms of membership, roles and contribution expected by the Welsh-medium Education Forums – their meeting frequency and the fact that actions are not sufficiently detailed nor evaluated adequately.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/thematic-reports/local-authority-welsh-education-strategic-plans>

- 1.48 Whilst acknowledging the appeal of enabling forums to develop on the basis of local aspirations, an agreement is required nationally between both local government and Welsh Government in order to eliminate inconsistencies and discuss change based on existing good practice.

### **Timetable**

- 1.49 The timeframe for WESPs must be reviewed. Three-year plans do not enable stakeholders to plan strategically for the change that is needed and five-year or even ten-year plans should be considered. It would be pertinent to consider whether the timeframe should align with Welsh Government's capital programme for investment in schools, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Education Capital Programme. This would enable the plans to focus the required investment on school and pre-school provision.

### **Legislative framework**

- 1.50 There is a need to move quickly on the introduction of any legislative changes. There will be a considerable delay between deciding on the necessary changes and their submission to the Assembly due to the drafting requirements and the Assembly's timetable. Therefore, the establishment of a board or panel must be a priority to consider the changes required in legislation and regulations and press for the necessary action by Welsh Government. It is imperative that any new framework should be in place before the next planning round, and if at all possible before then. Time is very much of the essence in order to contribute towards *Cymraeg 2050*. Changes therefore are necessary to both the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) 2013 Regulations.

### **The Outcomes**

- 1.51 There is a need to review the existing outcomes which are measured. There is little purpose in counting the number of children aged seven years of age who are being assessed in Welsh if no local targets have been agreed to increase the provision of Welsh-medium pre-school places.
- 1.52 It is unfortunate that the current legislation, the regulations as well as the guidance promote the practice of reporting on projections rather than targets e.g. Outcome 1. The WESPs report on how many children are currently in the local authority's nursery and reception classes who will then be assessed in Welsh in three years when they are seven years old, rather than setting targets for growth for the next three years based on increasing the Welsh-medium pre-school provision.
- 1.53 The board/panel will have the opportunity to consider not only the changes necessary but also the implications of policies and arrangements announced since 2013. In particular the recently

announced policy on impending changes on closing rural schools when so many are Welsh medium schools.

- 1.54 It would also be possible for the board/panel to consider the most appropriate outcomes for strategic planning towards 2050. Whilst counting the number of children who are being assessed in Welsh at the age of seven is seen as a robust data method to measure trends, there is a need to devise an outcome that increases the number of children who are in the Welsh-medium pre-school sector, and to secure growth within each local authority in this sector.

### **The Early Years**

- 1.55 It is clear when looking at the high percentages transferring between Welsh-medium pre-school and the local Welsh-medium schools, that there is a clear link between increasing Welsh-medium pre-school provision and the success of the 2050 strategy.
- 1.56 In some parts of Wales, questions need to be asked with regard to the strength of the relationship between local government and Mudiad Meithrin and whether there is a purposeful representation on the Forums by Mudiad Meithrin.
- 1.57 It may be necessary to explore changing some of the older models of pre-school provision if we are to successfully achieve the aim for 2050.
- 1.58 Welsh Government needs to ensure sufficient planning for the 30 hour childcare offer at both national and local levels, as it will impact on local patterns that will contribute to the language strategy in future. It raises questions with regard to the awareness of some Welsh Government departments and within some local authorities as to the impact of the policy on language and learning, and thus ensuring that stakeholders representing the Welsh language have an opportunity to feed into any planning process.
- 1.59 Questions arise about the validity of much of the data which is being prepared, be that on numbers in pre-school settings and whether some children are counted more than once, the quality of the data received in relation to the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and even PLASC data on the nature of the language provision within individual schools.

### **Linguistic categorisation of schools**

- 1.60 It is time to simplify the linguistic categorisation of our schools. It is clear to me that categorisation does not at present reflect the true linguistic nature of many of our schools. This creates confusion for parents when trying to understand the linguistic nature of those schools but also creates a false picture of local provision.
- 1.61 The precise nature of linguistic provision that could be expected in different categories is not sufficiently clear to parents. Estyn's report,

Linguistic progression and standards of Welsh in ten bilingual schools - November 2014 states “the official categorisation is not used correctly every time”. In some cases, it may be difficult for local authorities to keep abreast of the linguistic nature of provision in schools.

- 1.62 Fewer local authority officers now have direct access to schools. The Welsh Government is currently considering where responsibility should lie between the consortia and the individual authorities. It seems to me that as regional challenge advisors are being tasked with monitoring teaching and standards in schools it may be appropriate for them to advise the authorities on how the current categorisation aligns with the medium of teaching in a school. Responsibility for ensuring accurate linguistic information is available to parents can then be considered within any changes to the categorisation arrangements in due course.
- 1.63 I believe that we need to deal with the confusion where children in a bilingual school are registered to sit an exam in Welsh but receive exam papers in Welsh and English and complete the examination in English.

### **Capital investment**

- 1.64 Clear guidance from Welsh Government on capital investment in Welsh-medium schools is urgently required. This will enable local authorities to build new schools allowing for growth in Welsh-medium education or to expand existing provision. Local authorities are currently preparing their business cases for Band B of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Education Programme. Any decision by Welsh Government to establish a separate funding stream for Welsh-medium schools or increase the percentage of support will influence those decisions made by local authorities due to funding constraints.
- 1.65 There is a need to review the arrangements for creating pre-school provision on the same site as new (or existing) primary school to ensure an increase in transition rates from pre-school to primary settings in some areas.
- 1.66 On a national level, there is a need to ensure that local authorities decide how to determine the linguistic nature of any school built under the requirements of the Local Development Plan, or as part of an agreement between the developer and local authority in accordance with the terms of section 106<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.67 Welsh Government needs to address the conflict between its various strategies. An example is the pressure for local authorities to deal with surplus places in schools, whilst at the same time some local authorities are eager to open new schools in areas where there is no Welsh language provision but are aware that it may take time for the school to fill from the early years onwards. There is a clear tension here. The Welsh Government’s 21st Century Schools and Education

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<sup>2</sup> Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Programme team should reflect the ambition to increase Welsh-medium and bilingual provision within their business case guidance for local authorities.

## Further Education

- 1.68 We need to re-focus on the lack of Welsh language provision in the post-16 and vocational sectors. Since 2015 the effectiveness of the 14-19 learning pathways network in contributing to courses at KS4 and post-16 has weakened considerably. The Government's future plans and the proposed role of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol will need to be considered carefully but we need to understand how local authority planning is influenced by fewer further education colleges that increasingly operate on a cross county basis. Once again, the proposed board/panel would advise the Minister on any changes required in terms of data or how provision is funded in the future.
- 1.69 The recent Estyn report *Welsh-medium and bilingual teaching and learning in further education*<sup>3</sup> shows that there is much work to be done in this sector. The previous Welsh-medium Education Strategy<sup>4</sup> published in 2010 included the strategic aim of “improving the planning of Welsh-medium provision in the post-14 education and training phases” and also “to ensure that all learners develop their Welsh language skills”.
- 1.70 A broad target was established that at least 10% of learners in the further education sector should study either through the medium of Welsh or bilingually by 2020.
- 1.71 Despite evidence of good practice in some colleges, it would appear that little progress has been made in the sector since 2010. The effectiveness and influence of the 14-19 networks has decreased.
- 1.72 Although some changes to the data collected have been introduced this year there is more work to be done. The board/panel will need to consider means of strengthening the relationship between the Welsh-medium and bilingual schools and the further education sector.

## Youth services

- 1.73 Across local authorities in Wales, the provision and arrangements for young people to access bilingual youth services is very inconsistent. The local forums need to work closer with the agencies delivering these services as well as the Urdd and Mentrau Iaith.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/thematic-reports/welsh-medium-and-bilingual-teaching-and-learning-further-education>

<sup>4</sup> <http://gov.wales/topics/welshlanguage/welsh-language-strategy-and-policies/welsh-language-policies-upto-2017/welshmededstrat/?skip=1&lang=en>

## **Additional learning needs**

- 1.74 The majority of plans are very weak when outlining provision relating to additional learning needs (ALN). Although the guidance issued this year asked the Councils to consider how they will extend their capacity to provide education for pupils with additional learning needs through the medium of Welsh, based on their most recent annual audit, only a small number have done so.
- 1.75 The most recent ALN audit should be included as evidence of what provision is not available through the medium of Welsh and cannot be provided by the Local Authority at this time.
- 1.76 The plan should then explain how the Local Authority will bridge the gap between current ALN provision and need. The plans should outline how it intends to improve the support available rather than declare that there is insufficient Welsh-medium provision at this time.
- 1.77 Within some authorities, it is evident that the numbers requiring intensive ALN support and provision through the medium of Welsh are not sufficient to justify specialist provision at county level. However, the level of detail of discussions to respond to demand at both regional and sub-regional levels is disappointing. The consortia are required to stimulate discussions where they are not already taking place.

## **The workforce**

- 1.78 There is an inconsistent picture on how often local authorities measure the linguistic skills of their staff. If we are to see an increase in the number of children educated through the medium of Welsh within our schools we therefore must plan to develop the linguistic skills of practitioners within schools. There needs to be more discussion and debate as to how local authorities will prioritise and meet those needs particularly in terms of the use of the Welsh language Sabbaticals Scheme. A description of the difficulties in recruiting staff rather than any strategic planning to address the problem seems to be more prevalent.
- 1.79 We must ask ourselves, what purpose is there to plan for substantial growth for Welsh-medium and bilingual education during the next three years without urgent decisions being made to train more new teachers who speak Welsh. This is particularly the case within the secondary sector. We must improve the skills of the existing workforce but also ensure that use is made of those new skills post acquisition.
- 1.80 I note Estyn's findings that the majority of our local authorities have undertaken a linguistic skills audit of the teaching workforce and use these to inform continuous professional development programmes and specific training. There is little evidence, however, that the local authorities or the consortia appraise those programmes effectively, in particular the impact on standards.

- 1.81 There is a need to create a more fit for purpose structure for planning for a bilingual workforce. The forums do not influence post-16 Welsh-medium provision. Neither do they contribute towards growth and development of the bilingual workforce whether it is in childcare, the health and social care sector or even prospective teachers to supply the new Welsh-medium schools needed for the growth in the number of Welsh speakers by 2050.

## Recommendations

1. Create a more open and challenging relationship between the Welsh Government and all stakeholders in the development of the WESPs especially in setting targets and agreeing outcomes.
2. Review the timeframe of the WESPs to coincide with the Welsh Government's Capital Schemes, specifically the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme. Capital investment should be targeted to ensure linkages between pre-school and schools programmes.
3. Review the existing outcomes and agree the most appropriate and relevant outcomes for the next round of WESPs to ensure an effective contribution towards the Government's ambition for 2050.
4. Move quickly and purposefully in order to introduce the necessary legislative changes. A panel or board should be established to discuss and evaluate the necessary changes needed in terms of the legislation and regulations prior to their introduction to the Assembly.
5. Ensure an agreement at national level between local authorities and the Welsh Government to ensure consistency in terms of the membership, roles and expected contributions of the Forums and to discuss change on the basis of existing good practice.
6. Strengthen the strategic relationship between local authorities and Mudiad Meithrin to ensure growth at local authority level in order to contribute to the Welsh Government target for 2050.
7. The Welsh Government to plan sufficient Welsh-medium provision within the 30 hour childcare offer taking into account its potential impact on local pattern of provision.
8. Simplify the process of linguistic categorisation for schools. In the interim the consortia to produce reports for the local authorities confirming the current linguistic status in each individual school.
9. Review the nature and ensure the validity of data submitted to the Welsh Government. This should lead to the effective and early identification of trends or patterns within the data and flag up any concerns within projects/programmes involving the Welsh language at an early stage.
10. Welsh Government to publish clear guidance in respect of capital investment allocated to Welsh medium education. A number of stakeholders have suggested a separate fund whilst others believe there should be an increase in the percentage of financial support from Welsh Government where plans are responding to the Government's own priority for growth. The system for capital investment also needs to take pre-school provision into account in order to plan more effectively for the transition between pre-school and the primary phase.

11. A decision at national level or an agreement between Welsh Government and local authorities regarding the process for determining the linguistic category of any school built under the requirements of the Local Development Plan or through a Section 106 Agreement.
12. A fresh focus on post-16 provision when considering any change to the data required to ensure an accurate picture of Welsh-medium provision within further education colleges. With reliable data and a clearer picture, proper consideration can be given to the future funding of Welsh-medium further education provision.
13. Urgent planning and action to increase the number of teachers trained to teach through the medium of Welsh.
14. WESPs should set out targets and criteria ensuring young people are given opportunities to use their Welsh outside school hours. Ensure more consistency in the way Welsh language youth services are provided across Wales.
15. Local authorities to include detailed assessments of their additional learning needs provision within the plans, and the consortia to report frequently on the situation whilst leading on regional or sub regional discussions where demand is insufficient in individual counties.
16. Elevate the status of the Welsh language within Welsh Government departments and local authorities so that language factors are fully considered before any strategies are adopted. A system should be developed to avoid any conflict or reaching an early resolution where there is a conflict between different strategies which impact upon the Welsh language.
17. Central Government and local authorities to consider capacity issues within their language units as they move forward in realising Welsh Government's ambition for 2050.
18. There should be a legislative framework which provides support, advice and constructive feedback to organisations as they work towards meeting any legal duties relating to planning education (whether in the form of WESP or other form).