

1. The Council fully supports the Welsh Government's new Welsh Language Strategy and its aspiration of one million Welsh speakers by 2050 and welcomes the opportunity to give its views on the Welsh Government's key objectives of:
 - Improving workforce planning and support for practitioners for all phases of education; and
 - Ensuring a sufficient workforce for Welsh-medium education and teaching as a subject.
2. In order to progress this aspiration at a local level the Council has updated its Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) for 2017 – 20 in line with guidance provided by the Welsh Government. It outlines the Council's "endeavours to enable all children and young people to be confident, bilingual speakers through its education provision and be able to live, work and socialise comfortably through the medium of Welsh".
3. Amongst its other objectives are making parents, children and young people fully aware of the advantages of being bilingual, how they can live their lives through the medium of Welsh if they so wish, developing confidence in the normalisation of being bilingual and create a continuum to improve progression and raise standards.
4. The Council welcomes the introduction of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, particularly the long term planning and partnerships in safeguarding education provision within the County Borough to support the goals of a more equal society that enables

people to fulfil their potential and protects the Welsh language, heritage and culture within the County Borough's boundaries and communities.

5. The Council is also preparing to ensure that by 2020 all Welsh learners in the education system are prepared for the workplace, have access to the advantages of Welsh in the workplace and possess the necessary bilingual skills needed for local and regional economic developments. It also aims to increase the number of learners gaining higher level Welsh language skills over the next three years, and beyond.
6. Furthermore the Council is working on a community-wide basis to seek to increase the number of Welsh speakers across the County Borough as a whole. In line with its Welsh Language Standards the Council has produced a five-year promotion strategy, which aims to raise the profile of the Welsh language in the County Borough, increase its use and encourage more people to choose to use the Welsh language in their everyday lives.
7. The Councils in North Wales follow the national model for regional working and practice cross-boundary cooperation and planning with regard to the education workforce. There is a regional network of HR professionals, attended by GwE (regional school effectiveness), that has prioritised workforce planning as a key activity. They are reviewing a regional workforce planning approach for schools that includes:
 - identification of potential recruitment and retention issues within key roles across the region
 - exploring if there is potential for succession planning/joined up recruitment approaches (whilst recognising there is competition to fill vacancies)

- sharing of information about potential hard to fill posts, areas of growth and decline in order to inform potential regional approaches via Human Resources and GwE.
8. However, the Council considers that the Welsh Government's aspiration is ambitious and challenging. Even though plans are underway to address an increase in Welsh speakers at primary and secondary school level it will take many years for these children and young people to be ready to contribute to, and work in, a bilingual workforce. Currently the Council faces challenges with its efforts to recruit suitably qualified Welsh language staff, and would hope that the Welsh Government's Strategy also takes into account the situation as it is now with regard to growing a bilingual workforce.
 9. As noted above, the Council's WESP (2017–20) seeks to enable all children and young people to be confident bilingual speakers. It is the Council's opinion that much work and planning is needed across all public and private sectors in Wales to ensure that bilingual jobs are created for young people in the future. The Council is prepared and willing to work towards increasing the number of bilingual children and young people but would welcome a commitment from the Welsh Government that its efforts will be rewarded and that the planning for future bilingual jobs is done on a national level across the whole range of sectors.
 10. The Council is aware of successful initiatives in other parts of the world where that Government's ambition to normalise and increase the use of lesser-used, indigenous languages have been successful. It would appear that there are two key success factors. One is a true belief in, and a commitment to, the agenda at the very highest level of Government and the availability of public funds in order to ensure its success.

11. In order for the Welsh Government to achieve its aim, the Council considers that this will not be possible without proper investment over the lifetime of the project. This Council, along with all other Councils in Wales, is facing huge cuts to its budget and this will have a direct impact on its ability to invest in new initiatives. Additional money is already being put aside in order to implement the Welsh Language Standards and Welsh medium education. The Council is aware that an additional £2 million has been made available for Welsh medium education across Wales but is realistic in acknowledging that this is not sufficient.
12. In closing, the Council reiterates its commitment to the aim of one million Welsh speakers by 2050 and to seek to increase the number of children and young people who will be educated and trained to work in a bilingual workplace in the future. However, the Council is realistic in that this is a hugely ambitious aim and is concerned that without proper, sustained and thorough planning at a national level that it may not be achieved. Lastly buy-in at the most senior level must be given and additional funding made available to all of the organisations who have a role to play.