

Culture, Welsh Language and
Communications Committee

Achieving the Ambition

Inquiry into the Welsh Government's new Welsh Language Strategy

May 2017



National Assembly for Wales

Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee

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Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

Tel: **0300 200 6565**

Email: **SeneddCWLC@assembly.wales**

Twitter: **[@SeneddCWLC](https://twitter.com/SeneddCWLC)**

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The Committee was established on 28 June 2016 to examine legislation and hold the Welsh Government to account by scrutinising expenditure, administration and policy matters, encompassing (but not restricted to): culture; the arts; historic environment; Welsh language; communications; broadcasting and the media.

Current Committee membership:



Bethan Jenkins AM (Chair)
Plaid Cymru
South Wales West



Hannah Blythyn AM
Welsh Labour
Delyn



Dawn Bowden AM
Welsh Labour
Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymer



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UKIP Wales
Mid and West Wales



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South Wales West



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Welsh Labour
Neath



Lee Waters AM
Welsh Labour
Llanelli

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Foreword

The Welsh Government has committed to creating one million Welsh speakers by 2050. This is an ambitious target, which will, if it is successful, almost double the number of Welsh speakers in Wales in just over a generation.

The committee fully supports the bold aim of the policy, and has set out to be constructive in considering the practicalities of how this radical policy can be successfully implemented.

We took evidence from a range of stakeholders through written submissions and oral evidence sessions. We also took evidence through informal external engagement sessions both with stakeholders and school pupils across Wales.

It is clear from considering the evidence that success will require hard work, considerable additional resources and clear targets. It will also need to be founded on the continuing support of the people of Wales, Welsh and non-Welsh speakers alike.

Our recommendations are, on the whole, concerned with the practicalities of how the ambition can be turned into reality and the need for clarity on the staging points along the way.

Our main concern is that the implications of the strategic aim have not yet been fully thought through and that there is a lack of detail and clarity about how the aim will be achieved. We are also yet to be convinced that the Welsh Government have provided the necessary evidence on the likely scale of the additional resources and investment required to achieve its aim. The ambition to double the number of Welsh speakers is a cultural policy, albeit one that will need to be delivered in large part through the education system. There is a clear risk that this may have a distortive effect on the delivery of educational priorities as the system is realigned to be able to deliver the language strategy. It is therefore important that the resources and capacity needed to implement the policy are in addition to current spending on education.

The committee shares the concern of the Language Commissioner and the Minister that too many Local Authorities have been inactive in stimulating and assessing demand for increased Welsh medium provision. The principal driver for increasing capacity - the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs) – have not been implemented as intended and many local authorities do not seem to be sufficiently ambitious to create the growth that is needed. Too often they simply assess current demand, without looking to see how Welsh-medium education can be positively promoted so that demand increases.

The strategy mentions moving schools along the language continuum. In our view, the key issue is ensuring that more pupils move along the learning continuum toward fluency across both Welsh and English-medium education. There is a danger that we focus too much on changing the language category of the school rather than improving the fluency of pupils in all schools.

As seventy five percent of Welsh pupils attend English-medium schools the Committee does not feel that sufficient attention is being given to other possible ways of growing the number of Welsh speakers within the strategy.

With improved outcomes, English-medium schools may be a rich source of the Welsh speakers of the future. If this were the case, the Welsh Government needs to demonstrate how it intends to improve Welsh language education within English-medium schools.

If the overall goal is to be met then it is not enough to rely simply on the maintained education sector. Pre-school education also has a fundamental contribution to make, particularly in terms of 'normalising' the language from an early age.

Overall, we believe there is currently a lack of clarity around the Welsh Government's view on the comparative contribution that Welsh-medium education, Welsh in other schools, pre-school and 'normalisation' measures will make in delivering the overall aim. We would also like to see greater clarity from the Welsh Government on this, and whether a different focus is intended for different interventions as the strategy progresses.

Finally, if the aim of a million 'Welsh speakers' is to be meaningful, this must mean more than just the ability to say a few phrases in Welsh. It must mean understanding and holding conversations naturally on most everyday subjects. However, work is needed on identifying an objective way of measuring progress that is widely accepted. In our view, this should be the numbers of people reporting in the Census that they speak Welsh.

The decline in the number of people captured in the last census as being able to speak Welsh has rightly been a wake-up call which demands a different approach to safeguarding the future of the language in our national life. Doing more of the same will, self-evidently, be inadequate. In setting an arresting target for growth the Welsh Government has rightly set out an ambitious intention to halt the decline in the number of Welsh speakers and reverse the trend of the last Century. But to achieve that ambition will require a detailed and fully resourced plan for growth.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1. We recommend that the Government should publish its underlying assumptions about the increase in Welsh speakers it expects from its proposed interventions and consults further on detailed, outcome-focussed, targets and milestones before adopting them for the new strategy. Page 18

Recommendation 2. We recommend that the final strategy should give due weight to the importance of nurturing language use in communities, in social life and in workplaces. This should be done alongside language acquisition through Welsh-medium education, early years education and improving the quality of Welsh language teaching in English-medium schools and Welsh language outcomes for pupils. Page 22

Recommendation 3. We recommend that the proposed new Agency for the Promotion of Welsh has a clear focus from the outset in helping deliver the overall strategic aim of a million Welsh speakers particularly through helping parents understand the benefits of a bilingual education and of learning Welsh in schools outside the Welsh-medium sector. Page 22

Recommendation 4. We recommend that the Welsh Government sets out as an urgent priority:

- Its assessment of how many additional teachers able to teach through the medium of Welsh will be needed to achieve the strategy’s overall aim;
- When those teachers will be needed; and
- How it will identify, recruit and train those teachers for when they are needed. Page 26

Recommendation 5. We recommend that the Welsh Government considers what additional help and support it needs to provide to private sector employers and businesses to enable them to develop and expand their Welsh language provision as part of meeting the overall aim of the strategy. Page 26

Recommendation 6. We recommend that the Welsh Government publishes as a matter of urgency it’s assessment of the additional resources that will be needed to support the strategic aim of 1 million Welsh speakers by the year 2050. This should include the projected profile of spending over the early part of

the strategy and an assessment of the comparative cost of what the various interventions that will be required are likely to be. Page 28

Recommendation 7. We recommend that the Welsh Government responds specifically to Mudiad Meithrin’s assessment that an additional 650 new ‘cylch meithrin’ will be needed to support the strategy. Page 31

Recommendation 8. We recommend that expanding Welsh-medium early years provision should be a priority area when considering additional funding under the strategy. Page 31

Recommendation 9. We recommend that the Welsh Government should consider providing free tuition in Welsh to parents who put their children into Welsh-language pre-school provision. Page 31

Recommendation 10. We recommend that the Welsh Government takes steps to improve the information it has available on the Welsh-medium capabilities of early years practitioners so that it can plan properly to ensure that practitioners have the right skill mix and progression opportunities to support the aims of the strategy. Page 31

Recommendation 11. We recommend that the Welsh Government sets out in detail how it intends to move “schools along the language continuum” including examples of good practice models, with a particular focus on how it will address any concerns from parents and the wider community. Page 33

Recommendation 12. We recommend that the final strategy should emphasise the need to move greater number of pupils along the language continuum and how this will be achieved in both in all categories of schools in Wales. Page 33

Recommendation 13. We recommend that the Welsh Government evaluates the efficacy of its current scheme for improving the level of Welsh of practicing teachers and sets out a projected timescale for how Welsh speaking teachers, who do not currently teach in Welsh, can be encouraged to do so including providing more opportunities:

- for them to transfer to Welsh medium education; and**
- for mentoring and others schemes to help build confidence in their ability in Welsh. Page 35**

Recommendation 14. We recommend that the Welsh Government sets out clearly:

- how many additional teachers able to teach Welsh as a subject and teach through the medium of Welsh will be needed to achieve the strategy’s overall aim;
- when they will be needed; and
- how many of these additional teachers will be drawn from the existing teaching workforce and how many through initial teacher training or other routes into the profession. Page 35

Recommendation 15. We recommend that that the Welsh Government considers how it can increase the supply of Welsh speaking students entering initial teacher training or other entry routes into the profession taking into account any wider recruitment implications this may for recruiting teachers both within Wales and in competition with other parts of the UK. Page 35

Recommendation 16. We recommend that the Welsh Government considers the role of learning support staff in supporting the aims of the strategy and takes steps, along with Estyn and the Education Workforce Council, to establish a clearer picture of their current language skills to help inform future planning. Page 36

Recommendation 17. We recommend that the new strategy should place equal emphasis on dramatically improving outcomes from Welsh second language teaching along with increasing the numbers receiving Welsh-medium or bilingual education. Page 39

Recommendation 18. We recommend that the Welsh Government sets out clearly how it will dramatically improve the teaching of Welsh in English-medium schools.Page 39

Recommendation 19. We recommend that the Welsh Government along with the WJEC reviews the provision of Welsh language learning resources for students to ensure that students receiving their education through the medium of Welsh are not disadvantaged.Page 39

Recommendation 20. We recommend a thorough evaluation of the Sabbatical Scheme looking particularly at its value for money in improving classroom outcomes and in encouraging more teachers to teach Welsh or in Welsh. Page 46

Recommendation 21. We recommend that the proposed new Agency for the Promotion of Welsh, working with established organisations and local initiatives, promotes and markets Welsh as a community language with benefits to speakers as a skill and in the workplace. Page 48

Recommendation 22. We recommend that the Welsh Government continues to support good quality, widely available Welsh for Adults provision but considers carefully its relative priority within the strategy compared to other priority areas. Page 51

Recommendation 23. We recommend that the final strategy includes a clear definition of what will count as a Welsh speaker in evaluating whether the strategy is successful in its aim of creating a million speakers. Page 52

01. The draft strategy

Introduction

1. On 1 August 2016 the First Minister and the Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language launched the consultation on the Welsh Government's new Welsh Language Strategy at the National Eisteddfod in Abergavenny. The consultation came to an end on 31 October 2016 and the current strategy formally came to an end on 31 March 2017.
2. The Welsh Government's stated ambition is to have a million Welsh speakers by 2050. According to the most recent Census in 2011 there were 562,000 Welsh speakers in Wales. On that basis, the aim of the strategy will be to almost double the number of Welsh speakers in Wales by the middle of the century.
3. The Committee agreed that this would be an opportune time to conduct an Inquiry into the new strategy. The aim of the inquiry was to seek to inform and influence the new strategy at a formative stage.
4. Throughout this report we use the terms Welsh first and second language to refer to the different programmes of study within the National Curriculum. These are well understood terms in relation to the teaching of Welsh. However, we agree with the Welsh Government's consultation document that there is a need to move away from the concept of "Welsh as a second language" towards an integrated and cohesive consideration of the language as a genuinely living language.

The Welsh Language Strategy

5. In order for the overall aim of the strategy, of a million speakers by 2050, to be met, the Welsh Government proposes prioritising six key areas for action.

1. - **Planning and Language Policy:** For all the other elements of this strategy to be effective, the Welsh Government believes that it needs to plan sensibly and deliberately to put the appropriate programmes in place at the appropriate time. For instance, in order to increase the number of Welsh speakers on the scale needed, the first step in any strategy must be to create enough teachers to teach children through the medium of Welsh.

2. - **Normalisation:** By fostering a willingness to use Welsh among people who speak it, and goodwill towards it among those who don't, the Welsh Government wants the language to be a normal part of everyday life. This means that people feel comfortable beginning a conversation in Welsh, that they can expect to receive services in Welsh, and that people are used to hearing it and seeing it.

3. - **Education:** The Welsh Government wants to see a significant increase in the number of people receiving Welsh-medium education and who have Welsh language skills. Early years provision is also essential, as the earlier a child comes into contact with the language, the more opportunity he or she has to become fluent.

4. - **People:** As well as education, it will be essential to increase the number of people who transmit the language to their children.

5. - **Support:** It is essential to develop a robust and modern infrastructure to support the language in order to increase the number of speakers, improve their confidence, and make it easier to use in a wide variety of settings. Digital resources, a healthy and diverse media, a responsive and modern translation profession, and a corpus which reflects and maintains the status of Welsh as a living language, are essential for Welsh speakers whatever their ability.

6. - **Rights:** Legislation provides an unequivocal basis for organisations to act in support of the language and for Welsh speakers to use it. Individuals need to be encouraged to take up the opportunities that come with these rights. The long term aim is to move to a situation where these rights are embedded as a natural part of services.¹

6. The Strategy also stated:

2016 – now and next

Our vision is clear – to have a million Welsh speakers by 2050. For us to achieve that, we believe that several things need to happen: more children in Welsh-medium education, better planning in relation to how people learn the language, more easy-to-access opportunities for people to use the language, a stronger infrastructure and a revolution to improve digital provision in Welsh, and a sea change in the way we speak about it.

7. The Strategy states that the education system is the main way for ensuring that children can develop their Welsh skills, and for creating new speakers. Further to that it states that ensuring there is a workforce that meets the need for Welsh-medium education and training is the starting point for creating more speakers. This means planning to support the training of teachers and learning assistants, expanding sabbatical schemes for the present workforce, and significantly increasing the number of workers in the childcare and early years sectors.

8. It therefore identifies its first objective as creating a workforce with the appropriate skills to educate and provide services through the medium of Welsh. It intends to do this by:

- Significantly increasing the number of teachers and early years practitioners who are able to teach through the medium of Welsh, to enable the education of more children and young people through the medium of Welsh.
- Increasing the number of Welsh-medium childcare places, in order to satisfy the need among parents and carers and start as many children as possible on the journey to having two languages.
- Increasing the number of people who can work through the medium of Welsh in a number of specialist areas and services, so that Welsh services are available to those who choose them.
- Normalising language planning and ensuring there are appropriate leaders in the correct positions, so that Welsh is an automatic part of workforce planning and when considering which skills are required.

¹ Consultation on a Welsh Government draft strategy: a million Welsh speakers by 2050 – 1 August 2016

Recent developments in Welsh Language Education

9. It is the Welsh Government's policy that all pupils should study Welsh from ages 3-16, either first or second language. Approximately 16 per cent of pupils attend Welsh-medium schools and study Welsh as a first language. A further 10 per cent attend bilingual, dual-medium, or English with significant Welsh provision. Welsh Government statistics show that in 2014, 22.2 percent of 7 year old learners were assessed through the medium of Welsh first language and 17.1 per cent of 14 year olds were assessed in Welsh first language.

10. In 2014/15, there were 391 Welsh-medium primary schools in Wales, alongside 39 dual stream schools, 33 English schools with significant use of Welsh, and 862 English-medium schools. During the same period, there were 23 Welsh-medium secondary schools, 27 bilingual schools, 9 English schools with significant use of Welsh, and 148 English-medium secondary schools. Further information about the linguistic categorisation of schools can be seen in this Research Service Briefing.

Welsh Medium Education

11. The Welsh Government launched its Welsh-medium Education Strategy (WMES) in April 2010. It set out a new policy agreement with local authorities that required them to assess the demand for Welsh-medium education. This was later made a duty in the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.

12. The strategy sets out six strategic aims and a number of objectives within them:

- To improve the planning of Welsh-medium provision in the pre-statutory and statutory phases of education, based on informed parental demand;
- To improve the planning of Welsh-medium provision in the post-14 phases of education and training, taking account of linguistic progression and continuing development of skills;
- To ensure that all learners develop their Welsh language skills to their full potential, and encourage sound linguistic progression from one phase of education and training to the next;
- To ensure a Welsh-medium education workforce that provides sufficient numbers of practitioners for all phases of education and training, with high-quality Welsh language skills and competence in teaching methodologies;
- To improve the central support mechanisms for Welsh-medium education and training; and
- To contribute to the acquisition and reinforcement of Welsh language skills in families and in the community.

13. The WMES includes national targets and the Welsh Government publishes an annual report to update on progress. Targets in local authority Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs) are intended to support the delivery of the Welsh Government's overarching targets in the WMES.

14. In March 2016 the Welsh Government published Welsh-medium Education Strategy: Next Steps, which outlined its three main objectives for developing Welsh-medium and Welsh language education over the following 12 months:

- The need to embed processes for planning Welsh-medium provision: strengthening strategic planning processes for all phases of education and training continues to be a priority;
- The need for improved workforce planning and support for practitioners: ensuring a sufficient workforce for Welsh-medium education and training is vital; and
- The need to ensure that young people have the confidence to use their Welsh language skills in all walks of life: education and training alone cannot guarantee that speakers become fluent in Welsh, or choose to use the language in their everyday lives.

15. The Welsh Government’s Welsh-medium Education Strategy required local authorities to submit Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs), to measure demand for Welsh-medium education and outline their targets to the Welsh Government. The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 placed WESPs on a statutory footing. Following the implementation of the Act, local authorities were required to produce their first statutory WESPs for the period 2014-2017. The Act placed a duty upon local authorities to consult on, produce and publish a WESP to be submitted for approval of, and monitoring by, Welsh Ministers. It provided for Welsh Ministers to make regulations about WESPs and subsequently the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and Assessing Demand for Welsh Medium Education (Wales) Regulations 2013 came into force on 31 December 2013.

Welsh as a subject

16. Following the introduction of the Education Reform Act 1988, Welsh was phased in as a compulsory subject for pupils aged 5-14 (Key Stages 1, 2 and 3) from 1990. From September 1999 onwards, Welsh also became compulsory at ages 14-16 (Key Stage 4). With the introduction of the Foundation Phase in 2011, Welsh or Welsh Language Development is also taught to all 3-7 year olds.

17. The National Curriculum for Wales is made up of core and foundation subjects, which are listed in the Education Act 2002.

18. The core subjects for Key Stages 1-3 are Mathematics; Science; English; and Welsh first language (in relation to Welsh-speaking schools, as stated in the Education Act 2002).

19. The foundation subjects are Technology; Physical education; History; Geography; Art; Music; Welsh second language (if the school is not a Welsh-speaking school, as stated in the Education Act 2002); and for Key Stage 3, a Modern foreign language.

20. The core subjects at Key Stage 4 are Welsh first language; Mathematics; English; and Science. The foundation subjects are Physical education; and Welsh second language.

21. Although the study of Welsh first language or Welsh second language as a subject is compulsory, deciding on the type of qualification is a matter for schools and is done at a local level. At present at Key Stage 4, schools register pupils either for a Welsh first language GCSE, Welsh second language GCSE (full course), Welsh second language GCSE (short course), or for no qualification at all. The Welsh Government’s One Language For All: Review of Welsh Second Language at Key Stages 3 and 4 (2013) states that, although Welsh is a compulsory subject in the national curriculum, it is not compulsory to enter pupils to sit a GCSE examination or any other qualification.

22. The Welsh Government, in collaboration with the WJEC and other stakeholders, is in the process of developing a revised model for GCSE Welsh second language (full course) to be introduced in September 2017. The GCSE Welsh second language short course will be withdrawn once the

revised full course model is introduced, with the last assessment opportunity for the short course being in summer 2018.

23. In July 2012, the then Education Minister established the Welsh Second Language Review Group - to review Welsh second language provision at Key Stages 3 and 4. The Group's report One Language For All – Review of Welsh Second Language at Key Stages 3 and 4 (2013), highlighted a number of issues that the Group felt needed to be addressed to improve standards in Welsh second language, including:

- Pupils do not continue to develop their Welsh skills well enough on transition to Key Stages 2 and 3;
- The time allocated to teaching the subject is not sufficient, and in some schools, the allocation is as little as one hour a fortnight;
- Many teachers in primary schools lack confidence and ability to teach Welsh second language;
- Too many pupils who follow the GCSE Welsh second language short course are entered for the foundation tier though they are capable of gaining A*- B grades which cannot be achieved in the foundation tier;
- In most schools, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to hear and practise using the language beyond formal Welsh lessons; and
- In too many secondary schools, the subject is taught by non-specialist teachers who lack a thorough understanding of second language teaching methodology.

24. The Welsh Government's response to the Review Group's report stated that it would ask Professor Donaldson to consider those recommendations relating to the curriculum as part of his independent review of the curriculum and assessment arrangements.

25. The then Minister provided a further update on the progress made towards the implementation of these recommendations in October 2015, following the publication of Professor Donaldson's Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales report – Successful Futures.

26. The Minister stated that Successful Futures makes 10 recommendations relating to the Welsh language in the curriculum, and that these respond directly to the key recommendations made by the Welsh Second Language Review Group. All these recommendations have been accepted by the Minister, including that Welsh will remain compulsory in all schools up to the age of 16.

27. According to the then Minister, the new curriculum should see a renewed focus on learning Welsh primarily as a means of communication, particularly oral communication and understanding. Further, the Welsh Government intends to enhance the value attached to the Welsh language by strengthening the focus on its commercial value for the jobs market, the apparent cognitive benefits of bilingualism and its importance in enabling children and young people to have a good understanding of the cultural life of Wales in the past and the present.

28. The Welsh Government identified its first objective in the draft strategy as creating a workforce with the appropriate skills to educate and provide services through the medium of Welsh.

29. A significant proportion of the evidence received focussed on the broad aspects of the strategy itself, with many expressing concerns with the emphasis within the strategy, the clarity and detail provided, and the lack of targets and milestones that would enable the Welsh Government to measure the success of the strategy.

Our View

At the outset, we want to make clear that we support the overall ambition in the draft strategy of a million Welsh speakers in Wales by the year 2050. However, despite the desire for the strategy to succeed, the level of change required cannot simply be wished into existence. It will require hard work, considerable additional resources and clear thinking if the aim of the strategy is to be reached.

Our recommendations are mainly concerned with the practicalities of how the ambition can be turned into reality.

02. Targets and Milestones

30. Several contributors to the inquiry felt that the draft strategy is lacking in clear and detailed targets and milestones that would allow the progress of the strategy to be assessed. Cymdeithas yr Iaith suggested a range of specific targets and milestones, which are set out in their published submission to the Committee. Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol suggested annual targets should be set for the number of university graduates who undertake a proportion of their studies through the medium of Welsh.

31. Other contributors stressed the need for measurable milestones and targets, particularly covering 5-year intervals from its adoption and felt that the draft strategy is lacking in clear and detailed targets and milestones that would allow the progress of the strategy to be assessed.

32. Cymdeithas yr Iaith for instance wrote that there is a need to:

- i) Set sub-targets for every decade, or ideally every five years, outlining milestones on the way to achieving a million Welsh speakers;
- ii) Aim towards an ambitious target for 2041 that gives flexibility to increase the target for 2051, and, in addition, gives greater assurance that growth in the number and percentage of Welsh speakers is sufficient to reach a million by 2050.²

33. Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol seemed to concur with this view:

It is important to set clear milestones and targets along the way in order to be able to monitor progress and achievements...it will be necessary to publish a full action plan, and that specific targets and milestones should be set for the first 5, 10 and 15 years of the strategy in order to measure the progress of the schemes introduced.³

34. Referring to the vision for a million Welsh speakers by 2050, Estyn's Chief Inspector said:

I would say that there is a need for a detailed plan. That's what's not available at the moment. On a national level, there would need to be clear targets on what's intended to be achieved between now and 2050.

35. Huw O Jones posed questions for the Minister in his consultation response:

Why will growth be slower at the beginning of the period? Alun, are you able to publish a graph or table showing how many new Welsh speakers will need to be created every year between now and 2050 to reach the target of a million fluent Welsh speakers?⁴

² This is a translation of text that was originally submitted in Welsh. The original text can be found on our web pages at www.assembly.wales/seneddCWLC

³ See footnote 2

⁴ Ibid

36. The Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language appeared before the Committee on 14 September 2016, before publishing the draft strategy. During that scrutiny session, the Minister stated the following:

We do have to have milestones and targets put in place...and those should be targets for the impact that we're going to have, and also of what we are going to do over the next few years, and, say, the next five years, the next 10 years...So you will see targets and a timetable when you see the new strategy next year.⁵

37. During the Minister's scrutiny session on 18th January 2017, he re-iterated the fact that there will be a framework of targets published simultaneously with the strategy.⁶ However, because targets and milestones were not included in the draft strategy, there was no opportunity for stakeholders to comment on them during the consultation process or the Committee to scrutinise the Minister on the feasibility of the targets.

Our View

While few will oppose the overall aim of the strategy, there has to be some assessment of how practicable that aim is, particularly if it is unlikely to be achieved without significant investment and culture change.

We can understand that final targets and milestones cannot be set until the strategy itself is finalised. However, it would have been helpful if the Welsh Government had provided some initial assessment of, for instance, how many additional school places and teachers might be needed. The lack of any meaningful outline of possible targets and milestones in the consultation draft has made it difficult for consultees, and the Committee, to make an informed assessment of how realistic the overall aim of the strategy might be.

As well as milestones and targets, it would be helpful if the Welsh Government could provide information on whether different interventions and emphases are intended in different phases of the strategy. For example, will there be a greater focus on nursery and early years education initially or on upskilling teachers of Welsh in "English-medium" schools?

When targets are set they should be outcome-focussed. The Welsh Government should also publish its assumptions, about the increase over time it expects in numbers of new Welsh speakers as a result of its proposed interventions, so that stakeholders can engage with it.

This suggests that a further period of consultation will be needed once the strategy is 'finalised' so that proper account can be taken of the assumptions underlying the strategy and how realistic and measurable the proposed targets and milestones are.

Recommendation 1. We recommend that the Government should publish its underlying assumptions about the increase in Welsh speakers it expects from its proposed interventions and consults further on detailed, outcome-focussed, targets and milestones before adopting them for the new strategy.

⁵ Committee transcript: 14 September 2016 para 182

⁶ Committee transcript: 18 January 2017 para 142 & 143

03. Emphasis of Strategy

38. On the whole, contributors to the inquiry believed that the emphasis placed on education to enable the Government to reach the target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050 is reasonable. After all, if the Welsh Government is to reach its target of a million Welsh speakers, then it is reasonable to think that it is through this route that a significant proportion of new Welsh speakers will be created.

39. However, a number of contributors expressed a view that the emphasis on education should not be at the expense of other areas of Welsh language development. Aberystwyth University for example noted that:

Education is an area which is mainly associated with language acquisition, while areas such as community, social life and the workplace are mainly associated with language use. Due to the focus placed on education, there is reason to conclude that the types of interventions considered in the consultation document do not succeed in striking the appropriate balance between increasing the number of speakers and increasing the use of the language.⁷

40. Cymdeithas yr Iaith also stressed the need to ensure that workforce planning and language acquisition did not come at the expense of other important factors stating that

It is important that politicians do not forget their commitment to the other two objectives regarding use of the Welsh language and outward migration.⁸

41. While much of the emphasis within the strategy is on creating a million Welsh speakers, some question whether there should be greater emphasis on **creating demand** for Welsh medium education. Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg and the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) made the following points:

Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg

In terms of wider targets to normalise the Welsh language across the whole education system, targets must be considered not only to ‘respond to demand’ but to lead and create demand.⁹

WLGA

In addition to meeting demand for Welsh medium education and capacity within English medium schools for Welsh learning, there is also a need to create demand if the target of 1 million speakers by 2050 is to be met.

42. There were several references made to ensuring that not all the focus of workforce planning is directed towards the education sector alone. Swyddle, a private Welsh language recruitment specialist stated in their response that there is:

⁷ See footnote 2

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Ibid

An emphasis in the Strategy on the supply of the teaching workforce, but there is also need to cultivate a demand in the wider workforce, incentivising the use of Welsh beyond the classroom. Any language strategy should have a social/cultural approach (opportunities outside of work) but also an economic approach (work, incentivised, business champions and role models).

- 43.** Mudiad Meithrin also mentioned a need to plan across sectors, not only within education:

We note that there is a need to increase the number of people who can work through the medium of Welsh in a number of areas and specialised services. We suggest that there is a need to prioritise this in order to provide a proactive Welsh-language service across the wider public sector and in other businesses.¹⁰

- 44.** A few contributors also expressed concerns that the strategy focusses predominantly on the work of Welsh Government in respect of language planning, and fails to identify the contributions of other important stakeholders and organisations in ensuring the aims of the strategy are achieved:

Aberystwyth University

There is some ambiguity in the consultation document as to the exact nature of the proposed strategy [...] a detailed analysis of the content of the rest of the document shows that Welsh Government activity is considered and emphasised above all else. For example, there is little reference to other important actors such as local government, third sector bodies and civil society bodies.¹¹

WLGA

It is essential to identify those organisations that can help deliver on this strategy; ensure clarity of agreed outcomes and accountability. Funding streams should be similarly aligned and be sustainable in the medium to long term.

- 45.** Some contributors did however note caution in respect of the Welsh Government's aim:

Milford Haven Town Council

Whilst it is a laudable aim to promote the Welsh language for those who are interested and who live in those parts of the country where it is widely spoken it is unrealistic to aim for almost a quarter of the total population of Wales and to promote it at a time when many main services are being savagely cut...to promote further Welsh medium education and Welsh medium schools with enhanced facilities whilst forcing the closure and/or amalgamation of English medium schools reeks of bias and favouritism.

¹⁰ See footnote 2

¹¹ *ibid*

WLGA

The Strategy will also require adequate resourcing. It is essential that the Strategy also recognises and acknowledges the variation across local authorities in Wales in terms of the number of Welsh speakers and the capacity for those areas to significantly increase the numbers, or proportion of Welsh speakers.

Wrexham County Borough Council

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.

Our View – The role of Welsh-medium Education

The draft strategy places the central challenge of achieving the aim of a million Welsh speakers by 2050 squarely on the shoulders of the Welsh medium education sector. On the whole, those who contributed to our inquiry agreed that this was a reasonable approach. We share the view that any successful strategy will need to draw heavily on the Welsh-medium education system to generate significant numbers of the new Welsh speakers that will be needed to reach the target. As a first step in this, it is crucial that the current level of demand for Welsh-medium education is met.

Some voices did express caution however. As Aberystwyth University noted, the right balance needs to be struck between increasing the number of speakers and increasing the use of the language. In our view, while Welsh-medium education has shown it is very successful in producing new Welsh speakers, there is a danger that an over reliance on the education system may result in the language being pigeon-holed as the language of education, which might be counter-productive. We are not convinced that this balance has been struck in the Welsh Government's consultation document.

We are also not convinced that stimulating further demand for Welsh-medium education is the only intervention that can succeed or is needed. The emphasis on this sector needs to be weighed in the balance along with other interventions. These include investment in Cylchoedd Meithrin and expanding the workforce to teach Welsh to a high standard in English-medium schools. It is important that the Welsh Government establishes which interventions makes the best contribution to meeting the strategy goals and prioritises resources accordingly.

More than that, if there is a serious ambition to get a million people not only speaking Welsh, but using it in their communities, then we need to ensure that there are a range of policies, in addition to the education field, that support the community and social use of the language. This cannot rely on Government intervention alone. All stakeholders, including local government and public sector organisations, the third sector and private businesses need to buy in and commit to the strategy goals and come forward with the most ambitious commitments they feel able to make, towards meeting them - so that they too are accountable.

There should, therefore, alongside the emphasis on Welsh-medium education, be a very clear emphasis in the final strategy on community, social life and workplace policies that help encourage a living and vibrant use of the language in all aspects of modern Welsh life.

Recommendation 2. We recommend that the final strategy should give due weight to the importance of nurturing language use in communities, in social life and in workplaces. This should be done alongside language acquisition through Welsh-medium education, early years education and improving the quality of Welsh language teaching in English-medium schools and Welsh language outcomes for pupils.

Our View – Promotion of Welsh

We discuss funding in more detail later. However, whatever the final balance is between language acquisition and language use, it is worth noting that the additional resources that will be needed for Welsh-medium education are likely to be significant if the target is to be reached.

Apart from the additional resources that will be needed, another challenge that will need to be met is possible resistance from communities to such an expansion in Welsh-medium education. It is difficult to see how such a significant cultural shift can be achieved without the active support of parents and communities and a wider public debate about relative public spending priorities.

There is, therefore a need to reach out to those who are not currently engaged with the language or the aims of the strategy. It will be important to persuade communities - particularly new parents - and young people of the benefits of a bilingual education. The proposed new Agency for the Promotion of Welsh will have a clear role to play in this area and it will be important that it has a clear focus on helping deliver the strategy from its establishment.

Recommendation 3. We recommend that the proposed new Agency for the Promotion of Welsh has a clear focus from the outset in helping deliver the overall strategic aim of a million Welsh speakers particularly through helping parents understand the benefits of a bilingual education and of learning Welsh in schools outside the Welsh-medium sector.

04. Workforce Planning

46. In terms of this inquiry, workforce planning could be separated into three streams, that is:
- workforce planning in terms of teachers and practitioners able to teach through the medium of Welsh;
 - workforce planning in terms of identifying in specified sectors for Welsh language skills; and
 - workforce planning on a national level - requiring Welsh language skills audits across all sectors in Wales.

Teachers and practitioners

47. As the focus of the inquiry was specifically on the education workforce, it is not surprising that the focus of contributors to the inquiry was on workforce planning across the education sector:

Qualifications Wales

An important first step will be for Welsh Government to gain a full understanding of the current capacity and capability in relation to Welsh language skills across the education workforce.

Flintshire County Council

The Welsh Government need to have a robust action plan to support the development of the future Welsh medium teaching workforce. Continuing in the same way will not produce the changes needed. There will need to be a radical re-think about how this can be achieved.

Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon Cymru (UCAC)

It could be argued that the problem of workforce planning in education is a long-term systemic issue. Too much is currently left to chance...It is important to use an effective and convenient method of gathering vital data and to do so as soon as possible.¹²

Workforce planning – other sectors

48. However, some contributors also made a case for Welsh Government to look at targeting specific sectors where Welsh language skills will be required in the future.

Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol

We believe that the process of identifying the needs of the future workforce should be identified and accelerated within different fields by considering the level and range of Welsh language and bilingual skills that will be needed in specific fields within a decade or more.¹³

¹² See footnote 2

¹³ Ibid

Popeth Cymraeg

It is clear that the children's education system is the most important route in terms of creating Welsh speakers...Welsh for Adults, however, can do extremely important work in terms of targeting specific sectors.¹⁴

- 49.** It was also suggested by some that language planning needs to be done on a national level, across all sectors, and in doing so, engaging with employers across Wales about developing Welsh language skills in the workforce.

Colleges Wales

Engage with employers - across all sectors to talk about their Welsh language skills needs.

Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol

There is a need to develop a workforce with robust bilingual skills in every service area, and an attempt should be made to set specific targets in terms of the number of workers who are able to work bilingually across the sectors.¹⁵

Wrexham County Borough Council

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.

- 50.** Some contributors were of the view that there is a greater need to work with the private sector, engaging with businesses and providing support to maintain and develop their Welsh language/bilingual ability.

Swyddle

The Welsh language has a far better chance of evolving and surviving in a globalised world by truly becoming a language of business and commerce. The work of the Welsh Language and Economic Development Task and Finish Group (2014) has provided some basis for a strategic approach. The Welsh Government's response mentioned the language as an 'additional tool that provides the cutting edge over competitors' but the marketing strategies would be well served by emphasising the added value of the language.

Colleges Wales

Must engage a new audience strategically – work with private sector (provider of services), retail, tourism and hospitality, business representative bodies – FSB, CBI, IOD [Federation of Small Businesses, Confederation of British

¹⁴ See footnote 2

¹⁵ Ibid

Industry, Institute of Directors] -what skills are they looking for, and respond to these needs.

51. In his evidence to the Committee, the Minister was of the view that there was a need to encourage and enable businesses to develop and expand their Welsh language ability, the 'carrot' approach rather than the stick.

My inclination is always that we should cajole, sometimes persuade, encourage, enable—'enable' is the most powerful, of course; 'enable' is always the most powerful—help people. You know, the role of Government could well be, for example, to help a small business owner to produce bilingual signs, signage and the rest of it; it could be to provide a larger business with support in delivering what would be a bilingual proposition to potential customers.¹⁶

52. The Minister also spelled out his hopes about developing Welsh within the private sector.

I hope that, as we normalise, if you like, the use of the Welsh language in other parts of the society and the community, business itself will feel able to be a part of that. It is not my intention to simply use compulsion at every opportunity...As a Welsh speaker, I know that the bilingual policies that work easiest for me are bilingual policies that are delivered by people who care and are doing it because they think it's the right [thing] to do, because it's part of their business model, it's part of who they are, rather than somebody who's just compelled to put up a bilingual sign.¹⁷

53. Only two written evidence submissions were received from private sector businesses to the inquiry.

Our View – Teachers and Practitioners

Earlier we set out our view that due weight needs to be given within the strategy to nurturing language use in areas other than Welsh-medium education. But, there is little doubt that if the strategy is to achieve its overall aim, there will need to be a considerable expansion of those receiving a bilingual education and of the education workforce able to teach through the medium of Welsh. We make further specific recommendations in this area later in the report.

However, we are not convinced that the Welsh Government has sufficiently robust information on the scale of the task and how it might be addressed. The sort of expansion of provision needed seems unlikely to be achieved without having a clear idea of:

- The number of additional teachers and other practitioners that will be needed in future to teach through the medium of Welsh;
- How many of them will come from those already in the workforce and how many will need to be new recruits;

¹⁶ Committee transcript: 18 January 2017 para 314

¹⁷ Ibid – para 308

- The training requirements involved, including lead times; and
- Whether the policy levers to encourage this sort of expansion are currently in place.

There is no doubt a range of other questions, not least the financial resources required, that will also need to be addressed. However, the first step is for the Welsh Government to set out clearly what it believes the additional requirements to be and how it intends to meet these needs.

Recommendation 4. We recommend that the Welsh Government sets out as an urgent priority:

- Its assessment of how many additional teachers able to teach through the medium of Welsh will be needed to achieve the strategy’s overall aim;
- When those teachers will be needed; and
- How it will identify, recruit and train those teachers for when they are needed.

Our View – Other sectors

As we have said previously, while the education system may be the most important strand of the strategy, there is little point in increasing the numbers of Welsh speakers if they don’t use the language. A vibrant community language requires opportunities for its use in all aspects of Welsh life, particularly in workplaces.

In the public sector, the statutory requirements within the Welsh Language Measure 2011 are likely to mean that employers will need increased Welsh speaker resource in order to provide the service standards required by the Measure.

There are however, some parts of the public sector such as the social care workforce where a more proactive approach may be needed.

If Welsh is not to be seen as simply the language of education and the public sector, then there is a need to help businesses in Wales to use the language. The Minister talked of enabling and helping businesses to develop and expand their Welsh language ability; the carrot rather than the stick approach. We agree with this view. While, there may be a need to enforce specific standards on some larger businesses, we believe that businesses should be encouraged and helped to use and expand their use of the Welsh language. A key part of the strategy should, therefore, focus on what practical help and assistance can be provided centrally to help businesses increase their use of Welsh in the workplace.

Recommendation 5. We recommend that the Welsh Government considers what additional help and support it needs to provide to private sector employers and businesses to enable them to develop and expand their Welsh language provision as part of meeting the overall aim of the strategy.

05. Financial resource

54. Financial resource was a theme throughout the oral evidence sessions and via written evidence submissions. On a broad level, contributors were of the view that in order to achieve the target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050, the Welsh Government would need to provide the required additional financial resource. Contributors identified the need for additional resource to allow for increasing capacity within the Welsh medium education sector, but also resource for Welsh language planning in the wider context.

One Voice Wales

“One Voice Wales recognises that this ambition will be extremely difficult to realise without a significant injection of resources.”

Wrexham County Borough Council

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...additional money is already being put aside in order to implement the Welsh Language Standards and Welsh medium education.

Qualifications Wales

To realise the ambitious target of one million Welsh speakers by 2050, the Welsh language strategy will have to be carefully planned and sufficiently resourced.

Cymdeithas yr Iaith

For the strategy to succeed, there has to be sufficient investment ... as a total, we believe, over time, that there is a need for over £100 million a year in order for sufficient plans to be put to work properly.¹⁸

55. Flintshire County Council called for additional or specific financial resource in areas where the percentage of Welsh speakers is low:

Welsh Government should consider providing additional financial support to Local Authorities, particularly in those areas where there are low numbers/percentages of Welsh speakers to ensure their successful implementation.

56. However, University of South Wales in their written evidence suggested that in order to make significant progress there needs to be:

Significant investment in Welsh-medium schools across Wales, particularly in areas where there is a demand and the potential to increase the number of Welsh speakers significantly.

¹⁸ See Footnote 2

57. In response to a question during Committee on the financial resource available to deliver the strategy, the Minister stated that he was satisfied with the funds available:

I am content with the current situation, and we have weekly and monthly discussions with other Ministers to discuss the financial situation and future budgets...I am confident we have the necessary resources.¹⁹

Our View

Cymdeithas yr Iaith Cymraeg in their evidence call for over £100 million a year to put the relevant plans to work. The Welsh Government needs to assess whether additional funding of this scale will be needed but it is difficult to see how the aim of the strategy can be achieved without significant new funding or the reordering of current spending priorities or both. The Welsh government also needs to consider whether it has the right projected balance between promoting language acquisition and the funding of Welsh-language services in the public sector.

We are not in a position to estimate exactly how much extra funding is necessary but it is not implausible that very significant additional spending will be needed over the lifetime of the strategy. In addition, if the strategy is to be successful the bulk of the extra resources may need to be used up-front so that there is time for the funding to produce results.

An example from Mudiad Meithrin illustrates the scale of resources that may be needed. They estimate that an additional 650 of their groups will be needed to support the strategy. Each group costs around £17,000 to establish and a further £40,000 a year to run. That's around £11 million in total start-up costs and annual running costs that will reach £26 million. These figures may well be overestimates. Nevertheless, they show the possible scale of spending that may be needed to support just one aspect of the strategy.

The Minister's response, that he is confident that he has the necessary resources, would be reassuring if it was supported by a clear assessment of what resources will be needed and when. So far, we have seen no such assessment nor have we seen any commitment that the resources to deliver this strategy will be in addition to current spending on Education, so that other educational priorities are not distorted.

If the Minister's confidence is based on internal Welsh Government figures, then now is the time to publish those figures so that there can be a proper debate around the level of funding that will be needed and how realistic that is.

Recommendation 6. We recommend that the Welsh Government publishes as a matter of urgency its assessment of the additional resources that will be needed to support the strategic aim of 1 million Welsh speakers by the year 2050. This should include the projected profile of spending over the early part of the strategy and an assessment of the comparative cost of what the various interventions that will be required are likely to be.

¹⁹ Committee transcript: 18 January 2017 para 317

06. Early years provision

58. The pre-statutory care sector is considered by many contributors as key in creating new Welsh speakers and developing skills and confidence in using the language. This is the sector responsible for providing care for under-fives – an age when language acquisition happens quickly and naturally. Research has shown²⁰ that as many as 11 per cent of all Welsh speakers learnt the language at nursery, with a fluency rate of 50 per cent amongst those speakers. This is higher than the levels of fluency amongst those learning the language at primary school, secondary school or somewhere else apart from the home.

59. For many contributors, this sector requires specific targeting of resources. The language acquisition and skills learnt at this very early age appear to be critical as children move through the education system and into further or higher education and eventually the workplace.

Estyn

Ensuring Welsh medium education in early years is fundamentally important...It is accepted that the earlier a child comes in to contact with the language, the more likely he or she is to become fluent.

Mudiad Meithrin

We welcome the acknowledgement in the draft strategy that the early years are vital in a child's journey towards Welsh-language fluency...we suggest that the need to prioritise growth in the number of children in receipt of Welsh-medium care and education should be one of the development areas in this strategy.²¹

Welsh Language Commissioner

If we wish to create more fluent Welsh speakers capable of training and qualifying to work through the medium of Welsh in the future, both in the education sector and in other sectors of employment, it will first be necessary to increase the provision of Welsh-medium care.²²

60. In the Welsh Government's draft strategy, it states that an additional 331 Welsh medium classes would be required to support the vision of the strategy. However, Mudiad Meithrin, who currently have 501 Cylchoedd Meithrin (Playgroups), in Wales provided an estimate of the number of new Cylchoedd that would be required:

Mudiad Meithrin estimates that more than 650 new 'cylch meithrin' groups would need to be established to achieve corresponding growth in Welsh-medium pre-school provision across Wales.

61. This would require significant additional resource within the sector – as highlighted by Mudiad Meithrin during their evidence session:

²⁰ Welsh Language Use in Wales, 2013-15. Welsh Government & Welsh Language Commissioner (p.52)

²¹ See footnote 2

²² Ibid

We've also done some work in relation to costing-the cost of establishing a new cylch meithrin. It's around £17,000; the cost of running a cylch meithrin that has one leader and six assistants, which offers 12 and a half hours a week, is around £40,000 a year.²³

62. As was noted earlier, this suggests, for an additional 650 groups, around £11 million in total start-up costs and annual running costs will reach £26 million.

63. The Minister, in response to a question about Mudiad Meithrin's assessment that an additional 650 new 'cylch meithrin' groups would be required, on top of the 500 currently in place to correspond to growth in Welsh-medium pre-school provision said:

We do need to have in place sufficient provision to reach our targets. We don't have, at the moment – I completely accept that. I hope that the strategy we put in place will contain the targets that you've described.²⁴

64. The Minister also confirmed²⁵ during the Committee session that the Welsh Government is planning to expand or invest in the national training scheme for early years practitioners wanting to work in 'cylchoedd meithrin' day-nurseries and Welsh-medium nursery classes in schools across Wales. The scheme is administered by Mudiad Meithrin through a subsidiary company, 'Cam wrth Gam'.

Our View

In the previous section, we used the examples quoted above to illustrate the possible scale of costs that might be involved in expanding good quality early years provision through the medium of Welsh. There must be some doubt as to whether expansion of provision to the level suggested by Mudiad Meithrin is achievable, certainly without very significant extra spending. Nor are we clear to what extent any expansion in provision will be in addition to or in place of current English language provision.

However, we were convinced that it will be important to invest in additional early years provision if the strategy is to be successful. It should, therefore, be a priority area when considering the need for additional resources. Alongside this, given the positive impact on overall buy-in and likely language retention, consideration should also be given to providing free tuition in Welsh to parents who put their children into Welsh-language pre-school provision.

We understand that there is currently a lack of data available on the Welsh language skills of early years practitioners. Alongside prioritising the sector for additional resources, it will also be important to improve the information available on the skills capability of early years' practitioners so that decision making on the practicalities of expanding Welsh-medium provision is better informed.

We welcome the commitment by the Minister to expand or invest in the 'Cam wrth Gam' scheme to improve and expand training for the Welsh-medium early years workforce. However, the Welsh

²³ Committee transcript: 24 November 2016 para 191

²⁴ Committee transcript: 18 January 2017 para 249

²⁵ Ibid – para 208

Government should also consider the needs of other projects and providers in the early years sector that support Welsh language provision, such as flying start.

Recommendation 7. We recommend that the Welsh Government responds specifically to Mudiad Meithrin’s assessment that an additional 650 new ‘cylch meithrin’ will be needed to support the strategy.

Recommendation 8. We recommend that expanding Welsh-medium early years provision should be a priority area when considering additional funding under the strategy.

Recommendation 9. We recommend that the Welsh Government should consider providing free tuition in Welsh to parents who put their children into Welsh-language pre-school provision.

Recommendation 10. We recommend that the Welsh Government takes steps to improve the information it has available on the Welsh-medium capabilities of early years practitioners so that it can plan properly to ensure that practitioners have the right skill mix and progression opportunities to support the aims of the strategy.

07. Statutory Education Provision

Moving schools along the language continuum

65. Some contributors during the stakeholder session noted the enormous challenge in moving schools along the language continuum. One stakeholder said that this kind of change requires a seismic shift in mind-set on all levels in respect of Welsh medium-education. Currently, 26 per cent of schools (primary and secondary) are classified as Welsh medium schools, with a further 7.3 per cent classified as bilingual or dual stream schools.

66. To move schools along the language continuum would require significant planning and resource from Welsh Government according to some contributors:

UCAC

Support must be provided for schools to plan to move along the continuum – from changing a school’s ethos to increasing Welsh-medium activities and teaching, workforce planning to communicate with parents.²⁶

NASUWT

If the adventure is successful, then you would, presumably, get to a position where the schools in Wales would either be Welsh-medium schools or bilingual schools, rather than the category of English medium school...that’s a 30 year process.²⁷

Estyn

You’re not shifting from no Welsh at all to completely Welsh medium; you’re shifting all the system up a little bit. But I agree there would be a huge amount of resources involved.²⁸

67. The Minister explained to the Committee²⁹ that he was currently considering the matter of school categorisation, and accepted that great care was needed in the process of moving schools along the language continuum. He was unequivocal however that it is his expectation that children or young people reaching the age of 16 should be “Either bilingual—being able to speak both English and Welsh—or at least have a good grounding of Welsh”. [para 268]

Our View

The Welsh Government’s draft strategy says that it wants to achieve “a significant increase in the number of children and young people educated through the medium of Welsh or bilingually in order to create more speakers”. One of the ways in which it says this will be achieved is by moving “schools along the language continuum to increase the availability of Welsh-medium school places”. We would like the Welsh Government to provide examples of good practice and models for moving schools

²⁶ See footnote 2

²⁷ Committee Transcript: 24 November 2016 para 101

²⁸ Committee Transcript: 14 December 2016 para 82

²⁹ Committee Transcript: 18 January 2017 para 267-8

along the categorisation continuum. Where has this worked well and should the Welsh Government use it as a model in other areas?

The Minister recognised the sensitivities in this area and that considerable caution was needed in moving forward. We agree with that view. In our view, the immediate focus of the strategy should be on outcomes for pupils as the Minister suggested.

Nevertheless, there will need to be a significant increase in the number of pupils receiving a Welsh-medium or bilingual education if the strategic aim is to be met. We acknowledge that this is likely to require moving some schools along the language continuum, increasing the number of bilingual and Welsh-medium schools. However, for us, while school re-categorisation may be necessary in some cases, it should not be an end in itself. It is far more important that we see an increasing number of pupils move along the language continuum toward fluency in Welsh. The draft strategy as it stands does not provide clarity or detail as to how this might be achieved or how the need to engage with parents and communities will be achieved.

Recommendation 11. We recommend that the Welsh Government sets out in detail how it intends to move “schools along the language continuum” including examples of good practice models, with a particular focus on how it will address any concerns from parents and the wider community.

Recommendation 12. We recommend that the final strategy should emphasise the need to move greater number of pupils along the language continuum and how this will be achieved in both in all categories of schools in Wales.

Recruitment and Retention

68. One area of concern among some providing evidence is the recruitment and retention of teachers who can teach through the medium of Welsh, and who can teach Welsh as a subject.

UCAC

I think there is a shortage. Welsh-medium schools are finding it difficult to recruit. They’re finding it difficult to find Welsh speaking supply teachers.³⁰

Qualifications Wales

A particular concern we often hear of is the shortage of teachers who are competent and sufficiently trained to teach the subject.

Estyn

The report concluded that ‘a few schools, particularly Welsh-medium schools and those located in rural or economically deprived areas, have difficulty finding suitable supply teachers.

69. One border county also expressed concerns about the recruitment of teachers to teach through the medium of Welsh in their area:

³⁰ Committee Transcript: 24 November 2016 para 47

Flintshire County Council

There is a significant shortage of teachers able to work through the medium of Welsh, for example, physics and chemistry. The local Welsh medium secondary school has found a lack of suitably qualified teachers in core subjects over the last three years.

70. The Education Workforce Council (EWC) accept there is significant work to do in terms of increasing the talent pool within Welsh language education:

Welsh language and Welsh medium—it's always been more difficult to get the numbers. So, you're absolutely right. With that target of 2050 in mind, the first thing we need to do is to try and get that talent pool larger, because it's always been harder to get Welsh-speaking teachers.³¹

71. The issue of retention is also particularly acute in the early years sector according to those working within the sector:

Mudiad Meithrin

We have a challenge in that we have excellent individuals, they upskill, they have higher qualifications, but then they move on to the statutory sector.³²

Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol

There is no doubt that specific plans are needed to significantly increase the number of early years teachers and practitioners who are able to speak Welsh and who are confident in using the language in their work.³³

72. According to EWC data, around 33 per cent of teachers in Wales can speak Welsh, but only 27 per cent teach through the medium of Welsh. This suggests that around 5-6 per cent of teachers currently within the system could be encouraged or assisted to move to Welsh-medium teaching relatively quickly.

Our View

We received a consistent message that there is a shortage of teachers able to teach through the medium of Welsh or who can teach Welsh as a subject. The 5-6 per cent of current teachers who speak Welsh but don't teach in Welsh may be a relatively ready resource that can boost the availability of Welsh-medium teachers in the short term. While the availability of this pool of teachers is not a panacea, it may be a firm starting point for helping meet the extra demand that is likely to be required if the overall aim of doubling the number of Welsh speakers is to be reached. However, later in this report, we express our doubts about the efficacy of the 'Sabbatical scheme', which is meant to help increase the supply of practitioners who can teach through the medium of Welsh. This scheme needs to be evaluated before we can be sure of the contribution it might make in future.

³¹ Committee Transcript: 30 November 2016 para 186

³² See footnote 2

³³ Ibid

Medium to longer-term requirements will need to be addressed through increasing the supply of teachers able and willing to teach through the medium of Welsh. This may need to include improving in-service training opportunities and encouraging more teachers to learn Welsh to a standard where they can teach it, at least as a second language. However, the additional demand implied by the overall aim of the strategy suggests that other ways of meeting it will also need to be found.

If the demand is to be met then the number of Welsh speaking students entering Initial Teacher Training may need to significantly increase. This contrasts with the decline in first year enrolments on ITT courses in Wales in recent years when the policy has been to reduce the number of new entrants. It is not clear how this might be achieved but it is clearly a matter which the Welsh Government needs to address if the strategy is to be a success.

Recommendation 13. We recommend that the Welsh Government evaluates the efficacy of its current scheme for improving the level of Welsh of practicing teachers and sets out a projected timescale for how Welsh speaking teachers, who do not currently teach in Welsh, can be encouraged to do so including providing more opportunities:

- for them to transfer to Welsh medium education; and
- for mentoring and others schemes to help build confidence in their ability in Welsh.

Recommendation 14. We recommend that the Welsh Government sets out clearly:

- how many additional teachers able to teach Welsh as a subject and teach through the medium of Welsh will be needed to achieve the strategy’s overall aim;
- when they will be needed; and
- how many of these additional teachers will be drawn from the existing teaching workforce and how many through initial teacher training or other routes into the profession.

Recommendation 15. We recommend that that the Welsh Government considers how it can increase the supply of Welsh speaking students entering initial teacher training or other entry routes into the profession taking into account any wider recruitment implications this may for recruiting teachers both within Wales and in competition with other parts of the UK.

Learning Support Staff

73. The Education Workforce Council among others also highlighted the need to consider the entire education workforce, including learning support staff. Learning support staff account for just under half of education staff in Wales with 28,839 registered school learning support staff as of 31 August 2016. There are 35,450 school teachers currently registered in Wales:

Education Workforce Council

As the demand for learning support staff grows, we would urge policy makers to take into account the composition of the entire workforce.

74. At present, little is known of the Welsh language skills of learning support staff – many stakeholders were of the view that understanding the linguistic skills of this sector would be crucial in informing and developing the strategy.

75. In order to support the strategy’s aims, it is important to make teaching as a whole, and particularly in terms of this strategy, teaching through the medium of Welsh, as attractive as possible to learning support staff and others considering a career in teaching, and not to alienate the workforce in the process:

NASUWT

We have said in here that if you’re going to embark upon this process, then it needs to be considered to be an adventure, rather than a crusade, because if it’s a crusade, you can look at it and say you are forcing people to do this, and I don’t think that that would be a reasonable way forward on this.³⁴

UCAC

So, there’s a gap there between people who say they can speak Welsh and people who say they can teach through the medium of Welsh. With a bit of encouragement, maybe that percentage, that gap, would say, ‘Well, actually, yes, I would be keen to contribute to changing the ethos of my school, which is an English-medium school, to make it more Welsh in nature.’³⁵

Our view

Almost half the education workforce in Wales are learning support staff and their role in delivering the strategy must not be underestimated. They will be crucial if it is to be a success and the need to have sufficient numbers of support staff able to support Welsh–medium teaching must be given the right emphasis within the strategy.

Unfortunately, there seems to be a relative paucity of information about the current language skills of this group of staff. It will be important that this information gap is addressed if the skills of these experienced staff are to be utilised to best effect within the strategy.

Recommendation 16. We recommend that the Welsh Government considers the role of learning support staff in supporting the aims of the strategy and takes steps, along with Estyn and the Education Workforce Council, to establish a clearer picture of their current language skills to help inform future planning.

Welsh second language education

76. One matter raised during the inquiry was the need to improve Welsh language education provision across all schools in Wales, with particular reference to Welsh as a second language provision. The current second language qualification is in the process of being reformed:

³⁴ Committee Transcript: 24 November 2016 para 7

³⁵ Ibid para 26

Qualifications Wales

As the committee will be aware from our letter³⁶ to Welsh Assembly Members earlier this year, we have reformed the GCSE Welsh Second Language qualification for first teaching from September 2017. When it is introduced, the current full and short course provision will be removed. The new qualification will:

- strengthen the focus on speaking and listening to ensure that learners have the everyday Welsh skills they need for the real world;
 - remove the reliance on narrowly defined vocabulary and topics that can constrain learning and attainment in the language;
 - clarify the expectation that the time dedicated to teaching should be the same as for other GCSEs.
-

77. Understanding how the new qualification will improve the quality of Welsh second language education and increase the number of fluent Welsh speakers will be critical if the aims of the strategy is to be achieved.

78. There are some significant hurdles for Welsh Government and those within the sector to deal with if Welsh second language education is to improve across schools in Wales, and increase the number of Welsh speakers with the skills for the future workplace. One of those hurdles relates to the number of school students taking A level Welsh, both first and second language.

Estyn

The proportion of learners taking both A level Welsh first language and A level Welsh second language, in comparison to the take up of their respective GCSEs, has declined since 2011. Welsh Government targets for 2015 for both A level qualifications have not been met. The number of entries for A level first language has fluctuated between around 250 and 300 since 2011. The number of entries for A level Welsh second language has declined substantially over the same period.

79. Another hurdle to overcome is the apparent shortage in teachers who have the skills to teach Welsh as a subject. The challenge for Welsh Government and all those involved in the sector according to Qualifications Wales should not be underestimated:

A particular concern we often hear of is the shortage of teachers who are competent and sufficiently trained to teach the subject. As we have said previously, we consider the changes we have introduced to this qualification to be an initial interim step towards the removal of the distinction between Welsh and Welsh Second Language education and qualifications. The scale of challenge in terms of upskilling and expanding the education workforce should not therefore be underestimated.

³⁶ <http://qualificationswales.org/media/2063/open-letter-to-ams-on-gcse-welsh-second-language-eng.pdf>

80. In his evidence to the Committee, the Minister was clear that while change is required in terms of Welsh second language education, it is not possible to make wholesale changes immediately:

Some have argued that we have to get rid of this whole business of ‘second language’ and change immediately and quickly, and we don’t feel that we can do that. We don’t feel that the workforce is in a place to enable that and that’s why we’re doing it in the way that we are.³⁷

Our View

Nearly all pupils in Wales are taught Welsh from when they enter primary school until GCSE level. Most of these pupils are taught in English-medium schools. A considerable proportion of these pupils should, therefore, be leaving school with a good standard of proficiency in Welsh, able to communicate in many if not most day-to-day situations in Welsh. Sadly, this is not borne out by lived experience. Often pupils will leave school at 16 with little confidence or ability to use Welsh in everyday situations.

Members of the Committee visited Bishop Gore School in Swansea and St Richard Gwyn Roman Catholic High School in Flint to speak to pupils about their experience of being taught Welsh second language. In both schools, we found committed and enthusiastic teachers and engaging and able pupils who spoke honestly to us about their experience of being taught Welsh.

Many of the pupils expressed pride in Wales and were positive about the importance of the language to Wales. There was no prevalent ‘anti Welsh language’ views or attitudes. But they also spoke of being disengaged from the subject, of finding it somewhat irrelevant to their daily lives with perhaps an over emphasis on language structure rather than everyday use. They were enthusiastic in proposing ways in which Welsh could be made more relevant and interesting to their age group. These included the need for opportunities to use Welsh outside of the classroom in more informal settings.

We have some concerns that the changes to the GCSE Welsh Second Language qualification, outlined above by Qualifications Wales, may prove discouraging for pupils in English-medium schools, who will find it harder to achieve the higher grades. Nevertheless, we welcome the changes, which will be introduced from September 2017. In particular, we welcome the emphasis on everyday skills for the real world and the removal of the full and short course option. In the longer term, there is a need to ensure that we have sufficient teachers in place with the skills to ensure that the new unified Welsh language qualification is taught to a high standard in both Welsh and in English medium schools - this is an ambitious goal, how realistic and what the resource and timing implications are is still not clear.

Clearly it is not possible to evaluate these changes now. However, we are convinced that teaching Welsh second language will need to play a significant role if the number of Welsh speakers is to be doubled by 2050. There must therefore be as much emphasis on transforming provision and outcomes of Welsh second language teaching as on increasing the numbers receiving Welsh-medium or bilingual education.

³⁷ Committee Transcript: 18 January 2017 para 236

Recommendation 17. We recommend that the new strategy should place equal emphasis on dramatically improving outcomes from Welsh second language teaching along with increasing the numbers receiving Welsh-medium or bilingual education.

Recommendation 18. We recommend that the Welsh Government sets out clearly how it will dramatically improve the teaching of Welsh in English-medium schools.

Provision of Learner Resources

81. One issue highlighted by some contributors via written submissions is the need to increase the provision of Welsh language learning resources for students. The inequality of the situation according to some can have a detrimental effect on learning outcomes for pupils and also on the workforce who are required to translate material for lessons:

Qualifications Wales

Qualifications taken only by learners in Wales present a significantly less attractive proposition to commercial publishers...As a consequence, the resources available to learners in Wales has narrowed. This effect is exacerbated for Welsh-medium resources. As a result, there needs to be a more effective and efficient mechanism for Welsh Government to work with others to facilitate the equitable provision of teaching and learning resources.

UCAC

There is, however, a more fundamental need – for the resources required to teach new GCSE / AS-Level / A-Level courses. The workforce should not have to translate resources because Welsh-language textbooks are not ready in time for new teaching specifications.³⁸

Welsh Language Commissioner

Committee members will be aware that public attention has been drawn recently to the lack of Welsh textbooks available to support Welsh-medium education, the adverse effects that that has on classroom learning, and the extra pressure placed on teachers to have to translate textbooks from English into Welsh themselves.³⁹

Our View

It is of concern that the provision of Welsh language learner resources may be affecting the ability of teachers to teach and pupils to learn. Clearly, any strategy for increasing the number of Welsh speakers if it is to be successful will need to ensure that high quality teaching resources are in place for all learners when they are needed.

Recommendation 19. We recommend that the Welsh Government along with the WJEC reviews the provision of Welsh language learning resources for students to ensure

³⁸ See footnote 2

³⁹ *ibid*

that students receiving their education through the medium of Welsh are not disadvantaged.

08. Progression

82. One theme that was mentioned on a number of occasions is linguistic progression, that is, the ability for a child to seamlessly progress through the different phases of Welsh medium education, and eventually into the workplace with the necessary Welsh language skills.

83. The Welsh Government has committed to introducing one continuum of learning for Welsh language, which is broadly welcomed by contributors to the inquiry:

Qualifications Wales

We support the Welsh Government’s commitment to removing the distinction between Welsh and Welsh Second Language as part of the reforms to the curriculum, based on a single continuum for Welsh language acquisition and development.

University of South Wales

A vision that encompasses all stages of education could ensure continuity, consistency and ensure a language continuum that could address the significant decline in Welsh speakers between each phase of education.

Estyn

Maintaining continuity and progression is also critical and any strategic planning should seek to minimise the number of children who do not continue to develop their Welsh language skills to the best of their ability when they transfer across the key stages of education.

84. One key aspect to the success of the language continuum for students is the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs). According to Estyn, there is commitment by some local authorities but not others to the “development of Welsh medium education”. The Welsh Language Commissioner was also frank in her analysis of the first three years of the WESPs:

Welsh Language Commissioner

I would say that the experience of the first three years (of WESPs) was that we didn’t see any progress, and we have the figure for that – there’s been no growth. What isn’t acceptable, I think, is to allow that to happen a second time. We need more robust guidance from Government in gathering data and in putting reasonable targets in place.⁴⁰

85. The Minister himself accepts that each of the 22 new WESPs will vary considerably, with some plans better than others. However, he also stressed that each local authority has different pressures on their resources. The Minister does believe that the WESPs are an important tool, however, in ensuring that Welsh speakers across Wales have the same opportunity to access Welsh medium education.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Committee Transcript: 14 December 2016 para 324 & 325

⁴¹ Oral Evidence: 18 January 2017 para 218

Our View

We broadly welcome the concept of one language learning continuum. Language acquisition and linguistic ability are not a simple binary state. Many who say they are not Welsh speakers might claim greater ability for similar proficiency in other languages.

However, we need urgent clarity on the practical detail of delivering a unified language continuum and single qualification, as well as the resource demands and timescales to get to the required workforce. We are also concerned about WESPs. We share the concern of the Welsh Language Commissioner, Estyn and others about the apparent lack of progress after three years and at the variability within the plans. We note that the Minister, in a written statement on 14 March, shared this concern and that the level of ambition he had hoped for was not as evident from the WESPs as he had expected.

We note that the Minister has appointed former local authority leader and Assembly Member Aled Roberts to conduct a 'rapid review' of the current system for Welsh language education planning. We welcome this and look forward to seeing his conclusions.

09. Upskilling and Training

86. One critical area that a majority of contributors stated is in need of immediate attention is the upskilling of teachers and practitioners to be able to teach and provide services through the medium of Welsh. This would require significant investment and resource to allow those working in the sector to access training courses to develop their Welsh language skills.

Training and the Sabbatical Scheme

87. As was mentioned earlier in the report according to Education Workforce Council (EWC) data, around 33 per cent of teachers in Wales can speak Welsh, but only 27 per cent teach through the medium of Welsh. This would suggest some low hanging fruit of around 5-6 per cent of teachers within the system that could be assisted to upskill immediately:

UCAC

It is likely that the 2000+ teachers who do not currently feel confident enough in their abilities to teach through the medium of Welsh are eager to improve their skills so that they can make a contribution either towards enhancing the Welsh-language ethos of their schools or by undertaking a little teaching through the medium of Welsh.⁴²

88. However, according to Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg⁴³ while around 27 per cent of teachers state that they are able to teach in Welsh, a significantly smaller percentage of teachers are actually teaching in Welsh; as low as 18 per cent in the secondary sector. This suggests that there may be a more significant pool of teachers that might be able to teach through the medium of Welsh relatively quickly with investment in training.

89. According to Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, the development of Welsh language skills among teachers should be seen as a part of entry expectations and CPD for the profession:

Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol

What is key is ensuring that language proficiency, and the need to develop high levels of Welsh-language skills, are seen as natural parts of teachers' entry expectations and of the professional development of every teacher in Wales.⁴⁴

90. Again, as was mentioned earlier, this isn't limited to the teaching profession according to some, but for early years practitioners and for Further Education and Work-based practitioners:

Cymdeithas yr Iaith

In terms of the early years, the 'Cam wrth Gam' scheme must be expanded and the Welsh language must be made a vital skill for practitioners in this field to facilitate, over time, a shift towards monolingual Welsh-medium provision.⁴⁵

91. An aspect of training that requires further understanding is the Sabbatical Scheme, developed as a pilot scheme in 2005 as part of the Welsh Government's Welsh Language Strategy, 'Iaith Pawb', to

⁴² See footnote 2

⁴³ Written evidence para 5.4.

⁴⁴ See footnote 2

⁴⁵ Ibid

increase the supply of practitioners who can teach through the medium of Welsh. This is an intensive course for teachers and practitioners who wish to develop their Welsh language teaching skills, confidence and specialist terminology. The course itself is open to primary and secondary teachers, Further Education and Work-based learning practitioners. Opportunities for supply staff and Higher Education lecturers are limited, and not currently accessible for learning support staff.

92. Opinion about the effectiveness of the Sabbatical Scheme was mixed among contributors, although there was a range of anecdotal evidence suggesting that the scheme has been successful on the whole:

Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol

The success of the Sabbatical Scheme, and the range of programmes provided through this scheme, have set a robust basis for this work.⁴⁶

UCAC

The Sabbatical Scheme has seen a great deal of success...Options for extending the scheme should be considered, including joint provision with the National Centre for Learning Welsh.⁴⁷

Flintshire County Council

Sabbatical schemes have proven to be successful and have had a significant impact.

Qualifications Wales

In addition to initial teacher training, I think there is an issue here surrounding building on the successes of the sabbatical programme.⁴⁸

93. However, some stakeholders were of the view that there is a need for greater evaluation of the long-term success of the scheme and future development by Welsh Government and relevant bodies.

Education Workforce Council

In recent years, various strategies (for example, the Welsh language sabbatical scheme) have been employed to improve Welsh language ability of people in the workforce in Wales; however data from the register of practitioners suggests that this is having limited impact upon the number of Welsh speakers in the education workforce, with negligible change noted since 2007.

Estyn

There has been quite a detailed report by Arad on the different sabbatical courses....there is evidence that teachers are much more confident in using the

⁴⁶ See footnote 2

⁴⁷ Ibid

⁴⁸ Committee Transcript: 14 December 2016 para 24

Welsh language after being on the course...Where there isn't sufficient evidence...is the impact of that on the children's ability in those schools.

- 94.** One particular weakness of the scheme identified by some is the lack of resources available to allow for training opportunities such as the Sabbatical Scheme and other personal development courses in order to improve Welsh language skills.

EWC

It is recognised that it is often difficult for practitioners to access professional development opportunities, since if these are within ordinary work hours, this requires back fill to cover absence from.

UCAC

The main weaknesses of the Sabbatical Scheme were the difficulties in releasing teachers from schools, despite the scheme's generous conditions regarding paying for supply cover.⁴⁹

Colleges Wales

It might be worth looking and re-evaluating the flexibility of the sabbatical scheme with providers and practitioners on what would work and increase participant levels from FE.

Estyn

The report finds that 'nearly all schools have experienced difficulty in arranging suitable cover for absent class teachers. In Welsh-medium primary schools, schools are often restricted in the choice and quality of supply teachers available. This is due to a shortage in the number of Welsh-speaking supply teachers.

- 95.** In order for teachers and practitioners to undertake schemes such as this, it requires significant investment and funding.

ATL Cymru "Without clear funding commitment for Continued Professional Development for current teachers, lecturers and support staff, the current workforce will not be able to learn or improve their Welsh language skills.

University of Wales Trinity St David

This is an expensive programme [Sabbatical Scheme], it is an ambitious programme, but it is a programme that works.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ See footnote 2

⁵⁰ Committee Transcript: 30 November 2016 para 60

Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol

However, the resources provided to such schemes [Sabbatical Scheme] will need to be increased in order to ensure a sufficient increase in the number of teachers who are able to teach through the medium of Welsh over the coming decades.⁵¹

96. The Minister, during the budget scrutiny session, announced that some of the £5 million additional funding in the 2017-18 budget will be used to expand the sabbatical scheme.⁵²

97. A statement released by the Minister on the 25th January 2017⁵³ confirmed that £3 million of the additional funding would be allocated to the National Centre for Learning Welsh, with the main focus of the investment on “ensuring that there are opportunities for individuals to learn Welsh, in the public sector in the first instance, concentrating on intensive learning”.

Our View

The evidence we received about the Sabbatical Scheme was mixed. Certainly, a number of witnesses expressed the view that it has been successful although the evidence seemed largely anecdotal. They pointed to teachers being much more confident in using the Welsh language after being on the course. Evaluation scores for the course from those who participated also show high levels of satisfaction.

However, there seemed to be little if any evidence that attendance at courses has fed through to the classroom, either in terms of better outcomes for pupils or in terms of increases in the number of Welsh speakers in the education workforce. The Education Workforce Council in particular noted “negligible change ... since 2007”.

In our view, a far more rigorous evaluation of the success of the scheme is now needed, with a particular emphasis on classroom outcomes and how successful the scheme is at encouraging more teachers to teach Welsh as a subject or teach through the medium of Welsh.

Finally, the rationale for the National Centre for Learning Welsh to focus specifically on the public sector was not clear to us and needs further explanation.

Recommendation 20. We recommend a thorough evaluation of the Sabbatical Scheme looking particularly at its value for money in improving classroom outcomes and in encouraging more teachers to teach Welsh or in Welsh.

⁵¹ See footnote 2

⁵² Committee Transcript: 2 November 2016 para 329

⁵³ Written Statement 25 January 2017 - Welsh Work Plan Announcement

10. Additional issues for consideration

98. The Committee decided that the focus of this inquiry should be on education as the draft strategy itself identified the education system is the main way for ensuring that children can develop their Welsh skills, and for creating new speakers. The draft strategy also says that the need to ensure that there is a workforce that meets the need for Welsh-medium education and training should be the starting point for creating more speakers.

99. However, other aspects of language planning were highlighted during the inquiry. The multi-layered aspect of language planning means that a variety of activities are required on several levels in order to increase the number of Welsh speakers and its use day to day.

Promoting the Welsh language

100. The promotion of the language was raised during oral evidence sessions and in written submissions as an issue Welsh Government, local authorities and relevant bodies needed to grasp. Contributors mentioned the need to promote and market the language from a number of perspectives:

- to promote and market Welsh as a skill;
- to promote the benefits of Welsh medium education to parents;
- to promote the benefits of the language within the workplace; and
- to promote it within families and communities.

101. According to Qualifications Wales, there is a need for a “powerful and consistent campaign” to promote the language and generate support from the public and communities. Others also shared similar views:

Mudiad Meithrin

In acknowledging the importance of the early years in terms of ‘creating’ new Welsh speakers, we feel that there is a need for a national campaign to promote these benefits among all new and prospective parents in Wales.⁵⁴

Flintshire County Council

Targeted campaigns are needed to encourage Welsh speakers to take pride in their language skills and continue to develop their skills.

Colleges Wales

It’s time to adapt operations of some Welsh language promotion bodies – to engage with a new audience.

102. According to some contributors, there may well be a need for a change in culture and mind-set within communities and wider civic society. A ‘different approach’ was mentioned by contributors and a need to market and convince communities of the benefits of learning two languages. Reaching out

⁵⁴ See footnote 2

to communities where the Welsh language is not considered part of the fabric of the community is important in changing attitudes towards the language, and making it relevant to their lives.

103. New Welsh Language Standards now place legal duties on local authorities to promote the language within their own communities:

Wrexham County Borough Council

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.

Our View

We agree that there will need to be a significant increase in the promotion and marketing of the language as a major plank of the strategy if it is to be successful. The focus of this work should be to engage local communities and help ensure people across Wales can support the aims of the strategy. We recommended earlier that the proposed new Agency for the Promotion of Welsh should have a clear focus from the outset on helping parents understand the benefits of a bilingual education. It also needs to focus on promoting Welsh as a community language and the benefits it brings as a skill and in the workplace. In doing so it needs to work with established organisations with experience in this area such as the Mentrau Iaith and with local initiatives such as Tŷ'r Gwrhyd in Pontardawe.

Recommendation 21. We recommend that the proposed new Agency for the Promotion of Welsh, working with established organisations and local initiatives, promotes and markets Welsh as a community language with benefits to speakers as a skill and in the workplace.

Welsh language skills audit

104. Some contributors to the inquiry were of the view that there is a lack of evidence on the current Welsh language skills of the Welsh workforce, and that in order to build capacity across sectors, Welsh Government will be required to carry out a systematic audit of Welsh language skills across the whole workforce:

Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol

We believe that the process of identifying the needs of the future workforce should be identified and accelerated within different fields by considering the level and range of Welsh language and bilingual skills that will be needed in specific fields within a decade or more.⁵⁵

UCAC

Recruiting sufficient numbers of people, and people who have the skills that we

⁵⁵ See footnote 2

need, to these various posts is vital. To do this effectively, detailed information is needed on the nature of the current workforce.⁵⁶

Qualifications Wales

An important first step will be for Welsh Government to gain a full understanding of the current capacity and capability in relation to Welsh language skills across the education workforce. This will need to drive a concerted programme of work to build that capacity and capability over the coming years.

105. The Committee heard that even where comprehensive language skills audits are conducted, it does not necessarily translate into better planning. Estyn noted that all local authorities had undertaken a linguistic skills audit of the teaching workforce for example, but:

Estyn

Only a few local authorities use the evidence from the linguistic skills audit, when considering their school organisation projects and longer-term provision planning.

106. Identifying linguistic needs of the workforce should be “accelerated”, according to Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol. Some sectors are already proactively assessing the linguistic needs of the workforce, for example social work and social care.

Care Council for Wales

Since their introduction, degree programmes in social work have been required to develop their provision for social work students to be able to learn and be assessed through the medium of Welsh. The latter includes the need for all programmes to audit the Welsh language skills of students, which has enabled us to identify their learning and assessment needs.

Our View

While we accept that there is currently a lack of consistent data on the Welsh language skills of the workforce nationally, we are not convinced that this is a priority area. This could be an expensive and time consuming exercise that might deliver few tangible benefits. In our view, it would be better to focus on key areas of the workforce where there is a clear prospect of better information being key to the delivery of the overall strategy, such as learning support staff or the early years workforce.

Welsh for Adults

107. During the evidence gathering process, several references were made with regard to Welsh for Adults, on increasing the number of adults who learn Welsh, and the work that the new Centre for Learning Welsh will be co-ordinating.

⁵⁶ See footnote 2

Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol

It is important that sufficient resources are earmarked for the Centre's work in order to introduce new programmes to teach Welsh in the workplace.⁵⁷

WLGA

Consideration also needs to be given as to how to increase opportunities for adults to learn or improve their Welsh as Adult learners.

Aberystwyth University

There is scope for adopting a more comprehensive interpretation of education than that given in the consultation document. The tendency at the moment is to emphasise the statutory education sector, and as a result, the document pays little attention to adult education and language training in specific contexts, for example in the workplace.⁵⁸

108. Whilst many consider that it is important to provide adults with opportunities to learn Welsh, whether that is through the workplace or in their own time, the rate of success is not significant enough in the Committee's view for it to be considered a central way forward in the context of the strategy's aims and objectives, which is to increase significantly the number of Welsh speakers in Wales. For instance, the number of learners undertaking Welsh for Adults exams fell from 1,797 in 2010 to 1,452 in 2015.⁵⁹

109. Despite cuts to the Welsh for Adult programme in recent years, even its proponents are clear in their view that it is predominantly through the school education system that the numbers of Welsh speakers required will be created:

Popeth Cymraeg

With the limited funds available in the field of Welsh for Adults and the fact that fewer than 1,000 adults cross the fluency threshold every year (the national figure of 15,000 of learners includes learners at every level) it is clear that the children's education system is the most important route in terms of creating Welsh speakers.⁶⁰

110. Nevertheless, Popeth Cymraeg stressed that Welsh for Adults still has an important role to be played in developing adult Welsh language skills and in the promotion of the language.

Popeth Cymraeg

Welsh for Adults, however, can do extremely important work in terms of targeting specific sectors and the popularization of Welsh in general. This can create a domino effect with adults choosing to send their children to Welsh-medium schools even if they aren't fluent themselves.⁶¹

⁵⁷ See footnote 2

⁵⁸ Ibid

⁵⁹ The Position of the Welsh Language 2012–2015: Welsh Language Commissioner's 5-year Report, page 145

⁶⁰ See footnote 2

⁶¹ Ibid

111. Cymdeithas yr Iaith were of the view that the targets were required for an increased number of adults learning Welsh over the lifespan of the strategy, with five year, ten year and even thirty year targets.

- Within the next five years – Ensure Welsh for Adults is creating at least 4,000 fluent Welsh speakers annually.
- Within the next ten years – Ensure Welsh for Adults is creating at least 7,000 fluent Welsh speakers annually.
- Within the next twenty years – Ensure Welsh for Adults is creating at least 10,000 fluent Welsh speakers annually.
- Within the next thirty years – Ensure Welsh for Adults is creating at least 13,000 fluent Welsh speakers annually.

Our View

Good quality, readily available provision for Welsh for Adults is an important part of the overall 'eco system' for increasing the number of Welsh speakers. It is particularly important in helping to promote the language and in helping parents who want to become more involved in their children's education. However, the rate of success may not be significant enough for it to be considered a central way forward in the context of the strategy's aims and objectives.

Recommendation 22. We recommend that the Welsh Government continues to support good quality, widely available Welsh for Adults provision but considers carefully its relative priority within the strategy compared to other priority areas.

Other issues

112. A number of other themes were raised during the inquiry, but to a lesser extent, these included issues such as Learning Welsh in the workplace, Migration, Language rights, Leadership and culture Transmission, Normalisation, Confidence, and what is actually meant by 'a Welsh speaker'.

Our View

The purpose of our Inquiry was to flag up at an early stage some of the key issues that need to be addressed in the final strategy. Our recommendations and the main part of this report have concentrated on some of the obvious questions that need to be addressed. That is not to say that the other issues identified above are not important or will not need to be given more detailed and considered thought over the lifetime of the strategy. As a Committee, we intend to return to some of these issues as we carry out our work during this Assembly.

One issue does stand out for us though. That is what we mean by a 'Welsh speaker'. We are attracted to the proposition that being a Welsh speaker is not a binary state and that there is a continuum of language acquisition and capability. Nevertheless, if the aim of a million 'Welsh speakers' is to be meaningful, this must mean more than just the ability to say a few phrases in Welsh.

In our view, a Welsh speaker is one who is 'fluent' in the sense that they can understand and hold conversations on most everyday subjects without effort and in a way that any other 'Welsh speaker' would find natural and engaging. However, as the starting point for the strategy seems to be the

numbers of people reporting in the Census that they speak Welsh, then this may be the most consistent way of judging whether the strategy is being successful.

What is important though is that the final strategy itself provides a clear definition of what will count as a Welsh speaker in evaluating in its aim of creating a million speakers.

Recommendation 23. We recommend that the final strategy includes a clear definition of what will count as a Welsh speaker in evaluating whether the strategy is successful in its aim of creating a million speakers.

Annex A – Oral evidence sessions

The following witnesses provided oral evidence to the Committee on the dates noted below.

Transcripts of all oral evidence sessions can be viewed in full at:

<http://senedd.assembly.wales/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?Ild=15157>

Webcasts are available at: www.senedd.tv

Date	Name and Organisation
24 November 2016	UCAC NASUWT NAHT Mudiad Meithrin Colegau Cymru Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol
30 November 2016	The University of Wales Trinity Saint David Cardiff Metropolitan University Education Workforce Council
14 December 2016	Estyn Qualifications Wales WJEC Care Council for Wales Welsh Language Commissioner
18 January 2017	Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language

Stakeholder Session

16 November 2016	A Stakeholder engagement session was held on 16 November 2016.
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Annex B – Written evidence

Evidence to the committee was received throughout the inquiry. The Committee Consultation ran from 3 November 2016 – 30 November 2016. The submissions to the consultation are available at: <http://senedd.assembly.wales/mgConsultationDisplay.aspx?id=232>

Reference	Name and Organisation
WLS01	Aberystwyth University (Welsh Only)
WLS02	ATL Cymru
WLS03	Barry Town Council
WLS04	Care Council Wales
WLS05	Chris Sully
WLS06	Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol (Welsh Only)
WLS07	CollegesWales
WLS08	The Association of Welsh Translators (Welsh Only)
WLS09	Cymdeithas yr Iaith (Welsh Only)
WLS10	Education Workforce Wales
WLS11	Estyn
WLS12	Dafydd Roberts (Welsh Only)
WLS13	Glenys M Roberts (Welsh Only)
WLS14	Huw O Jones (Welsh Only)
WLS15	Michael Williams
WLS16	Milford Haven Town Council
WLS17	Mudiad Meithrin (Welsh Only)
WLS18	One Voice Wales
WLS19	Popeth Cymraeg (Welsh Only)
WLS20	Qualifications Wales
WLS21	UCAC (Welsh Only)
WLS22	Urdd Gobaith Cymru (Welsh Only)
WLS23	Welsh Language Commissioner (Welsh Only)
WLS24	Welsh Local Government Association

Reference	Name and Organisation
WLS25	Wrexham County Borough Council
WLS26	Flintshire County Council
WLS27	Swyddle
WLS28	University of South Wales
WLS29	Cylch yr Iaith (Welsh Only)

Annex C – External evidence gathering

Committee members visited the following schools on 8th December 2016:

- Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Bryn Tawe
- Bishop Gore School
- St Richard Gwyn Roman Catholic High School

Additional outreach work was conducted at the following schools and youth forums:

- Bishop Gore
- Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Bryn Tawe
- St Richard Gwyn
- Ysgol Maes Garmon
- Ysgol Bodedern
- Maes y Gwendraeth
- Ysgol Bro Pedr
- Carmarthenshire Youth Council
- Caerphilly Junior Youth Forum.