

Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee

Date: 13 January 2016
Time: 11:00
Venue: Committee Room 2, National Assembly for Wales, Cardiff Bay
Title: Request to give evidence to inform scrutiny of Draft Budget 2016-17 from the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee

Purpose

1. To provide information on the Draft Budget 2016-17 in relation to the Welsh language as requested by the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee.

Timing

2. The draft budget was published on 8 December.

Response

3. The following information is provided in the order requested in the commissioning letter dated 2 November 2015 under the following headings:

- Individual Budget Expenditure Lines for Welsh language funding
- Programme for Government commitments
- Key policies
- Welsh language impact assessments
- Preventative Spending
- Provision for Legislation

Individual Budget Expenditure Lines for Welsh language funding

4. The table below provides a summary of the Actions relating to Welsh language funding:

Budget Expenditure Line (BEL)		2015-16 £000	2016-17 (draft) £000
BEL 5164	Welsh in Education	18,599	18,681
BEL 6020	Welsh Language	5,259	3,913
BEL 6021	Welsh Language Commissioner	3,390	3,051
	Total	27,248	25,645

Note: Above figures include BEL 6020 to BEL 5164 transfer of £825K

5. **BEL 5164** is for the implementation of the Welsh-Medium Education Strategy which includes:

- the planning of Welsh-medium education;
- the delivery of practitioner training through the Sabbaticals Scheme;
- the delivery of Welsh-language training through Welsh for Adults and Welsh second language;
- commissioning of teaching and learning resources;
- promoting language transmission in families;

- research, evaluation and marketing in respect of the Strategy.
6. The purpose of **BEL 6020** is to support the aims of the Welsh Language Strategy *A living language: a language for living* and the policy statement *A living language: a language for living – Bwrw Mlaen* which are:
 - To encourage and support the use of the Welsh language within families
 - To increase the provision of Welsh-medium activities for children and young people and increase their awareness of the value of the language
 - To strengthen the position of the Welsh language in the community
 - To increase opportunities for people to use Welsh in the workplace
 - To increase and improve Welsh-language services to citizens
 - To strengthen the infrastructure for the language
 7. The purpose of **BEL 6021** is to fund the position of the Welsh Language Commissioner. The Commissioner has wide ranging functions and powers which include:
 - working towards ensuring that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language
 - imposing duties on persons who come within the scope of the Measure to comply with standards relating to the Welsh language
 - conducting inquiries into matters relating to the Commissioner's functions
 - investigating alleged interference with an individual's freedom to communicate in Welsh with another individual.
 - promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language especially within the 3rd and private sectors
 8. This Draft Budget reflects our priorities, but is shaped by decisions of the UK Government. The Welsh Budget is £1.4 billion lower now than in 2010-11 with the settlement continuing to decrease in real terms by 3.6 per cent between 2015-16 and 2019-20. We knew our budget would be less in real terms, but not how much lower. What we have known is service demands and pressures do not, of course, reduce in response to austerity.
 9. We have based our spending decisions on an analysis of demands and needs in key public service areas which are of particular importance to those who need it most. In the challenging financial climate we have sought to focus resources on priorities based on an assessment of greatest positive impact and mitigate the effects of austerity where its impact is unavoidable.
 10. We remain committed to securing the future of the language, and have limited the overall reduction of the total Welsh Language Budget to 5.9% in 2016-17 by allocating £1.2 million to support Welsh in the Community, by prioritising activity to support the use of Welsh and language acquisition and raising standards. Funding alone however does not ensure that the language continues to thrive, and we will continue to work closely with partner organisations to secure a strong foundation for the language in the future.
 11. For a copy of the information provided by the Minister for Education and Skills on budget provision to support the implementation of the Welsh Government's

Welsh Medium Education Strategy and Local Authorities' Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPS), please see Annex 1.

Programme for Government commitments relating to the Welsh language

12. In preparing for future financial restraints, the Welsh Government has sought to target investment to maintain the focus of our spending plans on our main priorities of: health and health services; growth and jobs; educational attainment; and supporting children, families and deprived communities.
13. Despite the challenges presented by the late timing of the UK Spending Review, we have used planning for the Draft Budget 2016-17 as an opportunity to look ahead to target investment in sustainable outcomes and adopt the five key ways of working established by the Well-being of Future Generations Act. The Act provides public bodies with a shared purpose through the establishment of seven well-being goals for Wales (one of which includes 'a thriving Welsh language'), and the five key ways of working ensure that public bodies take a long-term perspective when making decisions; that they consider what actions are required to prevent problems arising in future, or to prevent current problems from getting worse; that they take an integrated and collaborative approach to decision making; and that they involve users in the planning and delivery of Services. Such an approach is crucial for the Welsh language which as a cross-cutting policy area.

Key policies

Delivery of A Living Language: A Language for Living and Bwrw Mlaen

14. Our expenditure is planned in line with the activities included in our Welsh Language Strategy, Bwrw Mlaen policy document and Welsh-medium Education Strategy, as noted in paragraphs 5-7 above. We have had to make difficult decisions in light of the extremely tight financial situation.

Reprioritising funding

15. In terms of the impact of reprioritising funding under the Bwrw Mlaen document, reprioritising funding from Welsh for Adults in order to boost the language in the economy and community was a difficult decision. The planned changes to the way Welsh for Adults is being administered, including the establishment of a new national entity, will result in efficiency savings that will alleviate some of the impact in the long term.
16. Additional funding of £750,000 was provided in 2014-15 and 2015-16 to the Mentrau Iaith to ensure that adequate funding is available to enable the Mentrau to develop their work. The main priority was to ensure a baseline of funding to each of the Mentrau. Mentrau Iaith Cymru also received additional funding to support the work of the Mentrau at grass roots level, with the aim of raising standards and developing a marketing and staff development programme.

17. The Bwrw Mlaen grant scheme was established in 2014-15 and placed an emphasis on the delivery of new innovative projects. A total of 9 projects were funded in 2015-16. Below are examples of the projects that have been funded:
- **Menter Bro Dinefwr** - Pobl Dinefwr Project - A community journalism project in the Dinefwr area working with the local papurau bro and numerous community based organisations, to create a community hyper news project using social media.
 - **Hunaniaith** - Welsh in the Workplace Project – which aims to give encouragement and support the Welsh language within numerous workplaces and businesses in Gwynedd
 - **Menter Môn, Ynys Môn Performers' Network** is a project which aims to create a network of young performers in Anglesey which will guide and support them through the process of establishing themselves as performers.
18. A new outcome based grant scheme has been established in 2015-16 with the aim of ensuring that grant funded organisations improve their planning and co-operation. The grant scheme also emphasises the need to develop projects which are based on gaps in the current provision. The new grant scheme will be in place from April 2016.

Funding for the Welsh language across Ministerial portfolios

19. In addition to the specific budget for the Welsh Language, spending on the Welsh language is undertaken across Ministerial portfolios. Often, such funding is mainstreamed in programmes and projects and is not separately identifiable. However, there are some examples of designated funding aimed specifically at supporting the Welsh language, such as the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, which provides independent oversight, management and development of Welsh medium higher education across Wales – as well as specific funding within the Economic Development portfolio to promote the use of Welsh in business.

Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and Welsh Language Commissioner

20. Regarding Draft Budget allocations, the implementation of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, and funding for the Welsh Language Commissioner, the challenging financial situation faced by the Welsh Government as a result of the UK Government's Spending Review means that savings must be found from across policy areas. At the forefront of our minds was the need to protect activity aimed at promoting the Welsh language in communities. As such, we have therefore had to take the difficult decision to reduce the budget of the Welsh Language Commissioner by 10%. This reduction has been applied consistently across all Commissioners.

Delivery of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy

21. The Welsh-medium Education Strategy included a five-year Implementation Programme, and fixed five-year and indicative ten-year targets based on outcomes, which have been used to monitor progress in implementing the Strategy. Expenditure is planned in line with activities included in the Strategy's

Implementation Programme and progress against these activities are reported in the Welsh-medium Education Strategy Annual Report.

22. A comprehensive evaluation of the Strategy has been undertaken and the final report is expected to be published in the new year. This evaluation will set the future direction and the allocation of budget that supports Welsh-medium Education will reflect this.
23. As the Welsh language is a cross cutting theme, in addition to this budget allocation, other departments support the development of Welsh within the education system. Although not easily quantified, the total monetary support for the Welsh language in education is significantly higher.

Costs and evaluation of policy delivery

24. Turning to the delivery of policies, funding distributed to partners to promote the use of Welsh is managed by the Welsh Government's Welsh Language Division. As part of usual procedures, costs associated with such funding is assessed by officials as part of the application process and routine grant monitoring. Value for money considerations are always an integral element of all our grant schemes.
25. In line with the commitment made in the policy statement, *A living language: a language for living – Bwrw Mlaen*, an Evaluation Framework for the Strategy has been prepared. This sets out a number of research questions to help us gain a better understanding of the factors which influence the vitality of the language and the effectiveness of our language planning interventions.
26. As part of this work, last year we commissioned Bangor University to lead a research study on the use of Welsh as a community language. The aim of this study is to address research questions relating to the factors contributing to the vitality of Welsh as a community language, the capacity of communities to integrate Welsh learners, and the appropriateness of the Welsh Government's approach to language planning. The study was published in October. Although this is not an evaluation of the effectiveness of our funded programmes to facilitate the use of Welsh, nor did it include an assessment of value for money, it does provide a useful contribution to our understanding of how the Welsh language is used in different communities. This will contribute to our understanding of the success of aspects of the first year of Bwrw Mlaen's implementation.
27. In this respect it is important to acknowledge that there are of course challenges associated with understanding the link between specific interventions or programmes on the one hand, and language behaviour on the other. Language planning is a multi-faceted activity, and the factors influencing the vitality of the language are generally very complex. In some cases we are also dealing with factors or circumstances where change is likely to happen over time – some of the changes that we're seeking to bring about (for example changing attitudes and practices) will require efforts over a number of years.

28. Bwrw Mlaen also included capital funding of £2.25m to establish 10 language centres. The aim was to help develop strategic projects to help deliver the Welsh language policy agenda with an emphasis on providing the basis for community projects to become self-sustaining.

29. In terms of the outcomes of the funding, as part of the funding conditions, we have requested a closing report be presented no later than 18 months after beneficiaries receive the funds in order to assess the success of the centres. Those reports will address:

- aims and objectives of the project
- how the goals and objectives will contribute to the goals and strategic areas of our Welsh language strategy, 'A living language: a language for living' and the policy 'Bwrw Mlaen'
- evidence of achievements (including evidence gathered from stakeholders and beneficiaries, where applicable)
- self assessment of the effectiveness and impact of the project; and lessons learned in undertaking the project

30. The Welsh Language Unit's Evidence Plan 2015-16 included a commitment to conduct further work to refine the indicators that have been identified for the Welsh Language Strategy, to ensure they are as meaningful as possible. A scoping paper has already been drawn up and agreed for the research, and Knowledge, Analysis and Information Services will carry out the work in early 2016.

31. Furthermore, a report detailing progress made against the targets set is published annually. The 2014-15 annual report was published on 17 July 2015, and can be found at:

<http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150715-welsh-medium-annual-report-en.pdf>

Welsh language impact assessments

Assessment of 2016-17 Draft Budget allocations

32. Steps have been taken in the preparation of the draft budget this year to ensure that the Welsh language is appropriately considered.

33. The Strategic Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) of the Draft Budget 2016-17 was published as a stand alone document alongside the Draft Budget on 9 December 2015. By taking an integrated approach grounded in evidence and evaluation we have developed a wider understanding of the cross-cutting pressures that exist across key service areas, in line with our key priorities, while targeting funding at those who need it most. This has enabled us to gain a broader understanding of the overall impact of spending decisions on key service provision through taking a holistic view of public service delivery in Wales.

34. The integrated report considers children's rights, equality, tackling poverty and socio-economic disadvantage and Welsh language taking a sustainable development approach. These issues do not stand alone - they support and complement each other. For example, a more equal Wales is one of our well-being goals for Wales. We want a society which enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances.
35. The SIIA is a more focused document setting out the most significant changes to budgets while also highlighting the reasons for protecting certain budgets. The SSIA report published along side the draft budget outlines the key decision to allocate £1.2m to cushion the impact of reductions on Welsh language funding.
36. In addition, all Departments were issued guidance on assessing the impact on the Welsh language when preparing their draft budgets this year. While the Strategic Integrated Impact Assessment focuses on high level strategic impacts of spending decisions, throughout the budget planning process impact assessments are undertaken in line with this Government's approach in these areas.

Policy-making impact assessments

37. Considering the impacts, both positive and negative, on the Welsh language and Welsh speaking people and communities, is an essential part of the policy development and delivery process within the Welsh Government.
38. All submissions to Ministers require officials to detail in their Ministerial Advice the Welsh language policy obligations relevant to that advice. This includes the specific impact assessments developed that are relevant to the advice. In particular Advice to Ministers should demonstrate how officials have considered the Government's obligations under the Welsh language Standards.
39. A new framework for assessing the impact of policy decisions on the Welsh language was developed and launched in preparation for implementing the policy-making Standards, including guidance, a data handbook and a template to ensure officials have considered the effect of their decisions on opportunities to use the language, and not treating the Welsh language less favourably than the English language.
40. Officials from the Welsh Language Division support colleagues across Ministerial portfolios to embed the promotion of the Welsh language in programmes and activities.
41. In addition, with all projects supported by European Structural funds, when evaluating projects and applications for funding the Welsh language is considered as part of the cross cutting themes which all projects must consider. Guidance for all applications clearly state the minimum requirements regarding the Welsh language. Where these requirements are not given sufficient consideration, further support and advice is provided by the Welsh language Division which has been successful in achieving potential positive outcomes for the Welsh language within the 2014-2020 programmes.

Preventative Spending

42. In spending money allocated to the Welsh Language Unit on technological resources and solutions in 2016-17, we will take account of and build on three years' experience of investment in technology projects, which has been aimed at providing a firm foundation for the use of Welsh in technology.
43. In 2016-17 we will continue to explore how technology can lead to cost savings. We will be researching and, in some cases, funding:
- ways in which machine translation can lead to cost reductions
 - ways in which speech to text, speaker recognition and diarization systems can offer savings in transcribing meetings of public importance.
 - putting together building blocks which could combine the above to lead to ways of automatically giving the gist of a conversation to a listener who doesn't speak the language being spoken.
44. We have been grant-funding projects at Bangor University's Language Technology Unit, partly because we can see the role language technologies can play in automating processes which currently need to be executed by people. Speech recognition is one such example. One outcome of more accurate speech recognition in Welsh will be the ability for organisations such as the Welsh Government to offer bilingual voice activated telephony systems, such as those already being offered in English only by British banks.
45. We have funded case-studies to examine the effects of using a new way of transforming monolingual websites into bilingual websites which could, in due course, provide solutions for organisations to comply with Welsh Language Standards.
46. £500,000 has been provisionally allocated for funding the Twf project for 2016-17. The Twf project is the Welsh Government's main intervention in the field of language transmission in the family, considered by experts as one of the two most important areas of language planning – the other being education. As noted in our Welsh language strategy *A living language: a language for living*, the Welsh Government wishes to see more families where Welsh is the main language used with the children by at least one adult family member in regular contact with them. Twf is an innovative and extensive project aimed at encouraging Welsh speaking parents/carers to speak Welsh with their children. It has a network of field officers located throughout Wales conveying to parents, prospective parents and the general public the advantages of introducing the language from birth, and raising their children bilingually.
47. The Welsh Government, by investing in initiatives to target families from pregnancy and birth, ensures that key messages about children's ability to absorb more than one language are communicated. Research shows that the critical periods for development of the neural pathways for language in babies' brains are thought to be birth to six months old for vocabulary, and six to 12 months for language capacity and speech. By concentrating our initiatives during this period we ensure that children are given the best possible start and that two

languages are introduced from birth, thus avoiding the need for additional efforts, resources and costs in learning the language at a later stage in life.

Provision for Legislation

48. The Welsh Government's Welsh Language Scheme requires that we take advantage of every opportunity to ensure that new primary and secondary legislation will support the use of Welsh and be consistent with the following principles - that they:

- Be compatible with the bilingual nature of Wales.
- Support and facilitate the use of Welsh and, whenever possible, help the public in Wales to use Welsh as part of their day-to-day lives.
- Respect the principle that public services in Wales should treat the Welsh and English languages on a basis of equality.
- Help preserve traditional Welsh-speaking communities.

Welsh legislation

49. The **Historical Environment (Wales) Bill** forms part of a suite of legislation, policy, advice and guidance that makes important improvements to the existing systems for the protection and sustainable management of the Welsh historic environment. Some pressure groups and individuals had argued that Welsh place names should be included in such legislation, in order to protect Welsh names of historical value.

50. These groups included the Welsh Place-name Society, and the Mynyddoedd Pawb group who issued a petition calling on the Welsh Government to '...persuade bodies and organisations to protect and respect our wealth of place names'. The Welsh Language Commissioner also wrote to the CELG Committee asking for clear guidelines concerning place names and discouraging place name changes. The committee subsequently included a recommendation in their Stage 1 report:

'that Section 33 (2) of the Bill is amended to include a specific reference to historic place-names and the Deputy Minister brings forward an amendment at Stage 2 to give effect to this'.

51. The Committee's report suggested that a specific reference to place names within the historic environment records would, '...provide a clear signal to local planning authorities and other relevant parties that place names should be recorded and given due consideration within the context of heritage protection'.

52. During Stage 2, the Government tabled an amendment that required Welsh Ministers to compile and maintain a list of historic place names in Wales and the historic environment records to provide access to that list. These amendments were supported in Committee, and will raise awareness of the importance of historic place names. The Bill is currently at Stage 3 and subject to successful passage through the remaining stages of scrutiny, it is anticipated to receive Royal Assent in March 2016.

53. The **Planning (Wales) Act 2015** received Royal Assent on 6 July 2015 and contains provisions relating to the consideration of the Welsh language in both development planning and development management:
- Section 11 of the Act makes it a legal requirement for planning authorities to consider the effect of Local Development Plans on the use of the Welsh language in the plan area as part of a Sustainability Appraisal. This puts on a statutory footing the policy previously expressed in PPW and TAN 20.
 - Section 31 of the Act provides clarification that considerations relating to the use of the Welsh language can be taken into account by planning authorities when taking decisions on applications for planning permission, insofar as it is material to the application. The provision does not, however, apportion any additional weight to the Welsh language in comparison to other material considerations.
54. The Act ensures that Wales has a planning system that provides timely, fair and consistent decisions. The intention is for sections 11 and 31 in relation to the Welsh language to come into force in the new year. The work of updating the planning policy and guidelines to reflect the provisions in the Act has begun, and we will consult on changes to TAN 20. The Welsh Language Commissioner has an important role in supporting local planning authorities to collect and analyse evidence of the use of Welsh in their local areas. Local Planning Authorities will be able to define areas where the Welsh language is especially sensitive or significant in their Local Development Plans, and the Commissioner also has a role in this work.
55. The purpose of the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act** is to ensure that the governance arrangements of public bodies for improving the well-being of Wales take the needs of future generations into account.
56. The Act provides for a significant link to the Welsh Government's Welsh language strategy, *laith Fyw: laith Byw*, in particular in relation to increasing awareness of the value of the language and strengthening the position of the Welsh language in the community.
57. The Act has set ambitious, long term well-being goals to reflect the Wales we want to see in the future. This will put a thriving Welsh language at the heart of defining a sustainable Wales. It is an important milestone for the language, underlining its official status, and it will help ensure that Welsh is clearly part of the agenda for Wales' long-term future.
58. The Act, by including "a thriving Welsh Language" as part of the seven well-being goals for named public service organisations, is intended to ensure that the long-term future of the language is central to objectives set by the Welsh Government and other public bodies.
59. In relation to the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, the **Welsh Language Standards (no. 2) Regulations** will be laid before the end of 2015. These Regulations will make standards specifically applicable to a further 32 Bodies.

Further sets of Regulations will be laid by 22 February 2016 (the last laying date for this Assembly), all of which will be dealt with in the Plenary debate on 15 March 2016. Work is ongoing in relation to these bodies.

60. These further Regulations will cover Higher and Further Education institutions, Police and Crime Commissioners, Police Chief Constables, Fire and Rescue Authorities, and Welsh Tribunals.
61. Allowing the Commissioner to impose standards on these additional bodies will improve the Welsh language services available to the public in Wales and encourage more consistency within and across sectors.

UK legislation

62. UK legislation can sometimes have an impact on the Welsh language, particularly in the context of non-devolved areas of policy. One ongoing example of such legislation is the UK Government's Immigration Bill which contains provision to impose English language requirements on public sector posts across the UK. In Wales, the Bill provides that the language requirement would be English or Welsh, reflecting the official status of Welsh. The Welsh Government has been in dialogue with UK Government on this and related issues.

Information provided by the Minister for Education and Skills on budget provision to support the implementation of the Welsh Government's Welsh Medium Education Strategy and Local Authorities' Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPS),

Welsh-medium education

1. Local authorities use funding from a number of sources to implement their Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs). Since April 2015, delivery of Welsh-language training and support for practitioners, language centres, late immersion projects and projects aimed at increasing rates of linguistic continuity, on a regional, local and school level form part of the programme of activities delivered through the Education Improvement Grant. Local authorities are asked to ensure that the programme of activities funded by the EIG reflect the priorities set out in their WESPs.
2. The Welsh-medium Education Strategy sets out the ambition of the Welsh Government for a country where Welsh-medium education and training are integral parts of the education infrastructure and a place where all learners develop their Welsh-language skills to their full potential.
3. The Welsh-medium Education Strategy included a five-year Implementation Programme, and fixed five-year and indicative ten-year targets based on outcomes, which have been used to monitor progress in implementing the Strategy. The fifth annual report on progress in implementing the Strategy was published in July. Not all targets have been achieved, however, progress has been made against four of them, and the highest numbers of seven year old children now receive Welsh-medium education.
4. A comprehensive evaluation of the Strategy has been undertaken and the final report is expected to be published in March. This evaluation will set the future direction and the allocation of budget in the next Assembly term will need to take account of this.
5. We are protecting our funding to education, including Welsh medium and bilingual schools, who receive their main funding from local government. Welsh language is an integral part of the implementation of the Curriculum review and Welsh medium, and bilingual schools are part of the Pioneer network of schools developing the curriculum and New Deal. We have made reductions in certain areas where activities are outside of schools where the impact will be manageable, to enable prioritisation of spend to schools
6. A ministerial review, Raising our Sights: Review of Welsh for Adults was published in July 2013. The principal recommendation was to establish a national entity to lead Welsh for Adults strategically at a national level. The University of Wales Trinity Saint David was successful through a competitive grant process and they are now hosting the new Canolfan Dysgu Cymraeg Cenedlaethol (National Centre for Learning Welsh).

7. The Review Group also identified the need to reduce the number of providers in order to avoid duplication, improve value for money and ensure that all providers have sufficient volume of provision to develop expertise and benefit from increased efficiency through economies of scale. This rationalisation process is currently being undertaken by the Canolfan Dysgu Cymraeg Genedlaethol.
8. The total budget allocated to support Welsh for Adults in 2016-17 is £10.535m. This is a reduction of £0.5m against our original allocation for the sector. During the current transitional period the budget supports the existing six Welsh for Adult centres until July 2016 and the new Canolfan Dysgu Cymraeg Genedlaethol. From August 2016, this budget will support the activities of the Canolfan Dysgu Cymraeg Genedlaethol only, therefore the reduction is expected to be manageable.

Legislation

9. The budget continues to take account of our current legislative programme. A table setting out the costs for 2016-17, of both previously enacted legislation and anticipated costs of Bills at published RIA stage or enactment, has been published alongside the Draft Budget narrative, Annex D. A more detailed update on the costs of our legislative programme relevant to the remit of this Committee is provided below.

School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013

10. The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act received Royal Assent on 4 March 2013. As part of its implementation, and actioned in Draft Budget 2013-14, funding of £21.8m for school based counselling and school breakfasts transferred to the Revenue Support Grant within Local Government MEG from 2013-14 onwards. This funding continues to form part of RSG allocation for 2016-17.
11. Under the Act, local authorities are accountable for planning Welsh-medium provision and Welsh Education Strategic Plans became statutory from April 2014. The implementation of the WESPs will continue to be supported through funding for the Welsh in Education Grant which has been transferred into the new single amalgamated Education Improvement Grant for schools from 2015-16.