

One Voice Wales supports the overall thrust of the Welsh Government strategy and in particular the aim to create a million Welsh speakers by 2050. However, One Voice Wales recognises that this ambition will be extremely difficult to realise without a significant injection of resources and without an unprecedented level of political support from the Welsh Government itself and from the wider structures of local government and other public sector bodies.

One Voice Wales is recognised by the Welsh Government as the national representative body for community and town councils in Wales. It represents the sector on the Local Government Partnership Council and over three-quarters of the 735 community and town councils are already in membership, with numbers growing year on year. As well as our representative role, we also provide support and advice to councils on an individual basis and have previously launched, with Welsh Government support, a modular training programme for councillors, which continues to deliver effectively. We believe strongly that community councils are well-placed to develop the economic, social and environmental well-being of the areas they serve and, as such, are active and proactive in debating key issues such as energy policies, environmental issues and strategic planning. Our sector will support and wish to participate in much of the locally based aspects of this field of work, and it is hoped that our members will increasingly be enabled to do so with the help and support of the Welsh Government moving forward. The communities served by our member councils represent the entire spectrum of linguistic patterns found in Wales, and members will wish to do what they can to assist the Welsh Government in its drive to achieve its ambitious target.

The Welsh Government having identified creating a workforce with the appropriate skills to educate and provide services through the medium of Welsh as a key objective, One Voice Wales would wish to make the following brief points:

In relation to improving workforce planning and support for practitioners for all phases of education, it is assumed that this relates to the current workforce, as opposed to a future workforce as addressed under the next point. It seems inevitable that not only will there be a need for a serious injection of funding into in-service skills development for practitioners, but there will also be a more strategic requirement in terms of the overall direction and means of travel across the whole of Wales and across the educational phases.

In relation to ensuring a sufficient workforce for Welsh-medium education and teaching as a subject, a number of key planning objectives should be established immediately, which would assist in the generation of momentum in this direction. Not only will there be a need to train many more teaching and support practitioners who can operate through the medium of Welsh, but there will also be a fundamental need for local education authorities to be extremely proactive in their plans for creating additional Welsh medium schools and other educational roles where this expanded workforce can be deployed. School and college governing bodies, on which a significant number of elected community and town councillors sit, will also have an important role in overseeing these developments as time progresses.

Dr. Del Morgan

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