

Written Representations

Mr. H. Gapper (Welsh Medium Education)

My comment (both as a lay representative on behalf of Welsh medium education and as a parent of two Welsh-speaking children) is that despite the recent growth in Welsh medium education in the Vale opportunities to use the Welsh language outside of the school remain very limited. The Council has worked with voluntary organisations to provide specific events and activities through the medium of Welsh, for example Welsh medium swimming lessons in leisure centres and Gwyl Fach y Fro in Barry Island. Such events and activities have proved popular demonstrating a clear appetite amongst our children and young people to use the Welsh language in social contexts. However such opportunities are very limited and we must change this in order to avoid the language being seen by young people as the language in which they receive their education but one in which they cannot choose to live their lives. To this end the strategy should aim to be as ambitious as possible.

One particular area the Council may wish to explore further is whether it could require or persuade those organisations who use parts of its estate (e.g. leisure centres, community halls etc) to provide some of their activities in Welsh or bilingually. For example, sports clubs which rent Council premises or community groups which use community centres to provide group activities. Plenty of support is available for community groups to develop their Welsh / bilingual provision (for example from the Welsh Gov and Welsh Language Commissioner) and it may not be unreasonable for the Council to set certain language requirements on the provisions of group activities by those who use its premises.