



Complete Agenda

Democratic Service
Swyddfa'r Cyngor
CAERNARFON
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH

Meeting

LANGUAGE COMMITTEE

Date and Time

10.00 am, MONDAY, 10TH OCTOBER, 2022

Location

Virtual Meeting

Contact Point

Rhodri Jones

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(DISTRIBUTED 03/10/22)

LANGUAGE COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP (15)

Plaid Cymru (10)

Councillors

Menna Baines
Olaf Cai Larsen
Llio Elenid Owen
Elfed Williams
Vacant Seat – Plaid Cymru

Elfed Wyn ap Elwyn
Jina Gwyrfai
Gwynfor Owen
Meryl Roberts
Sasha Williams

Independent (5)

Councillors

Richard Glyn Roberts
Eirwyn Williams
Vacant Seat - Independent

Peter Thomas
Gruffydd Williams

Ex-officio Members

Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council

Other Invited Member

Councillor Menna Jones, Cabinet Member Corporate Support - The Welsh Language

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES

To receive apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

To receive any declaration of personal interest

3. URGENT BUSINESS

To note any items that are a matter of urgency in the view of the Chairman for consideration

4. MINUTES

5 - 13

The Chairman shall propose that the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 20.06.2022 be signed as a true record (attached)

5. WELSH GOVERNMENT: LETTER FROM THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND WELSH LANGUAGE 14 - 17

Information item only (This item has been translated by the Council).

6. WELSH LANGUAGE PROMOTION PLAN: ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT 18 - 24

To present information about the Department's contribution to the Language Policy.

7. WELSH LANGUAGE PROMOTION PLAN: HIGHWAYS AND MUNICIPAL DEPARTMENT 25 - 30

To present information about the Department's contribution to the Language Policy.

8. WELSH LANGUAGE PROMOTION PLAN: FINANCE DEPARTMENT 31 - 38

To present information about the Department's contribution to the Language Policy.

9. PROJECT UPDATE: LANGUAGE DESIGNATION POLICY 39 - 42

To give an update on the progress of the project to the Members.

LANGUAGE COMMITTEE: MONDAY, 20 JUNE 2022

PRESENT:

Councillors: Eirwyn Williams, Elfed Wyn ap Elwyn, Gruffydd Williams, Jina Gwyrfai, Llio Elenid Owen, Menna Baines, Meryl Roberts, Olaf Cai Larsen, Richard Glyn Roberts, Sasha Williams

Officers: Vera Jones (Democracy and Language Service Manager), Llywela Owain (Senior Language and Scrutiny Adviser), Gwenllian Mair Williams (Language Adviser), Llio Mai Dafydd (Welsh Language Learning and Development Officer). Sioned Mai Jones (Democracy Services Officer) and Rhodri Marc Jones (Democracy Services Officer).

OTHERS INVITED:

Councillor Elwyn Jones (Chair of the Council), Richard Medwyn Hughes (Vice-chair of the Council) and Menna Jones (Cabinet Member for Corporate Support)

Item 8: Alun Gwilym Williams (Senior Business Manager, Adults, Health and Well-being Department)

Item 9: Marian Parry Hughes (Head of Children and Supporting Families Department)

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Elect Councillor Elfed Wyn ab Elwyn as Chair of the Welsh Language Committee for the year 2022/23.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Elect Councillor Llio Elenid Owen as Vice-chair of the Welsh Language Committee for the year 2022/23.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Alan Jones Evans, Gwynfor Owen and Menna Jones (Cabinet Member for Corporate Support).

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received.

5. URGENT ITEMS

No urgent items were received.

6. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous committee meeting held on 7 April, 2022, as a true record.

7. ANNUAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS

The report was presented by the Language Adviser, and she briefly drew attention to the following main points:

- The Language Adviser explained that this report had been created as a result of Section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, which made it a requirement for the Council after the end of the last financial year, before 30 June 2022.
- It was also noted that its purpose was to summarise and explain how the Council implemented and complied with the language standards.
- Pride was expressed that the report's figures showed that 99.1% of the Council's workforce had Welsh language skills. This figure included any person who had any type of Welsh language skills - whether they were fluent, partly-fluent or only understood a little bit of the language.
- It was expressed that 91% of all Council staff met the language designation of their post. The ability to work through the medium of Welsh was very important to the Council, and the Language Adviser was proud that this figure was high. Nevertheless, it was accepted that this figure could be increased. One way of attempting to do this at present was by offering Welsh language training to those staff who did not yet meet their language requirements, in order to help them develop the skills.
- It was noted that 909 jobs had been advertised on the Council's website in the last financial year where it was noted that Welsh language skills were essential for the role.
- It was explained that a number of developments had been completed over the year in order to ensure that bilingual services could be offered effectively:
 - o The Translation and Democracy Services teams had been busy over the year developing facilities in order to be able to hold multi-location meetings. Testing had been undertaken to ensure that the meetings could be held with people attending in the chambers and some people attending virtually, whilst also ensuring that the simultaneous translation service could continue without any obstacles.
 - o Trials had been undertaken with Council departments for a new self-assessment system. This system asked them to complete a self-assessment in order to see to what extent they complied with the language standards. This enabled the Corporate Support department to carry out a Corporate Self-assessment of the Council's compliance with the language standards, for submission to the Welsh Language Commissioner.

Members of the committee were given an opportunity to ask questions:

- A member asked whether it was possible to look at the percentage of Council staff numbers who met the language designation level of their job over time, so that it could be compared with the last years.
- It was asked whether it would be possible to contact other agencies and bodies that collaborated with the Council when they suffered from linguistic failures. A member

also asked if this could be done at a high level in order to ensure that the linguistic standards of our partners were sufficient.

- It was expressed that anecdotal evidence suggested that the standards of language skills increased as salary scales increased, thus this could create a social divide. Specific reference was made to the difference in skills between jobs in locations such as schools.
- It was felt that the ability to use the Welsh language in the workplace should be essential for every post, because in some circumstances the communication language changed from Welsh to English naturally if one (or more) of the staff did not speak Welsh.

In response to these points, the Language Adviser noted

- That it was not possible to compare the numbers of staff who met the language designation of their post at present, since the data had not been gathered in the same method over the past years due to the pandemic. Nevertheless, it would be very interesting to compare these figures from year to year and see whether the figure increased or decreased. The Language Adviser was confident that this could be done from the next report onwards, because by then the data would have been gathered in the same method for two consecutive years. The Language Adviser was also confident that the relevant figure of 91% would increase this year as more Council staff completed a language self-assessment and as more staff attended linguistic training.
- That issues regarding the linguistic failures of our partners and other agencies were being raised by Council staff. Subject to the circumstances of the linguistic failures, officers would refer to them at meetings with the relevant people or would make direct contact with the agency/partner. Including such failures in a report such as this drew the matter to the attention of the Language Commissioner, who would then place pressure on the agency to improve its language standards. It was noted that it would be possible to put a protocol in place in order to establish a process of contacting partners effectively, should a linguistic failure occur.
- That there was an element of truth in the fact that the linguistic skills of staff increased as salary levels increased, particularly written and reading and comprehension skills. This could be explained to some degree by the requirements of those posts - i.e. a manager level post would require higher language skills due to the need to present reports to committees, etc. As the same need did not exist with lower-level posts, it was likely that the linguistic skills of the individuals were lower in general. However, the Language Adviser also drew attention to the fact that offering comprehensive training opportunities was a key part of the language designations project.
- That every job advertised on the Council's website noted that Welsh language skills were essential (and not desirable). No job was advertised with desirable language requirements. What varied was the specific level of skills that were designated for the post. The Language Adviser also referred to the challenges that were facing the Council in terms of recruitment. Also, it was noted that there was a clear expectation that any worker being appointed but who did not meet the language requirement of their post followed training and worked to reach those linguistic levels over time.

RESOLVED

- To accept the report and to note the observations received and approve the report for publication by the closing date, 30 June 2022.

8. LANGUAGE POLICY AND WELSH LANGUAGE PROMOTION ACTIVITIES: ADULTS, HEALTH AND WELL-BEING DEPARTMENT

The report was submitted by the department's Senior Business Manager, and in brief, he drew attention to the following main points:

- It was explained that the department followed a Successive Strategy Framework entitled 'More than Just Words', which set requirements on the department to ensure that care was available for the residents of the County through the medium of Welsh without them having to request this.
- It was reported that one of the department's biggest challenges of late was the recruitment of new staff. This was a national problem, and within the county, some areas experienced more difficulty than others with the recruitment of staff. In addition to this, there were some specific posts, such as Occupational Therapists, that were difficult to fill as specialist skills, as well as Welsh language skills, were needed.
- He elaborated on a very specialised field that the department was involved in, namely Dementia. Further investigations revealed that it was all-important for patients to receive care in the language that they felt most comfortable to use, as this improved their well-being. Subsequently, the department was working to develop Dementia units in supported housing, dementia specialist support staff and new technology to support people who wished to stay in their own homes.

Members of the committee were given an opportunity to ask questions:

- A member asked whether it was possible to ensure that Welsh-medium care was available for people suffering from Dementia within the private sector.
- Enquiries were made as to whether the department had had to consider advertising for posts where Welsh was not essential in order to attract applicants who had the relevant specialist skills.
- It was enquired whether the department had a process to try and pair-up patients with carers who were able to provide care in accordance with the patient's language choice, particularly bearing in mind that not all patients required care through the medium of Welsh.
- It was asked whether there was an intention to offer care through the medium of Welsh beyond Gwynedd at present, and whether the budget was available in order to provide care effectively.

In response, the Senior Business Manager noted:

That ensuring care through the medium of Welsh to patients within the private sector was very challenging as every patient had the right to choose where they received their care. This was the reason why the department was so eager for the Council to offer and provide care through the medium of Welsh.

- It was confirmed that every effort was being done to pair-up patients with carers who had suitable linguistic skills. This could be challenging at times, particularly when a patient needed urgent care.

- It was noted that there was an intention to develop the out-of-county opportunities of receiving care through the medium of Welsh. It was noted that these opportunities were very restricted at the moment, but Gwynedd led the way to encourage other counties through the 'More than Just Words' forum.
- It was explained that there was an intention to try and attract professional workers, e.g. Social Workers and Therapists who had moved away from the area and returned to Gwynedd to live and work, in order to strengthen the provision in Gwynedd.

RESOLVED

- To accept the report and to note the observations received.

9. LANGUAGE POLICY AND WELSH LANGUAGE PROMOTION ACTIVITIES: CHILDREN AND SUPPORTING FAMILIES DEPARTMENT

The report was submitted by the Head of Department, and in brief she drew attention to the following main points:

- It was explained that this department also followed the 'More than Just Words' Successive Strategy Framework, in the same way as the Adults, Health and Well-being Department,
- The Early Years Service collaborated closely with CWLWM, which were 5 national lead organisations for childcare, in order to promote the Welsh language across childcare settings within the County. This very often led to new projects that were promoted by the 5 organisations, such as a new podcast by Mudiad Meithrin with the assistance of Nia Parry, entitled 'Baby Steps Into Welsh', which assisted children and parents to learn the language. The Early Years Service also benefitted from collaborating with CWLWM as the Mudiad Meithrin's Cynllun Croesi'r Bont bridged nursery classes linguistically, and 11 cylchoedd meithrin within the county received such support.
- It was also reported that the department promoted the Welsh language independently in many ways. £100 grants were being offered to non-Welsh speaking private childminders to purchase relevant Welsh language resources. In addition to this, many teams within the department used the 'FRIENDS' parenting course and had managed to translate the course into Welsh for the County's parents.
- It was noted that it was not possible to obtain a suitable childcare setting within the county for every child, often for safety reasons. If no Welsh-medium setting was available for the child, the department and the Social Workers would continue to visit and contact the children through the medium of Welsh, in order to promote their linguistic development.
- It was explained that the department was leading 55 Nursery Education providers at present, who received support from an Early Years Teacher to assist with teaching through the medium of Welsh. Pride was expressed in the Flying Start Scheme, which served in deprived areas in the County, and provided a Welsh-medium education to 2 year old children. There were 12 Flying Start Child Care settings within the County at present.

- It was highlighted that work was being completed to promote the Welsh language for older children as well, such as creating and developing the Duke of Edinburgh Award App for secondary school children.
- It was confirmed that promoting the Welsh language had been given prominence by the department over the past year. One member of staff, Stephen Wood, succeeded in the Dafydd Orwig Memorial Awards this year, for his success in learning Welsh. As well as using the language verbally within the department, many written resources and videos had been developed to train staff on various important features within the department. Also, the department was in the process of dubbing resources for regional and national use, in order to provide an effective bilingual service.
- A discussion was held on the effective work of the Youth Service, and it was noted that many schemes such as gardening, cookery and graffiti workshops, were now available through the medium of Welsh and that the feedback of 16-25 year olds who had participated in the workshops, jointly with the 'FRIENDS' scheme, stated that they had enjoyed the fact that they had been able to participate in Welsh, as they felt that this was beneficial to their personal development.
- The committee was updated on the Activities and Play Framework for children, young people and families. Now, 24 activity providers were able to do this through the medium of Welsh. Furthermore, over 50 organisations had come together to present well-being activities during the recent well-being week. The latest technology was used via the 'Haia' platform in order to hold all activities as Hybrid events, and through the medium of Welsh. Following this success, a new App was being developed - 'Ai Di', in order to help connect children and carers. It could be used to connect with schools, as well as for community use.
- Members were reassured that linguistic requirements were being included in every third-party contract where suitable and that this process was monitored regularly between the Service Manager and the Manager on behalf of the provider.

Concern was expressed about the recent recruitment problems, similar to those of other Council departments. It was noted that it was at times challenging to recruit people who were qualified and had specialist skills, as well as Welsh language skills. The department was looking at ways to overcome the problems, as well as provide support to staff members who wished to develop their Welsh language skills.

- It was added that challenges were facing the department when collaborating with partners since the facilities were not always available to be able to communicate effectively in Welsh. It was explained that not everyone could offer a simultaneous translation provision.

Members of the committee were given an opportunity to ask questions:

- Pride was expressed in Gwynedd Council's translation service and a discussion was held on the need for a protocol to demand that the Welsh language was used when collaborating with partners and to inform them if their Welsh language services were insufficient.
- It was noted that facilities were being wasted if people did not use them. Everyone was reminded of the need to use the Welsh language if they were able to, in order to sustain it and help others to learn.

- The department's work in developing a number of new and useful apps for people of all ages was praised. It was asked whether it was possible to monitor the use made of the apps to see how much use was made of the Welsh versions.

In response, the Senior Language and Scrutiny Advisor noted:

- That staff could be reminded of the current language policy and their responsibilities regarding informing partners of linguistic failures. It was explained further that a new protocol, as previously discussed, could be created in order for staff to inform the department's officers that a linguistic failure has occurred, so that contact could be made with the partners, the Language Commissioner and the Government, if needed.

In response, the Language Adviser noted:

- As this matter had been raised a number of times during the meeting, that consideration could be given to adding a protocol as an amendment to the new language policy, before it was submitted to cabinet members, should the committee agree to do so. It was expressed that the fact that officers had a responsibility to inform and respond to any linguistic failure was positive, because they had a direct contact with the partner, and that this reinforced the language policy.

In response, the Head of Children and Supporting Families Department noted:

- That there was a need to ensure that partners and other regional and national agencies improved their linguistic standards as the use of the Welsh language was secondary in many meetings. It was agreed that there was a need to use our method of implementing the Welsh language as an example to other agencies.
- It was noted in response that it was not possible to monitor the use of Welsh in a number of the apps developed to date, as they dealt with individuals' personal information. Nevertheless, the hope was to be able to monitor the amount of Welsh used on the Duke of Edinburgh Award app.

RESOLVED

- To accept the report and to note the observations received.

10. LANGUAGE POLICY

The report was presented by the Language Adviser, and she briefly drew attention to the following main points:

- She began by explaining that the department had started to look into potential revisions to the language policy in 2020, following major changes in the way the Council operated when providing services to the public.
- It was explained that a need had arisen to provide clear guidance to staff about specific subjects, such as how the Welsh language was being used via the Council's IT systems.
- Details were given on the proposed revisions to the policy, such as:
 - o General principles at the start of each section
 - o Substantial changes to Section 5 (Digital services - website, apps and self-service) to explain the use of Welsh in different technological systems.

- Adding a new clause to Section 6 (Signage) to reflect the Council's commitment to the place names project and promote Welsh place names.
- Substantial changes to Section 12 (job advertisements and the recruitment process).
- Obtaining assurance of whom is accountable to the policy as well as the responsibilities of Elected Members and Language Committee Members under Section 15 (Accountability).

Members of the committee were given an opportunity to ask questions:

- A member asked whether consideration had been given to including suitable wording in various sections of the policy to ensure that the Council protected the percentage of Welsh speakers in communities, as well as maintain Welsh services for those speakers.
- The need to ask one question through the medium of English at the Council's recruitment meetings was questioned and considered.
- A member asked whether something needed to be included which noted the need for Welsh language skills for sub-contractors who worked with the Council on various projects.
- Attention was drawn to the fact that elected members were bound by the Code of Conduct, and therefore there was a need to consider whether the language policy acknowledged this.
- It was asked if there were any implications for members of staff who needed to receive training to achieve the language designation of their job but have been unable to attend those training sessions.
- It was asked whether this was the final opportunity to propose changes to the language policy.

In response, the Language Adviser noted:

- That consideration could be given to the point made about protecting the percentage of Welsh speakers within our communities.

That the language standards of sub-contractors who worked with the Council was considered in a specific section of the language policy, but that the wording of this section could be revisited to ensure that this was highlighted.

- It was confirmed that there were no consequences if staff missed Welsh language training to achieve their language designation. Nevertheless, individuals who did not reach their language designation were regularly monitored to see what type of training could benefit them so that they could succeed to foster Welsh linguistic skills.

In response the Democracy and Language Services Manager noted:

- That the suggested changes would be considered before a draft language policy was submitted to the Cabinet. Changes proposed by heads of department would also be considered. If the Cabinet approved the draft, it would be submitted to the Full Council where there would be an opportunity to propose any amendments.

RESOLVED

- To accept the draft report and to note the observations received and approve to proceed to submit the Policy - with appropriate revisions - to the Council Cabinet as the next step in the process for it to be formally approved.

The meeting commenced at 10.00am and concluded at 12.15pm.

CHAIR

Jeremy Miles AS/MS
Gweinidog y Gymraeg ac Addysg
Minister for Education and Welsh Language



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf JMEWL/00982/22

Mr Dafydd Gibbard
Prif Weithredwr
Cyngor Gwynedd

anwenmairjones@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

13 Mehefin 2022

Annwyl Mr Gibbard,

Diolch am eich llythyr dyddiedig 3 Mai 2022 ynghylch cyfieithu ar y pryd.

Mae gan Lywodraeth Cymru gynlluniau cadarn nid yn unig i gynyddu'r nifer o siaradwyr Cymraeg, ond hefyd i ddyblu defnydd y Gymraeg gan ei siaradwyr, fel y nodir yn strategaeth y Gymraeg, *Cymraeg 2050: miliwn o siaradwyr*. Mae dyletswydd arnom o dan Safonau'r Gymraeg i ofyn am ddewis iaith mynychwyr i gyfarfodydd a drefnir gan Lywodraeth Cymru. Byddwn yn darparu adnodd cyfieithu i'r rheiny nad ydynt yn gallu siarad Cymraeg os ydy cyfradd o fynychwyr y cyfarfod sydd yn siaradwyr Cymraeg wedi ymateb eu bod yn awyddus i ddefnyddio'r iaith yn y cyfarfod.

Mae'n bwysig ein bod yn defnyddio adnodd cyhoeddus prin yn y ffordd fwyaf darbodus ymhob maes ac mae sut rydym yn blaenoriaethau cyfieithu ar y pryd wedi'i gytuno gyda Chomisiynydd y Gymraeg. Mae'r trefniant hwn yn ein galluogi i wneud y defnydd gorau posibl o'r adnodd hynny, a'i ddefnyddio mewn modd sy'n golygu ei fod yn cael y mwyaf o effaith o ran defnydd y Gymraeg.

Wrth drefnu cyfarfodydd mae'n staff yn cael eu hannog i ddefnyddio crebwyll, ac mae mynychwyr o sefydliadau sydd yn gweithredu drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg yn un o'r ystyriaethau hynny, ynghyd â thestun y cyfarfod a'i leoliad.

Fe soniwch yn benodol am gyfarfodydd yn ymwneud â phandemig y coronafeirws a sefyllfa Wcraïn yn eich llythyr. Mae eithriadau gan gyrff eraill rhag gweithredu rhai o ddyletswyddau Safonau'r Gymraeg wrth ymateb i argyfyngau (yn rhinwedd eu categoraidd fel ymatebwyr categori 1 yn y Ddeddf Argyfyngau Sifil 2004). Nid yw'r eithriadau yma yn berthnasol i lywodraethau canolog ond o ystyried ein profiad dros y ddwy flynedd ddiwethaf byddwn yn trafod priodoldeb y sefyllfa hwn i gorff sydd wedi arwain yn genedlaethol ar ein hymateb i'r argyfyngau yma.

Cyn bo hir hefyd, mi fydd canlyniad ein partneriaeth ddiweddaraf gyda Microsoft ym myd technoleg iaith yn gweld golau dydd. Mi fydd ein cydweithredu'n golygu bod cyfleuster

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

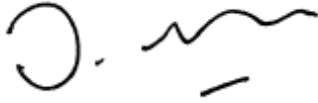
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CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Jeremy.Miles@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Jeremy.Miles@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

cyfieithu ar y pryd ar gael a fydd yn galluogi hyd yn oed fwy ohonom i ddefnyddio'n hiaith mewn cyfarfodydd Teams. Bydd hynny ar gael fel rhan o drwydded Teams arferol heb unrhyw gost ychwanegol ac yn gallu cael ei ddefnyddio ar gyfer ieithoedd eraill hefyd. Dyma achos o Gymru a'r Gymraeg yn arwain datblygiad a fydd yn cynyddu'r defnydd o ieithoedd ledled y byd.

Yn gywir,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'J' followed by a series of wavy lines and a short horizontal stroke at the end.

Jeremy Miles AS
Gweinidog y Gymraeg ac Addysg



Ein cyf JMEWL/00982/22

Mr Dafydd Gibbard
Chief Executive Gwynedd Council
anwenmairjones@gwynedd.gov.wale

S

This document has been translated
by Gwynedd Council.

13 June 2022

Dear Mr Gibbard,

Thank you for your letter of 3 May 2022 regarding simultaneous translation.

The Welsh Government has firm plans not only to increase the number of Welshspeakers, but also to double the use of Welsh by its speakers, as set out in the Welsh language strategy, *Cymraeg 2050: miliwn o siaradwyr*. We have a duty under the Welsh Language Standards to ask about the preferred language of those attending meetings organised by the Welsh Government. We will provide a translation resource for those unable to speak Welsh if a proportion of meeting attendees who are Welshspeakers have responded that they are keen to use the language at the meeting.

It is important that we use limited public resources in the most economical way in all areas and how we prioritise simultaneous translation has been agreed with the Welsh Language Commissioner. This arrangement allows us to make the best possible use of that resource, and use it in a way which means it gets the most impact on Welsh language usage.

When organising meetings our staff are encouraged to use their judgement, and attendees from organisations who operate through the medium of Welsh is one of those considerations, as well as the context of the meeting and its location.

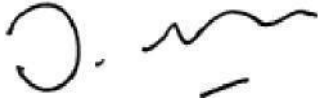
You specifically mentioned meetings relating to the coronavirus pandemic and the situation in Ukraine in your letter. Other bodies are exempt from implementing some of the duties of the Welsh Language Standards when responding to emergencies (by virtue of categorising them as category 1 respondents in the Civil Emergencies Act 2004). These exceptions do not apply to central governments but given our experience over the past two years we will discuss the appropriateness of this position for a body which has led nationally on our response to these emergencies.

The result of our latest partnership with Microsoft in relation to language technology will soon see the light of day. Our collaboration will mean that a

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

simultaneous translation facility is available which will enable even more of us to use our language in Teams meetings. That will be available as part of an ordinary Teams licence at no additional cost and can be used for other languages as well. This is a case of Wales and the Welsh language leading a development that will increase the use of languages around the world.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'J' followed by a series of wavy lines and a short horizontal stroke at the end.

Jeremy Miles MP

Minister for Welsh Language and Education

DATE	LANGUAGE COMMITTEE
MEETING	10 OCTOBER 2022
TITLE	Environment Department Report
PURPOSE	To present information about the Department's contribution to the Language Policy
AUTHOR	Dafydd Wyn Williams, Head of Environment Department

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. This report has been prepared to present information to the Language Committee on the Environment Department's contribution to the Language Policy.
- 1.2. The Council's Language Policy is embedded in all of the Department's work. In this report we will highlight the opportunities that are available to improve the provision for our residents, and we will acknowledge the challenges facing this field.
- 1.3. Following recent work to identify the language designations of all jobs in the Department, we can report that 91.7% of the Department's staff meet the language designations of their posts, which is a little higher than the Council average (91.3%). These figures are based on various assessments including line manager assessment and staff self-assessments. Up to 31/8/22, 78.5% of the Environment Department staff have completed a self-assessment and staff are encouraged to complete this in order to get a full picture of our staff's language skills.
- 1.4. The latest figures indicate that 154 staff within the Department meet the relevant language designations, with 14 not currently meeting the requirements. However, the fact that individuals are not able to meet the post's language requirements does not mean that they are unable to speak Welsh and can offer a service through the medium of Welsh to the customer. The extensive training opportunities available by the Council are promoted amongst Department staff. There are positive examples within the Environment Department of individuals who are developing and improving their language skills and there is continuous encouragement for staff to attend the courses that are available to develop their skills and confidence in the Welsh language.
- 1.5. As members are aware, responsibility for Waste and Recycling has been transferred to the Environment Department since the beginning of the month. We will continue with the work undertaken by the Highways and Municipal Department to ensure that more staff from the Waste and Recycling Services complete the language designation assessments. There will more about the contribution of the Waste and Recycling field to the Language Policy outlined as part of the Report of the Highways and Municipal Services Department.

2. RESPONSE TO THE COMMITTEE'S QUESTIONS

A matter that the members wish to discuss:	Question
<p><u>Boosting and promoting</u></p> <p>How do we go beyond the bilingual provision to increase the opportunities for people to use the Welsh language in the community, to contribute to the national target of creating a Million speakers, and to the Well-being goal of ensuring that the people of Gwynedd are "Able to live in a natural Welsh community"?</p> <p>The Welsh Language Promotion Plan for Gwynedd can be seen here: (https://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/cy/Cyn gor/Dogfennau-Cyngor/Strategaethau-a-pholisiau/Cynllun-iaith/Cynllun-Hybu'r-Gymraeg-yng-Ngwynedd-2018-2023.pdf) It sets the priorities for promoting the Welsh Language in five areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Language of the family, 2. The Language of Learning, 3. The Language of Work and Services, 4. The Language of the Community 5. Research and Technology 	<p>1. Can you highlight any projects within your department that contribute to one of the Council's language strategy priorities, namely the Welsh Language Promotion Plan for Gwynedd?</p> <p>Building Control Service: This service has responsibility for managing street names and naming and numbering properties under the provision of the Public Health Act, 1925. The Council has a statutory responsibility to act to ensure that any new name or changes to street and property names, and / or numbers are allocated with reason and in a consistent manner.</p> <p>What is required to be considered according to legislation, is whether or not there is already a house of the same name for example, or whether the name is appropriate (e.g. decent). There are no enforcement powers for this, and the law does not allow us to refuse an application unless it is a duplication or that the name is inappropriate.</p> <p>Nevertheless, the Policy operated by the Building Control Service means that we are able to be proactive in highlighting the historic and cultural significance of Welsh names. Officers encourage applicants who wish to change a name from Welsh to English to re-consider, both formally and orally. The Building Control Service contributes to a corporate project to Protect Place-names.</p> <p>Statistics from 2021/22 show there were 67 requests to change property names with 100% of the names subsequently registered through Royal Mail being Welsh names. It is noted that there were no examples where applicants applied to change from a Welsh to an English name. It is very heartening that of the 67 applications, 26 property owners changed from English back into Welsh names with many appreciating the original historical names (and that others changed from one Welsh name to another or naming a property for the first time).</p> <p>Joint Planning Policy Service: The main function of this Service is to prepare, monitor, review and revise the Joint Local Development Plan (2011-26) including the preparation of Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p>

The planning role is limited to seeking to create the best possible circumstances through the Plan's policies to facilitate sustainable developments. Consideration of the Welsh language has been central to the process of preparing the Plan and the Plan incorporates a specific planning policy namely Policy PS1 that deals with the Welsh language and culture.

Also, Supplementary Planning Guidance (Maintaining and Creating Unique and Sustainable Communities), includes detailed guidance on how to consider the Welsh language when dealing with applications for new developments.

Through this work, the Plan contributes to promoting and supporting the Welsh language in the Gwynedd Planning Authority. The Gwynedd Planning Policy Service will continue to prioritise this key area when preparing the New Local Development Plan for Gwynedd.

Planning Service: One of the main duties of this Service is to deal with planning applications for all kinds of development including housing, employment (factories and shops), tourism, agriculture, minerals and waste etc.

In accordance with the statutory requirement, planning applications must be determined in accordance with the Joint Local Development Plan. As noted above, the Plan includes a dedicated Welsh language policy and a Supplementary Planning Guidance that provide detailed guidance on how to implement the policy.

By acting on the duty of dealing with planning applications, in accordance with the Plan's requirements, we contribute to promoting the Welsh language in the area. This is done by ensuring that applications give consideration to the Welsh language in line with the Policy and Guidance that highlight the cultural importance of the language, in addition to promoting the language so that it is visible in developments (e.g. signage).

The Planning Service also contributes to a corporate project to Protect Place-names. By contributing to this project, the service has held a review of the planning conditions and has kept a version in their systems to ensure consistency and efficient use of conditions for staff. The conditions also strengthen the viewpoint of the Building Control Service when dealing with applications to name new houses and streets. This highlights the importance of joint working and communication between the Department's services as well as with the various Departments within the Council.

Traffic and Projects: A Professional Trainee in Planning and Transport Engineering has recently started with the Service. The individual will learn about these important areas within the Environment Department through the medium of Welsh. Also, as part of their training they will work with and learn alongside experienced officers in a natural Welsh speaking environment.

The Service is also proud to celebrate and promote Welsh names in projects wherever possible. As part of the improvements to the Lôn Eifion walking and cycling path between Bryncir and Caernarfon, Welsh names were given priority along the path with the intention of improving awareness and promoting the use of native names.

Road Safety: Service officers work jointly with schools offering activities and education and training through the medium of Welsh to the county's children.

Licensing: The Licensing Service ensures that members of the public can give evidence through the medium of Welsh in formal cases and in the submission of cases for prosecution and appeals through the medium of Welsh where possible. Every hearing and meeting of the Main Licensing Committee and Sub-committees are held in accordance with the language policy - and therefore members of the public can present evidence in hearings through the medium of Welsh.

Climate and Nature: The responsibility for leading the Council's Climate and Nature Emergency Plan is coordinated by the Environment Department. By working together and developing partnerships with other organisations, we support local businesses to work in the field of renewable energy technology. Some projects – e.g. Gwynedd Net Zero Partnership led by Adra - trains the local workforce (especially young people) for them to stay locally to work in local businesses. We also want to expand how many apprenticeships and trainees the Council recruits to work in the climate and nature/biodiversity fields.

We will consult further with external partners and with Gwynedd residents on developing a Climate and Nature Emergency Plan in 2023/24. We will always communicate in the person's choice of language and encourage discussion in Welsh and English.

Internal Communication: The Department produces a regular newsletter for staff that is distributed electronically. The internal newsletter that is provided in Welsh shares news and updates about various departmental and corporate developments and is an opportunity to draw attention to any opportunities to develop Welsh language skills for staff and to celebrate any relevant successes.

Externalisation of work and awarding third party contracts

How do we ensure that the quality of the bilingual service is maintained when externalising work and awarding contracts?

2. If the department awards work externally on contract, can you refer to any good practice, either when imposing conditions or when monitoring in order to ensure compliance with the linguistic conditions?

Contracts: In every contract awarded via the Sell2Wales procurement portal we continue to endeavour to ensure that the standard of the Welsh medium service is secured and maintained. A copy of the Language Policy is included in the tendering documents, and every applicant is asked to read this to ensure that they understand what is required of them in terms of the Welsh language but also that they understand the importance of the Welsh language to Gwynedd Council. The language requirements (which reflect the Council's Language Policy) of every contract are determined according to the needs of that contract.

Projects / contracts: The nature of the engineering industry tends to be English. In order to encourage the use of Welsh during the purchasing process, we ensure that 'invitation to tender' or 'instructions to tender' documents are advertised bilingually.

Bus and taxi contracts: As part of terms and conditions of bus and taxi contracts, it is a requirement that the contractor ensures full compliance with the Council's Welsh Language Policy.

Trading Standards: When any work is awarded externally, specifically specialised work such as hiring mechanics to undertake a report on the condition of a car, or hiring specialist equipment (that requires an operator to use the equipment), an officer from the service would be present at all times to ensure that communication/contact with the third party would be undertaken in their choice of language.

Licensing: The Licensing Service have seen that the ability to communicate from day-to-day with the Police in Welsh has improved since the appointment of high level Welsh speaking inspectors.

Climate and Nature: We will collaborate with the Welsh Government and Business Wales to influence the private sector when awarding procurement contracts. We will continue to ask for their commitment to the Welsh language as well as new requirements for them to report on how they are trying to reduce their carbon emissions.

<p><u>Operating bilingually</u></p> <p>How do we manage to act on the requirements of the Language Policy and Welsh Language Standards?</p>	<p>3. Are there any obstructions that prevent you as a department to offer a full service in Welsh? <i>This could be across the department or in specific services.</i></p> <p>e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>recruitment problems or lack of staff skills</i> • <i>Working in a field that is considered to be an 'English' industry in nature (i.e. external influences)</i> • <i>Working jointly with external bodies and agencies who do not operate bilingually</i> <p>Recruitment Challenges continue in some specialist areas in terms of relevant qualifications and the ability to communicate through the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>Planning: Recruiting competent Planners continues to be a challenge, and recruiting competent Planners who speak Welsh is even more of a challenge. Obviously, fluency in Welsh in terms of the Planning Service, which deals regularly with the public is extremely important. Despite the challenges, we continue to be able to appoint competent officers who possess the required linguistic skills. The Service has been looking more at appointing applicants who have a degree in similar fields of work (e.g. Geography), and then training at work in addition to paying for them to achieve a qualification in the Planning field. This recruitment method has enabled us to successfully appoint over the years. However, when we advertise Planning posts, the number of applicants is scarce, although we have been fortunate over the years to secure good applicants. Another challenge is retaining staff in the long-term in light of salary levels by comparison with most of the other authorities in north Wales.</p> <p>Countryside/Biodiversity: Recruiting staff to this field continues to be challenging. After three failed attempts to advertise for a Biodiversity Officer, we had to reduce the language requirements. Following this, an applicant who is a 'foundation' standard learner was appointed who is enthusiastic to develop their language skills and has already commenced Welsh language training.</p> <p>Collaboration Staff in the Environment Department participate in multi-agency meetings regularly, at national and regional level. A significant number of these meetings tend to be held through the medium of English. However, officers ensure that any joint working that would be prepared to be distributed to the public would be bilingual.</p>
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Developing new opportunities

4. Do you have ideas about new ways we can promote the Welsh language in the county's communities - either in your own services or by collaborating with others?

The Environment Department promotes the use of the Welsh language through the work of each of the Services and any communication with the public will be undertaken according to the language choice of Gwynedd residents.

As noted above, the Professional Trainee in Planning and Transport Engineering has recently started with the Service. We believe that this offers an opportunity to develop the future workforce and to ensure that staff gain experience and that we offer a career pathway for our staff in the future. This in turn will ensure that we have professional officers in the future who possess the language skills the Council desires.

Work is being prepared to promote three new trainee posts for a period of three years in the Public Protection field. One trainee will work in each Public Protection field, namely Food and Safety; Environment and Licensing and Trading Standards. These three posts will give opportunities for successful trainees to gain specialist professional skills through the medium of Welsh.

The Council's Language Forum: The development of the Language Forum is welcomed as an opportunity to share good practice across the Council's departments. It is an opportunity for representatives from all Council departments to discuss ideas about how to raise awareness of the support that is available and how to encourage/inspire staff to make the most of what is on-offer.

Organising voluntary activities within the Council or Council departments may create opportunities for staff to speak Welsh together in a leisurely and more natural environment. It may have a positive influence on family/friends/neighbours and inspire them to organise the same type of activities for new speakers in their communities.

Support: As a Department, we encourage any member of staff to attend courses to learn or refresh the language for the benefit of Gwynedd residents. We will continue to support and encourage staff who are new speakers to use their Welsh in meetings, when greeting and introducing themselves or whenever they are confident to present an item in Welsh in order to build their confidence in a safe environment.

Agenda Item 7

MEETING	Language Committee
DATE	10 October 2022
TITLE	Report of the Highways and Municipal Department
PURPOSE	To present information about the Department's contribution to the Language Policy
AUTHOR	Steffan Jones, Head of Highways and Municipal Department

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report has been prepared in response to the Language Committee's request for information about how the Highways and Municipal Department implements the Language Policy.
- 1.2 The Department employs 570 members of staff with the majority of these being manual workers e.g. waste collectors, street cleaners, recycling centre workers and road workers. Welsh is the first language of the majority of our workers and the medium that is used to communicate internally and externally with our residents.
- 1.3 According to the latest quarterly departmental report, almost 95% of the Department's staff meet the language designation of their job. This is encouraging and reflects the Department's desire to promote the language among our staff. However, it should be noted that only 39% of staff members have responded to the survey so far. While this is better than the percentage of respondents at approximately the same time last year, it remains the lowest response rate of all the Council's departments.
- 1.4 Improving the response rate has been challenging. However, we have worked closely with the Council's Welsh Language Learning and Development Officer to find ways to improve the response and our efforts have begun to bear fruit to some extent. More background on this is given in the table below.
- 1.5 You will be aware that the Department has recently been restructured. As a result, the Waste Collection and Recycling Service, along with the Waste Treatment Service, both of which employ the majority of our manual workers, have transferred to the Environment Department since the beginning of the month. We will work closely with the Environment Department to try and encourage the remaining staff members of both departments who have not yet completed the language designation assessments to do so.

2. RESPONSE TO THE COMMITTEE'S QUESTIONS

Issues that members would like to discuss:	Question
<p><u>Advancement and promotion</u></p> <p>How do we go beyond providing a bilingual service to increase the opportunities for people to use Welsh in the community, to contribute to the national target of creating a Million speakers, and to the Well-being goal of ensuring that the people of Gwynedd are “Being able to live in a naturally Welsh speaking society”?</p> <p>The Welsh Language Promotion Scheme in Gwynedd can be viewed here:</p> <p>https://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/cy/Cyngor/Dogfennau-Cyngor/Strategaethau-a-pholisiau/Cynllun-iaith/Cynllun-Hybu'r-Gymraeg-yng-Ngwynedd-2018-2023.pdf</p> <p>It sets out priorities for promoting the Welsh language in five areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The language of the family, 2. Language of learning, 3. Working language and service, 4. The language of the community 5. Research and Technology 	<p>1. Can you highlight any projects within your department that contribute to one of the Council's language strategy priorities, namely the Promoting the Welsh Language Scheme in Gwynedd?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department attempts to raise Gwynedd residents' awareness of its services in a number of ways. We ensure that all our information and publicity material is bilingual including any signs we have on our public sites e.g. the recycling centres. • In addition, we organize sessions for groups and arrange public presentations e.g. our recycling officers visit schools, colleges and other local organizations to explain the benefits of recycling and to explain how we collect and treat waste. The majority of these sessions are held through the medium of Welsh except for when the officers are aware in advance that the audience will be in English or partly in English. • In relation to the language in the workplace, all our internal instructions, health and safety documents etc. are produced bilingually; again, with Welsh having priority over English. • The language survey has identified 14 members of staff who do not meet the language designations of their jobs and who have not followed any language training to date. We are in the process of contacting these individuals to encourage them to learn or develop their Welsh skills through different media e.g. self-study lessons, online lessons or intensive courses.

Outsourcing and letting third party agreements

How do we ensure that the standard of bilingual service is maintained when outsourcing and contracting?

2. If the department is outsourcing work, can you refer to any good practice, either in imposing conditions or in monitoring to ensure compliance with linguistic conditions?

- We ensure that our services meet the requirements of any policy and legislation in relation to the Welsh Language by:
 - Discovering if the contractors can offer their services bilingually by asking relevant questions in the pre-qualification questionnaire (as follows):

<i>Note</i>	<i>The buyer can only select you to tender if you can confirm that you will be able to comply with the requirement to provide services bilingually (in Welsh and in English) where that is a requirement identified in the tender. If you are successful, the buyer may need you to provide evidence to support your answer.</i>	
1.121.2	Confirm that you can meet, or that you will meet if you are successful, the requirement to provide services bilingually in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Language (Wales) Act 2011 and the subsequent Language Standards imposed on the Council.	Yes/No * delete as appropriate

- There is a clause in our tender documents which raises the contractors' awareness of our language requirements and expectations of them (as follows):

5.11 Gwynedd Council Welsh Language Policy 2016

This Policy is published in accordance with the priorities of Gwynedd Council and the requirements placed on the Council under the Welsh Language Standards, Section 4 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

The purpose of the Policy is to state how the Council will plan and provide to ensure that all of its services meet the needs of the local population from a linguistic point of view. It is also a means of ensuring compliance with Welsh Language Standards.

The Council will act in accordance with the basic principle set out in the Welsh (Wales) Measure 2011, which is to give equal status and validity to both languages while not treating Welsh less favourably than English.

The Welsh Language Standards not only apply to the services supplied directly by the Council, but they also apply to services supplied on behalf of the Council by other parties. In relation to those services supplied on behalf of the Council by other parties the Council will ensure:

- a) that any specifications, agreements, contracts or arrangements made with third parties relating to the provision of services to the public comply with the requirements of the Welsh Language Policy and Welsh Language Standards;*
 - b) through contracting arrangements that the agent or contractor is able to and implement any applicable elements of the Council's Welsh Language Policy and Standards when providing services to the public on his behalf or under his supervision;*
 - c) that the requirements for the use of the Welsh language will be specified in the tender documents and contracts;*
 - d) that appropriate procedures are established to monitor compliance with the Welsh Language Policy and Standards.*
- We also ask successful contractors to sign an agreement committing them to our requirements in relation to the language (as follows):

A clause in the Council's Terms and Conditions
30. Welsh language requirements

Depending on the text of the Agreement, the Council will set language requirements that will reflect the principles of the Council's Welsh Language Policy, the requirements of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards imposed on the Council as part of that Measure.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The team publishes the advertisement for each quote, or tender for each work to be contracted, on the National Procurement website Sell2Wales through the medium of Welsh. ○ The team also sends all necessary correspondence to our contractors through the medium of Welsh.
<p><u>Operating bilingually</u></p> <p>How do we succeed in implementing the requirements of the Language Policy and Standards?</p>	<p>3. Are there any barriers to your ability as a department to offer a full service in Welsh?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Department offers a service that is almost entirely in Welsh to our residents. The only exceptions are probably the rubbish collection and street cleaning services, specifically in parts of Meirionnydd, where it is sometimes difficult to recruit staff for these roles. Although the positions have elementary linguistic levels, it can be challenging to fill them. ● The steps taken in relation to tendering etc. are set out in 2 above. However, there are some tenders that could not be provided in Welsh for the following reasons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Many tenders and contracts are technical and, as a result, are considered not suitable for translation. ○ Due to the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (which replaces the Official Journal of the European Union - OJEU), we are only allowed to advertise high value contracts in English (plans or large services over a certain price threshold). ○ Time – the team receives requests to tender at short notice and they are under pressure to publish the tender within a tight timetable which means there is no time to translate the documentation. ○ Cost - the cost of translating documentation can be costly. Therefore, we are dependent on the manager responsible for the budget being willing to pay for the translation work. ● Trying to discover the percentage of Department staff who meet the language designations of their jobs has proven to be challenging. We originally believed this was due to the limited access our manual workers, approximately 500 workers out of a total of 570 staff members, have to work computers and laptops.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therefore, we set about working with the Welsh Language Learning and Development Officer to discover other methods of gathering the information (see 4 below). • The response level has increased from 25% last year to 39% this year as a result of our interventions. However, it still remains the lowest response rate of all the Council's departments.
<p><u>Developing new opportunities</u></p>	<p>4. Do you have ideas for new ways we could be promoting the Welsh language within the county's communities - either in your own services or by working with others?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is explained in 3 above that finding the percentage of Department staff who meet the language designations of their jobs has been challenging. To try to overcome this, the Department worked closely with Sïon Elwyn Hughes, and latterly Llio Mai Dafydd, to try to find alternative ways of encouraging and facilitating the workforce to respond to the assessment. Our main solution was to simplify the online assessment so that it is more relevant to our manual workers and distribute it to each of them individually in the form of a hard copy questionnaire with a letter from the Head of Department explaining the reason for collecting' the information. This was implemented and all employees had to sign that they had received it. It was hoped that this method would be successful and enable us to find out how many of our staff actually meet the language requirements of their jobs. However, unfortunately, it was not as successful as we had hoped. The return rate remained low despite the efforts of the manager, team leaders and administrative staff to encourage them to respond over a period of several months. • Moving forward, it may be possible to consider including the language questionnaire as part of the induction process for new staff. In addition, we can try to collect the data through the team leaders i.e. that they confirm if, in their opinion, the employee meets the language designations of their job or not. As the majority of our manual workers have now transferred to the Environment Department, we will work closely with their officers to implement different solutions to the advantage of both of us.

Agenda Item 8

MEETING	Language Committee
DATE	10 October 2022
TITLE	Welsh Language Promotion Plan: Finance Department
PURPOSE	To present information about the Department's contribution to the Language Policy
AUTHOR	Dewi Morgan, Head of Finance

Background

1. This report has been prepared to present information to the Language Committee on the contribution of the Finance Department to the Language Policy.
2. The Council's Language Policy is embedded in all the Department's work, and this report highlights the opportunities that are available to improve the provision for our residents, whilst also acknowledging the challenges facing the area of work.

The Language of the Finance Department's Jobs and Staff

3. Following recent work to review the linguistic requirements of all the Department's posts, identify the language designations of the posts, and then to assess the language of the Department's staff, it can be reported that 218 of the Department's staff (which is 96%) have now submitted a self-assessment, and 216 of those (99%) reach the language designations of their posts.
4. Maintaining the ability to offer our services through the medium of Welsh is ongoing, and we consider the language requirements of staff in our day-to-day work, when recruiting and appointing, inducting and conducting ongoing appraisal conversations. We offer support to staff to develop their language skills, so that they can provide the best service to the people of Gwynedd in Welsh and maintain our high standards in the context of the language.

Conclusion

5. The Finance Department's services produce a variety of letters, leaflets, forms, posters, websites and bilingual systems, with Welsh as the default language. Furthermore, the Department aims to achieve the 'Cymraeg Clir' standard, so that Welsh customers do not feel that our Welsh language documents are too difficult to understand and use.
6. With some specialist aspects of Finance and IT work, we are battling hard to reach the standard. However, if we fall short at times it is because of the technical nature of the issue at hand, not because of a lack of ambition or a lack of effort by the Department.

Committee Members' Questions

7. The following table has been prepared in order to present the Finance Department's responses to the questions and matters that the Language Committee members wish to discuss, with examples of the Department's services that I would like to highlight.

1. PROMOTING AND FACILITATING

How do we go beyond providing bilingually to increasing the opportunities for people to use the Welsh language in the community, to contribute to the national target of creating a million speakers, and to the Well-being goal of ensuring that the people of Gwynedd are "Able to live in a naturally Welsh speaking society"?

Question 1 - *Can you highlight any projects within your department that contribute to one of the Council's language strategy priorities, namely the Welsh Language Promotion Plan for Gwynedd?*

Response:

Overall Product Quality

Extensive work by the various services of the Finance Department contributes to the promotion of the Welsh language, with publications such as the Council's Statement of Accounts, the Pension Fund's Annual Report, and Taxation and Benefit forms setting the standard and are reference materials for other bodies to follow suit.

Microsoft Windows Language

The worldwide use of computers through the medium of English by businesses and individuals has conditioned users (even in Gwynedd) to familiarise themselves with English terms in various systems. Despite this, we encourage our users to work with the Welsh language installation on their computers.

The Council supplies computers on the Microsoft Windows platform for our officers, serving approximately 2,700 corporate users. These computers are received with an English language operating platform, which is the default standard for computers supplied in the UK. By now, internal steps are taken to adjust the settings when preparing the computers for our users, with each new computer being equipped with a Welsh language operating platform.

Since reporting to the Language Committee last year, the Council has decided that Welsh is the default setting on all Council computers. Although some services already display a clear willingness to transfer to Welsh, only around half of our users across the Council had voluntarily transferred their computer to Welsh. The result was a decision to force the change.

Language Designations Project

As detailed in the introduction above, only two Finance Department staff do not meet the language requirements of their posts. These officers are at foundation level, and there are further opportunities for them to develop their training should they wish. We are confident that progress can be reported soon.

Development of the Welsh language

Since the last report in October 2021, a Council Tax Revenue Assistant (who is one of the officers referred to above) has attended a Language Improvement course with “Dysgu Cymraeg”, dedicated to Gwynedd Council staff, between May and June 2022. Now that she has developed to foundation level, working for the Council has helped her learn and develop herself as an individual and gain confidence to use Welsh in the workplace.

“Buddy” scheme

The “Buddy” Scheme has been set up to support one of the aims of this project, which is to help Council staff reach the language designations of their jobs.

The purpose of the scheme is to give staff in the middle of training, or have just finished, the opportunity to use Welsh informally and ask for help in a comfortable position.

There is currently 1 member of Finance staff involved in the Scheme. This example is a Welsh learner, and work in the Taxation Service. She has joined the Buddy Scheme, and has been partnered with a Senior Accounting Assistant. This Scheme enables the officer to hold conversations in Welsh with a co-worker and also be aware that she has a "listening ear". This arrangement seems to work very effectively.

Welsh lessons

During January 2022 a Professional Trainee in the Department completed "Work Welsh " training, a week of online course held by Nant Gwrtheyrn. This training was organised jointly between the Welsh Language Learning and Development Officer and Canolfan Nant Gwrtheyrn.

Assessment Collection

Currently 11 members of staff have not submitted their self-assessment. The majority of the remaining staff are new members of staff, and work continues to collect the assessments.

Language Designations Forum

The purpose of this Forum is to share knowledge, good practice, learn from others, deal with barriers and opportunities that arise in the context of the language designations across the organisation.

These meetings take place quarterly for Teams. If any issue, question or comment needs to be raised in the forum, then the Department representative will take care of this.

There is an arrangement whereby all information that the Welsh Language Learning and Development Officer will share with the Department representative is cascaded to all Finance Department staff.

Finance Department Intranet

We have arrangements in place to update and transform the Department of Finance intranet. This work is co-ordinated by a Technical Lead (IT) and his Team.

Dafydd Orwig Prize

One member of Finance staff has been awarded the Dafydd Orwig prize for promoting and promoting the Welsh language in the workplace. She received this award while working in another department in the Council. I hope she can use her experiences/good practice in her new role in Finance.

2. OUTSOURCING WORK AND AWARDING THIRD PARTY CONTRACTS

How do we ensure that the quality of the bilingual service is maintained when outsourcing work and awarding contracts?

Question 2 - *If the department outsources work on contract, can you refer to any good practice, either when imposing conditions or when monitoring, in order to ensure compliance with the linguistic conditions?*

Response:

External Suppliers

When the Finance Department outsources work on contract, we ensure that a Welsh language service is offered to people within the county's communities, for example the customer service at Barclays Bank and the Post Office.

However, it should be noted the Department's disappointment that Barclays has closed branches within Gwynedd since the Department of Finance reported to the Language Committee in 2021. The Caernarfon and Porthmadog branches have already closed in early 2022, and the Dolgellau branch is also set to close.

It is not always possible to maintain a fully bilingual service with some specialist and technical services, due to the specialised nature of the market. However, staff always strive to operate internally through the Welsh language wherever possible. Where any information is publicly produced we ensure that it is bilingual from the outset.

For example, there was recently work with an external supplier to assist the department in distributing Cost of Living Support Scheme funds. Working closely with Council officers enabled all correspondence sent to Gwynedd residents for the scheme to be fully bilingual.

Collaboration across Wales

In some situations, e.g. The Wales Pension Partnership, national collaboration was chosen, rather than outsourcing to an external company. The inter-authority agreement of the 8 Welsh pension funds ensures that reports to the partnership's joint governance committee reflect Gwynedd's bilingual standards, and ensures an equal platform for the language beyond the county's boundaries.

There has been a similar situation with the WCCIS computer system (care service system) for supporting care cases of all kinds, provided nationally by an external supplier. The considerable input of Gwynedd Council's IT developers has enabled the system to provide as much as possible bilingually.

Gwynedd Council is also represented on the Welsh Government's Welsh Language Technology Board, which advises the Minister on establishing a "Welsh Language Technology Action Plan", and is part of the Welsh Government's Welsh 2050 strategy. The action plan has now been published, with Council representation continuing to assist the Government on these issues.

3. OPERATING BILINGUALLY

How do we succeed in implementing the requirements of the Welsh Language and Standards Policy?

Question 3 - *Are there any obstructions that prevent you as a department to offer a full service in Welsh?*

Response:

Virtual Translation -

It was reported to the Committee in October 2021 that a far-reaching change for holding meetings was quickly introduced at the end of March 2020. It was not possible to hold in-person meetings, and so we resorted to holding virtual meetings. *Microsoft Teams* is now widely used, working entirely flawlessly in Monolingual Welsh for internal Council meetings.

However, as external, democratic and interagency meetings were re-established, the need to provide simultaneous translation came along. *Microsoft Teams* was now the standard provision in the Council, and indeed was busy catching on across Wales, but unfortunately, provision for simultaneous translation was not part of the package.

Through collaboration between the translation, democratic and information technology services, simultaneous translation provision was delivered through the *Zoom* platform, it proved resilient, reliable, easy to use and very effective. This platform remains operational for any meeting requiring simultaneous translation provision.

Council democratic meetings remain virtual or hybrid, and our use of *Zoom* and the simultaneous translation provision allows us to broadcast a full programme of Council meetings live on our website.

4. DEVELOPING NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Question 4 - Do you have ideas about new ways we can use to promote the Welsh language in the county's communities - either in your own services or by collaborating with others?

Response:

Provision of computer to Gwynedd's Schools

A new Digital Learning Service was formed at the beginning of April to provide digital leadership and support to our Schools, including the roll-out of the Gwynedd Schools Digital Strategy.

New laptops have already been provisioned and introduced to all teachers, and the work to prepare a laptop to every secondary learner (Year 7-11) well underway, with Welsh being the default language in each occurrence. The Service is committed to review the language settings on legacy equipment with a vision that all end user devices are formatted with Welsh as the default language.

The Future

Over the next year the Finance Department will:

Hold initial discussions about working towards "Investors in People" accreditation; the element of this work that involves the Welsh language will be a substantial part of this task.

Over the last few months, as a Department we have started to work closely with the Welsh Language Learning and Development Officer. We will continue to strengthen this collaboration over the next year.

Agenda Item 9

MEETING	Language Committee
DATE	10 October 2022
TITLE	Overview of the Language Designations Project
PURPOSE	Present a summary of the project's work and the next steps.
AUTHOR	Llio Mai Dafydd

1 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide background on the Language Designations project and a summary of the work that has taken place so far. In addition, there will be information about the work in progress and the next steps. This is done to ensure that all members of the Language Committee are aware of the project's work.

2 Background

- 2.1 In 2015 the Language Committee decided to look at the procedure for recording the language skills of staff, in preparation for the arrival of the Language Standards in 2016 and in an effort to get a better understanding of the exact skill level of staff, rather than just being able to speak Welsh or not.
- 2.2 In January 2016 a further decision was made to review the language requirements and conditions of the Council's jobs in order to set realistic requirements alongside the duties of the post. For example:
- **Teacher:** The requirements were kept at the highest level due to the nature of the job.
 - **Leisure Assistant:** The speaking and listening requirements were kept high to reflect the importance of these skills in the job but the writing requirements were reduced as a leisure assistant does not need to write reports, minutes etc.
- 2.3 In 2017 the second part of the project began, which was to record the language skills of staff and ensure that support was available to current members of staff either to maintain the standard of their Welsh skills or to meet the language requirements of their job if there was a gap.
- 2.4 We started by running a pilot with the Gwynedd Consultancy department at the end of 2017. This was partly due to the Department's needs, and also due to their desire to work together. One of the most important lessons learned from the pilot is the importance of meeting Department Heads and Managers, and including them in the process from the very beginning. In addition to that, the department and managers taking ownership of the work was vitally important to the success of the project.
- 2.5 A Project Board was established to keep track of the work. As the project required looking at jobs (assessing needs and the recruitment process), people (appointing and assessing skills) and training, it was decided that the Project Board would include representatives from different services who

would contribute towards these elements, e.g. the Human Resources service and the Support service.

3 Project overview

- 3.1 From the end of 2018, the implementation of the project began with the other main departments of the Council. This was done by contacting Department Heads and Managers.
- 3.2 In addition to the Council's main departments, work has also been done to collect language assessments and to develop the language skills of Byw'n lach staff. Although no specific effort has been made to implement the project with the organizations hosted by Gwynedd Council, e.g. North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agent, North Wales Economic Ambition Board and GwE, they can also complete the language self-assessment questionnaire, and support is available to them on request. Work has also taken place to collect language assessments from School staff, which will receive further attention as a result of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.
- 3.3. In order to facilitate the work of gathering information about staff language skills, the language self-assessment questionnaire was developed and started to be used from 2019 onwards. The questionnaire asks an individual to score their ability to do a variety of tasks through the medium of Welsh. Based on the answers, the questionnaire provides a language level at the end. It is also an opportunity for staff to note their confidence in using the Welsh language, to note if there is anything the Council can do to assist them to use more Welsh in their work, and gives them the opportunity to note any need for training.

The questionnaire is located on the Council's Self-Service system, and a version on an external site is available for those who do not have access to the Self-Service system.

It is recognized that it's a challenge to ensure that some groups of frontline staff complete the language self-assessment questionnaire. In order to get an idea of their language skills, managers are asked to indicate whether the members of staff meet the job's language designations or not.

- 3.4 All types of support, including internal Gloywi laith courses, external learning courses, intensive courses, online courses and apps and websites, are continuously offered to staff to improve or maintain their Welsh skills.
- 3.5 In order to offer aftercare to training recipients, and to support speakers who lack confidence or who want to improve their Welsh through a method other than the classroom, the **Welsh Friends Scheme** was established in March 2019. This Scheme pairs a member of staff confident in their Welsh with a member of staff who wants to develop their language skills.

- 3.6 Together with staff from the Information Technology service, a system was developed in order to keep the information about staff's language skills. This system gives the ability to create various reports e.g. A report of individuals who do not have a language assessment, a report for one service only.
- 3.7 A process was established to ensure that departments regularly receive information about the language levels of their staff, the number who do not meet the language designations of their jobs and the number who have or are attending language training. Department Heads now receive a report every 3 or 6 months.

This will also be a means of ensuring the continuity of the work after the project has ended.

- 3.8 The internal Language Site was developed as a central place to share information about language training, about useful resources and about the project itself, including frequently asked questions and useful information for managers.
- 3.9 A Language Designation Forum was established which includes a representative from each of the Council's main departments. The Forum meets every 3 months and offers the opportunity to discuss any challenges that have arisen in relation to the Welsh language, to share good practice and to share information about new opportunities to develop language skills.
- 3.10 Here is the latest project data for the Council's main departments (*correct on 23 September 2022 and excluding Schools*):

Total staff of the Council's main departments: **3,936**
Number of staff who have completed the language self-assessment: **2,717 (69%)**
Number of staff who have received some form of language assessment: **2,945 (75%)**
Number of staff remaining without a language assessment: **991 (25%)**
Number of staff who meet the language designations of their jobs: **2,687 (91%)**
Number of staff who do not meet the language designations of their jobs: **258 (9%)**
Number of staff who are higher than the language designations of their job: **1,969 (72%)**

Since the start of the project in 2017 over **200** members of staff have attended language training, either to learn Welsh or to further develop their skills.

Of the 258 who do not meet the language designations of their jobs, **47** have received language training to date.

4 Next steps

- 4.1 During the Performance Monitoring meeting of the Corporate Support department in June 2022, it was decided that the formal project had come to an end and that it was transferring to be part of day-to-day work, but that does not mean that the work of assessing and supporting staff will come to an end.

- 4.2 The work of gathering information about staff language skills will continue, as well as the work of offering support to develop staff language skills.
- 4.3 Meetings will be organized with Department Heads in order to officially close the project, to update them on the latest developments and remind them of their responsibilities and the support available to staff.
- 4.4 As the assessment procedure has been established, the focus will now shift to look at the support and training that is offered to develop the language skills of the workforce. It will be necessary to prioritize frontline services to contact regarding language training and specific attention will be given to members of staff who do not currently meet the language designations of their jobs.

This may mean commissioning specific courses for members of the Council's staff.

- 4.5 There will be collaboration with the Education department in order to collect language assessments from School staff as part of the work of the Welsh Language in Education Strategic Plan, which is operational from September 2022.
- 4.6 It will be necessary to ensure that adequate monitoring arrangements are in place, and that the individual departments understand their responsibilities in order to ensure the continuity of the project.

The Language Designation Forum will continue to meet to ensure this and we are intending to look at additional ways of supporting teams to maintain Welsh as their working language and to integrate learners.

5 What we seek from the Language Committee

- 5.1 We welcome comments or questions from the Language Committee on the work of the project as well as recommendations and suggestions for the next steps.