



Complete Agenda

Democratic Service
Swyddfa'r Cyngor
CAERNARFON
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH

Meeting

LANGUAGE COMMITTEE

Date and Time

10.00 am, TUESDAY, 24TH OCTOBER, 2023

Location

Virtual Meeting

Contact Point

Rhodri Jones

01286 679256

rhodrijones1@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

LANGUAGE COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP (15)

Plaid Cymru (10)

Councillors

Menna Baines
Alan Jones Evans
Olaf Cai Larsen
Llio Elenid Owen
Elfed Williams

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

Aelodau Ex-officio / Ex-officio Members

Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council

Other Invited Member

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

A G E N D A

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

4 - 9

The Chairman shall propose that the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 27.06.2023 be signed as a true record (attached).

5. WELSH LANGUAGE PROMOTION PLAN: ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

10 - 15

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

6. WELSH LANGUAGE PROMOTION PLAN: FINANCE DEPARTMENT

16 - 21

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

7. DRAFT PROMOTION PLAN MONITORING REPORT 2018-2023

22 - 45

To provide an overview of the monitoring work done in regards to the implementation of the Council's language strategy – the Welsh Language Promotion Plan for Gwynedd 2018-2023.

LANGUAGE COMMITTEE: MONDAY, 27 JUNE 2023

PRESENT:

Councillors:

Elfed Wyn ap Elwyn, Alan Jones Evans, Jina Gwyrfai, Olaf Cai Larsen, Gwynfor Owen, Llio Elenid Owen, Sasha Williams, Elfed Williams, Richard Glyn Roberts, Meryl Roberts and Gruffydd Williams

Officers: Llywela Haf Owain (Senior Language and Scrutiny Adviser), Gwenllian Mair Williams (Language Adviser), Llio Mai Dafydd and Bet Huws (Welsh Language Learning and Development Officers) and Rhodri Jones (Democracy Services Officer).

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor Menna Trenholme (Cabinet Member for Corporate Support).

Item 7: Alun Gwilym Williams (Senior Business Manager, Adults, Health and Well-being Department)

Item 8: Marian Parry Hughes (Head of Children and Supporting Families Department)

Item 9: Nia Wyn Vaughan (Senior Research and Analytics Officer)

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Resolved to elect Councillor Elfed Wyn ab Elwyn as chair of the Welsh Language Committee for the year 2023/24.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Resolved to elect Councillor Llio Elenid Owen as Vice-chair of the Welsh Language Committee for the year 2023/24.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Eirwyn Williams and Menna Baines.

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 meeting of this committee held on 25 April 2023 as a true record.

7. LANGUAGE POLICY AND WELSH LANGUAGE PROMOTION ACTIVITIES - REPORT OF THE ADULTS, HEALTH AND WELL-BEING DEPARTMENT.

The report was presented by the Senior Business Manager, Adults, Health and Well-being Department and briefly drew attention to the following main points:

It was explained that technological systems were being updated to correspond to the needs of the County's residents. An example was shared of updated Telecare technology, linking individuals with call centres to receive support by pushing a button on a specific bracelet or pendant. It was noted that over 1500 people currently used this equipment in Gwynedd.

It was detailed that this service had been provided through the medium of English in the past, but the Department was eager to offer this provision in Welsh and in Gwynedd's local dialect. It was explained that the department was trying to secure this development by upgrading all the equipment to becoming digital by 2025, and to commission companies to assist with the development of the linguistic requirements.

It was reported that the 'More than just Words' group had been established for a year, and was chaired by Cyngor Gwynedd's Statutory Director of Social Services. It was explained that the group set performance measures for the Department in order to receive confirmation that they reached their linguistic targets.

It was explained that searches were being carried out on the care service's digital system (WCCIS) to ascertain how many individuals wished to receive care through the medium of Welsh and how many social workers in the department were able to offer the service in Welsh. This would indicate whether the Department was meeting the requirements of residents who needed care. It was confirmed that the vast majority of social workers succeeded in providing the service in Welsh.

Members were reminded that services were offered to individuals in Welsh, and that staff provided the active offer. It was noted that patients needed to request care through the medium of English if they wished to do so. It was confirmed that the Department would remind the workers of this arrangement.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and offer observations. In response to the question, it was explained that the Department was collaborating with a number of external agencies and bodies and that all efforts were being made to ensure that the Welsh language was a priority for all the partners in addition to the provision of care to individuals in the language in which they were most comfortable.

Gratitude was expressed for the report.

RESOLVED

To accept the report and note the observations received.

8. LANGUAGE POLICY AND WELSH LANGUAGE PROMOTION ACTIVITIES - CHILDREN AND SUPPORTING FAMILIES DEPARTMENT

The report was presented by the Head of the Children and Supporting Families Department, and briefly drew attention to the following main points:

- It was confirmed that the Early Years Service collaborated with members of CWLWM (5 lead childcare organisations in Wales) to promote the Welsh language across care settings in Gwynedd.
- It was explained that "Cynllun Croesi'r Bont" run by Mudiad Meithrin was ongoing, with its purpose being Welsh language immersion within nursery groups and classes.
- It was noted that the Early Years Service offered grants of £100 to new private childminders who were non-Welsh speakers to assist with buying Welsh language resources.
- It was explained that the department provided support for parents to learn Welsh through Mudiad Meithrin's online 'clwb cwtsh' sessions, and the 'Friends' courses through the medium of Welsh with the support of the Family Support Team, the Trobwynt Team and the Youth Service.
- It was ensured that linguistic needs were a factor in determining matters such as the contents of the care packages and the support for vulnerable children, care settings and fostering/adoption. It was explained that some children under the Department's care were moved to an out-of-county area due to safeguarding needs, but it was confirmed that the Social Worker would continue to address the child's language needs through visits and resources.
- It was reported that there were 55 Nursery Education providers in Gwynedd that received Early Years Teacher support from the Department. They provided Welsh language nursery education for 10 hours a week for 3-year-old children in order to immerse them in the language and introduce them to the language as the language of education.
- There was a Network of Youth Service Support Workers providing informal learning opportunities and accreditations for young people through the medium of Welsh. This was a means of bridging school activities with social activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award, with all elements of the award now available in Welsh via a new app.
- It was confirmed that all the 'Effective Child Protection' programme materials had been developed in Welsh and English for regional and national use.
- It was noted that a group of foster carers from Gwynedd had created a video as part of the national Foster Wales fostering campaign. It was noted that the video was presented in Welsh with English subtitles and was frequently shared on social media to attract people to consider fostering.
- The Department has led on the establishing an Activities and Play Framework for children, young people and families across the Council's departments. 24 activity providers had been approved on the framework and were able to provide Welsh-medium play opportunities.
- It was a source of pride that over 50 local organisations had come together recently to offer well-being activities for young people as part of the Gwynedd Young People Well-being Week.
- The Department had been collaborating with the Council's Well-being Team to develop the 'Ai Di' App as a convenient way for young carers to keep in touch with their school, and to use it in the community to receive discounts on activities and services. It was explained that this app had recently received national praise as it met the needs of young carers.
- An update was provided, confirming that 69% of the department's staff had completed the language self-assessment. A number of the staff who had not completed the self-assessment were either casual workers or staff with no access to a computer.
- It was confirmed that 93.8% of the department's staff met the language designations of their post. It was explained that 21 members of staff did not meet the language designation of their job, and that three of those staff were currently attending language training.

- It was acknowledged that the difficulties in recruiting qualified social workers was a cause of concern for the Department. It was confirmed that the department had developed a Workforce Plan to reduce the likelihood of having to recruit social workers who were non-Welsh speakers or use non-Welsh speaking agency workers. It was noted that this Workforce Plan had already received the approval of the Cabinet and the Care Scrutiny Committee.
- It was noted that collaboration through the medium of Welsh with partners was a challenge that faced the Department. This included national, regional and local meetings as a number of the partners did not offer translation provision at virtual meetings. It was emphasised that the Department held the majority of its meetings bilingually and the Council's Translation Unit was thanked for collaborating so effectively with the Department.
- It was explained that young people who received a custodial sentence had been added to the Department's risk register. This was due to the fact that the Department had no control over the sentence location and these individuals could lose all ties with their families, language and culture during this period. A relevant example was shared, and it was confirmed that the department continued to provide support through the medium of Welsh throughout the period of the sentence, with the assistance of the Youth Justice Service and Social Workers.
- It was highlighted that finding suitable care settings for children was challenging and it was noted that the department had received a complaint from one young person as the staff responsible for their care were non-Welsh speakers. It was emphasised that the Department made every effort to place individuals in suitable care settings with regard to all aspects.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and offer observations. During the discussion, the following matters were raised:

- It was explained that Flying Start areas had been restricted to specific locations in the past as they were funded by the Welsh Government. By now, the need for the service had been demonstrated in other areas within Gwynedd and the scheme had been extended. It was confirmed that there were plans to further extend the scheme in the future as it provided children and parents with important support and childcare provision for 12.5 hours per week for two-year-old children.
- The news that the Department's recruitment situation had improved recently was welcomed as there were currently no vacant posts in the Department. The Department has worked on a number of projects and has worked on a number of methods of attracting such as collaborating with Bangor University and providing work placements for nine MA pupils. It was explained that seven of those pupils had succeeded in gaining a job at the end of their work experience and all of them were Welsh speakers.

Gratitude was expressed for the report.

RESOLVED

To accept the report and note the observations received.

9. CYNGOR GWYNEDD 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:

It was explained that there was a statutory requirement to publish an annual report on its compliance with the language standards in accordance with Section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. It was noted that this report had to be published by 30 May 2023.

It was confirmed that the following figures had been included within the report:

- 99.4% of Council staff had some degree of Welsh language skills.
- 93% of staff reached the Foundation level or higher, and so could speak Welsh.
- 833 job adverts had been published over the year where Welsh language skills were essential.
- A new Welsh Language Policy had been approved and published, with supplementary policies.
- Specific steps to strengthen and improve compliance regarding consultation on policy decisions.
- A review of IT systems had begun, to ensure that they complied with the Policy in respect of using Welsh place names and the Standards in relation to replying to correspondence in Welsh or bilingually.

Attention was drawn to some of the challenges that the Language and Scrutiny Unit would be addressing during the year in order to improve the bilingual provision and the Welsh active offer. It was noted that these challenges included:

- Raising staff awareness about the exact requirements of the language standards. It was considered that the Council should share this information with staff in creative ways in order to confirm that everyone was aware of the requirements.
- There had been a small reduction over recent years in the number of staff who chose to complete courses through the medium of Welsh. It was emphasised that the unit intended to hold discussions with the Learning and Development Team to consider how they could assist.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and offer observations. During the discussion, the following matters were raised:

- It was confirmed that the Council had not advertised any posts that did not note the necessary linguistic skills to deliver the post. It was explained that the language designation requirements varied from post to post, in accordance with the roles delivered within those posts.
- It was explained that individuals on the Welsh Foundation level were confident in speaking the language and were able to communicate effectively. Some posts sought individuals with Higher level skills, although this varied between roles. Members were reminded that the Council had an effective procedure to support workers to learn Welsh and these arrangements had been used to develop the language skills of any staff members who required support.

Gratitude was expressed for the report.

RESOLVED

- **To accept the report and note the observations received.**
- **Recommend the Cabinet Member to publish the report by the deadline (30 June 2023).**

10. FINDINGS OF THE CONSULTATION ON THE GWYNEDD LANGUAGE STRATEGY 2023.

The Language Adviser presented the report. She referred briefly to the following main points:

Members were reminded that the Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language Measure) (Wales) 2011, placed a requirement upon the Council to produce a five-year strategy noting how the Council intended to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language within the county. It was noted that the Council should explain how these actions would contribute to the national Welsh 2050 objective to increase the number of Welsh speakers.

It was explained that the period of the existing promotion strategy would end in October 2023. It was noted that the review period had commenced since the beginning of 2023 and that discussion sessions had been held with Cabinet members, Language Committee members and members of the Gwynedd Language Forum, in order to gain their input, prior to a consultation period on the draft strategy between 17 April and 21 May 2023.

It was reported that 159 electronic responses and one letter had been received by the service. There was a good cross-section from all parts of the County, with the majority of respondents being individuals between 35 and 74 years old. It was confirmed that there were only three responses from people under the age of 34, and it was emphasised that the service carefully considered how they would gather the views of this group within the community in the future.

It was explained that 72.3% of the respondents agreed with the intention to focus on increasing opportunities for people to use the Welsh language. This was a common theme in a number of responses in order to enable people to increase confidence when speaking Welsh.

It was confirmed that consideration would be given to making changes or adaptations to the final strategy in order to respond to some of the comments in the consultation. Members were informed that the final draft would be shared with internal departments in order to identify work streams that would address the objectives and produce an initial work programme.

It was hoped to submit the final draft of the strategy to the Cabinet in October 2023.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and offer observations. During the discussion, the following matter was raised:

- The number of responses to the consultation were low, probably as the Council had a number of other consultations underway at the same time. It was agreed that there was a need to consider new methods of sharing information, to ensure that the feedback received was a fair reflection of the views of the public, although it was acknowledged that there were currently challenges in relation to holding consultations – such as the challenge of using social media and the challenge of receiving responses from a range of different ages.
- It was confirmed that the service had not yet researched the future impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on the Welsh language. It was emphasised that this technology had developed quickly and that research would be undertaken during the lifespan of this strategy.
- It was emphasised that the Council had a duty to consider all the responses to the consultation. It was agreed that only a minority of the responses were negative, but it was noted that officers had to be aware of these observations when proceeding to produce a final draft.

Gratitude was expressed for the report.

RESOLVED

To accept the report, and the information presented in Appendix 1, and to note the observations received.

The meeting commenced at 10.00am and concluded at 11.15am.

CHAIR

MEETING	Language Committee
DATE	24 October 2023
TITLE	Report of the Environment Department
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. The aim of this report is to present information to the Language Committee about the Environment Department's contribution to the Language Policy.
- 1.2. The Environment Department includes a range of services across the fields of Waste and Recycling, Transport, Planning and Public Protection.
- 1.3. The nature of these services means that staff come into contact regularly with members of the public, councillors, other Council staff, and other authorities and external partners.
- 1.4. As a Department, every effort is made to ensure that the services are provided in the customer's preferred language, and there is effort by the Department's officers to promote the use of the Welsh language through their work.
- 1.5. In the report we will highlight the work that is taking place across the Department to support and promote the language, the opportunities that are available to improve the provision for our residents, but also recognising the challenges faced.

2. RESPONSE TO THE COMMITTEE'S QUESTIONS

Question 1. Promoting and advancing

How does your department go beyond offering bilingual services and contributes to the objectives of the county's language strategy (what activities and projects have been carried out during the past year which raise the status of the Welsh language and ensure opportunities for people to use Welsh in the community)?

The Council's language strategy sets priorities for promoting the Welsh language in five areas:

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

The current strategy can be viewed here:
(<https://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/cy/Cyngor/Dogfennau-Cyngor/Strategaethau-a-pholisiau/Cynllun-iaith/Cynllun-Hybu'r-Gymraeg-yng-Ngwynedd-2018-2023.pdf>)

Planning Policy, Landscape and Nature

The work of the Planning Policy Team revolves mainly around preparing, monitoring, reviewing and revising the Joint Local Development Plan (2011-26) including the preparation of Supplementary Planning Guidance. Consideration of the Welsh language has been central to the process of preparing the Plan which incorporates planning policy PS1 that deals specifically with the Welsh language and culture.

The Supplementary Planning Guidance (Maintaining and creating distinctive and sustainable communities) also contains 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 area. The Team will continue to prioritise this key area when preparing the New Local Development Plan for Gwynedd.

Much of the officers' work in the area of Landscape and Nature means that they work closely with the public, and facilitating access to our natural environment is an integral part of their work. In that respect, Officers of the Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau Special Area of Conservation have developed a pamphlet containing different walks as part of a seagrass project in the area. As well as preparing material about the walks and the project, the officers have also been leading walks with learners, giving them the opportunity to practise their Welsh and learn new words and terms.

This team has also led a partnership to develop a bilingual education pack titled 'Tir a Môr' for primary schools. The pack offers a quality resource that can be used with a variety of worksheets which means that schools can continue with studies in the classroom, and it also enable teachers to hold their own sessions.

Biodiversity officers carry out regular work to encourage interest and promote nature. A nature discovery day was held jointly with several partners in the Morfa Madryn nature reserve near Llanfairfechan, and this was an opportunity to hold a variety of activities with families.

In Parc y Dre in Caernarfon, with funding through the Local Nature partnership, the team has installed signposts that state the names of trees in Welsh, English and Latin in this historical park. As an extension of the efforts to encourage the use of Welsh names for trees and plants, an information leaflet was produced which stated the names for various species, and this leaflet was promoted on the Council's stall in the Llŷn and Eifionydd National Eisteddfod.

As part of the work of promoting our public green habitats, officers worked with Local Nature Partnerships in Wales to ensure language consistency and accuracy between different regions when promoting the 'It's for Them' stakeholder toolkit. The information in this pack was used to create the promotion signs and to share the message as part of the Ymylon Gwyllt Gwynedd programme.

Planning

When dealing with any planning application, decisions are made in accordance with the Joint Local Development Plan, which, as outlined above, contains a specific policy on the Welsh language and a Supplementary Planning Guidance that provides detailed guidance on how to implement the policy.

By operating in this way, the Planning Service contributes to the promotion of the Welsh language in the area, ensuring that applications give consideration to the Welsh language in accordance with the Policy and guidance, highlighting the cultural significance of the language, as well as promoting for the language to be made visible in developments (e.g. signs). Although we have no power over the contents of signs, officers always try to contact applicants to try to secure Welsh-language signs.

The Service has also contributed to the Council's project on Protecting Place Names. Through this, the service has reviewed planning conditions and added a planning condition for any new housing developments to ensure a Welsh name for the house or the estate. This helps the Building Control Service when dealing with formal applications to name new houses and streets.

Building Control

The Service has responsibility for managing the naming of streets and the naming and numbering of properties, and it has a statutory duty to ensure that any new name or revisions to the names of streets and properties are allocated logically and consistently.

Whilst it does not have enforcement powers to reject an application unless there is duplication or the name is inappropriate, the Building Control Service takes a proactive approach to highlight the historical and cultural significance of Welsh place names.

The latest statistics (2022/23) show that 76 applications were made to change a property's name, with 95% of the names that were registered through Royal Mail being Welsh names. It is noted that where applicants applied to change a name from Welsh to English, there were connections with the business name(s). It is very encouraging that of the 76 applications, 22 owners changed back from English names to Welsh names, with many appreciating the original historical naming (others changed from one Welsh name to another or put a name on the property for the first time, and chose to do so in Welsh).

Within this field of work, Cadw have commissioned language advisers to conduct research to obtain a better understanding of the changes around Welsh place names, and the Building Control Service has shared experiences with them. This

research will contribute to the consideration of a range of legislative and non-legislative options that are available to protect place names if and where they are identified as names that are under threat of being changed; and will strengthen the evidence base on changing place names.

Public Protection

The Food Safety and Trading Standards Services support and participate in national campaigns to promote important messages to the public. This includes messages on the Council's social media accounts.

When investigations are undertaken by the Public Protection Services' officers, communication and liaison is undertaken in the customer's chosen language, and they highlight the fact that the Council welcomes Welsh-medium communication.

Transport and Road Safety

As part of the 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. Any documents or messages that are displayed on buses and bus shelters are fully bilingual.

The Road Safety team holds activities in schools and in the community, with the vast majority of face-to-face promotion taking place through the medium of Welsh, unless a member of public's preferred language requires them to communicate in English. The Team also promotes its work bilingually on websites and social media.

Parking and Street Works

The Service offers bilingual methods of payment in the county's car parks through the pay and display machines or through a mobile phone app. In terms of the street works aspect, obviously all the signs that are installed on parts of the highway are bilingual, with the Welsh displayed first.

Waste and Recycling

Regular work takes place in this field to promote recycling services and encourage residents to make the most of the methods that are available to recycle materials. All the information and publicity material produced is bilingual, with priority given to the Welsh language.

Officers attend events to promote these services and they communicate and present in Welsh unless the residents' preferred language requires them to discuss bilingually or in English.

Every effort is made to capitalise on every opportunity to promote the services and encourage residents to reduce waste, and there was a good example of this in a presentation about making the most of the food you have, where a promotion session was held with a local cook during the National Eisteddfod.

The promotional material produced ensures the use of clear Welsh, and all the internal messages for the workforce are provided bilingually, with priority given to the Welsh language.

Question 2. Policy and Standards Matters

- i. Staff language skills – the number of Welsh speakers and learners within the department (latest Language Designations data).
- ii. Barriers – are there any barriers to your ability as a department to offer a full service in Welsh (i.e. act on the requirements of the Language Policy and Welsh Language Standards)?
- iii. Compliments and Complaints – provide information on any compliments or complaints that the department has received during the year about Welsh/bilingual services.

i. Staff language skills

The Environment Department employs 345 members of staff, and the most recent overview report shows that 91% of the Department's staff who have completed a language self-assessment or who have been assessed by their line manager, meet the language designations of their posts. This is consistent with staff language levels across the Council.

It is important to note that the fact that a member of staff does not meet the language requirements does not mean that they are unable to offer a Welsh-medium service to the customer, and the Department promotes any opportunities for staff to attend training to develop skills or refine their language skills.

However, it should be noted that a significant number of the Waste Service's workforce do not have a language designation assessment. This follows a pattern that was seen before the waste services transferred to the Environment Department, and we note that efforts were made by the Highways Department previously to ensure that language assessments were being completed. Efforts are continuing to ensure that assessments are undertaken in order to understand staff language skills across the Department.

The most recent overview report shows that 49 staff in the Waste services have been assessed, but there are 111 members of staff without an assessment. This is clearly a challenge, and we recognise that further work must be carried out to ensure that assessments are completed, and there is a request for line managers to assist with the work of conducting assessments over the next period.

ii. Barriers

There have been recruitment challenges in some specialist fields including Planning and Public Protection, in terms of the required qualifications and the ability to communicate in Welsh. This has been true within Planning, where the recruitment of qualified Planners who are able to speak Welsh can be difficult, but the ability to communicate fluently through the medium of Welsh is essential in a service that deals regularly with the public.

Nevertheless, it is pleasing to be able to report that the Planning Service has appointed two professional trainees for a period of three years in recent months. This offers an opportunity to train officers and ensure the succession of the service in future, where we will have officers who will be able to offer a Welsh-medium service to the residents of Gwynedd in future.

Three trainees have also been appointed to the Public Protection services since the report that was submitted to the Language Committee last year, with one trainee working in each area of Public Protection which are Food and Safety; Environment and Licensing; and Trading Standards. These trainees started in post a few months ago, with the three individuals having the opportunity to gain specialist professional skills through the medium of Welsh.

iii. Compliments and Complaints

The answer to question 1 outlines the range of areas where the Department's services are working to support and promote the language. Many of these efforts that were highlighted in activities during the National Eisteddfod this year have been praised and received positive feedback.

With regard to complaints, the Planning Service has dealt with some comments that have been raised due to the fact that officers' reports on applications are prepared only in Welsh. But applicants accept that this is the situation, and that a translation can be provided when this is requested.

Concerns have been presented about place names in road closure notices and the fact that English names have been included alongside the Welsh. In such cases, there is a tendency to include all the names that are used for a street or location (both Welsh and English), to ensure that the notice is understood by and inclusive for all road users. But in order to address the concerns raised, the matter is being considered by the Legal Service.

Question 3. Development Opportunities

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?

With advancements in the field of vehicle charging, officers from the Traffic team are working to ensure that external providers ensure that this new technology can be used through the medium of Welsh. By developing a network of charging machines on Council land, we are adopting new terminology in Welsh when referring to technical elements in an attempt to encourage the public to use the Welsh terms, such as 'gwefru' (charging), 'gwefru chwim' (fast charging) etc.

Positive work is happening to promote opportunities to develop staff confidence to use and develop their Welsh skills, and work takes place to promote any successes internally through the Staff Intranet and the Gair o Gyngor magazine. Publicly highlighting the efforts of Council staff in this field would be a way of emphasising that we are keen to support staff development and could encourage new speakers or people who do not have confidence in their Welsh skills that the

Council is an employer that supports the workforce to develop skills and confidence in their Welsh language.

Agenda Item 6

MEETING	Language Committee
DATE	24 October 2023
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 Finance Department's contribution to the Language Policy.
2. The Council's Language Policy is embedded in all of the Department's work, and this report highlights the opportunities available to improve provision for our residents, while also recognising the challenges facing the area of work.
3. The Finance Department's services produce a range of letters, leaflets, forms, posters, websites and bilingual systems, with Welsh as the default language. Furthermore, the Department aims to achieve a 'Clear Welsh' standard, so that Welsh customers do not feel that our Welsh documents are too difficult to understand and use.

<p>The matter that members would like to discuss:</p> <p><u>Language promotion</u></p> <p>How does your department go beyond to offer services bilingually and to contribute to the objectives of the county's language strategy (what activities and projects have been undertaken during the last year to raise the status of the Welsh language and ensure opportunities for people to use Welsh in the community)?</p> <p>The Council's language strategy sets priorities for promoting the Welsh language in five areas :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The language of the family, 2. The language of learning, 3. The language of work and service, 4. Community language 5. Research and Technology 	<p><u>The language of Microsoft Windows</u></p> <p>Global use of computers through the medium of English by businesses and individuals has conditioned consumers (even in Gwynedd) to familiarise themselves with English terms in various systems. Despite that, we encourage our users to work with the Welsh settings on our computers.</p> <p>The Council supplies PCs on the "Microsoft Windows" platform for our officers, serving approximately 2,700 corporate users. These computers are received with an English operating platform, which is the default standard for computers supplied in the UK. Internal steps while preparing the computers for our users now customize the installation, with each new computer being prepared with an operating platform in the Welsh language. Welsh is the default setting on all Council computers.</p> <p><u>Banking Agreement</u></p> <p>When the Finance Department outsources work on contract, we ensure that a service in Welsh is offered to people within the communities of the county, for example the customer service at Barclays Bank and the Post Office.</p> <p>However, it should be noted the Department's disappointment that Barclays has closed branches over the past two years in Gwynedd. The Caernarfon and Porthmadog branches closed in February 2022, the Dolgellau branch before the end of 2022 and it has now been announced that the Pwllheli branch is closing in November 2023. There will then be only one branch left in Gwynedd, the Bangor branch. The Finance Department will begin the process of tendering for banking services shortly as the agreement expires in September 2024.</p> <p><u>Specialist suppliers</u></p> <p>This is still not possible to maintain a fully bilingual relationship with some specialist and technical services, due to the specialised nature of the market. However, staff always strive to operate in-house through Welsh wherever possible. Where any information is produced publicly, we ensure it is bilingual from the outset.</p>
---	--

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's representative will take care of this.

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

Finance Department Intranet


We have arrangements in place to update and transform the Finance Department intranet. This work is co-ordinated by Technical Lead (IT) and Its None. The intranet will exist in Welsh only.

Pension Fund Stand – Boduan National Eisteddfod

The Pension Fund had a Stand at the National Eisteddfod this year. This was a great opportunity to meet a large number of fund members and help them better understand their pension, and provide them with support to create an online "My Pension" account or complete relevant forms.

Collaborations and Partnerships

The Council has a leading role in several regional partnerships. A number of Finance Department services have been centrally involved in establishing the governance of these partnerships, for example the Corporate Joint Committee (CBC) for north Wales, in addition to the work already undertaken in assisting the establishment of the North Wales Ambition Board. We believe that input in the finance area into these developments means that the arrangements, including presentations and documentation in the field of finance are prepared and delivered in Welsh and English on an equal basis. Gwynedd's ability to deliver technical and specialist issues in both English and Welsh means that we are able to provide certainty and confidence in achieving these objectives.

	<p><u>New pension fund logo</u></p> <p>In preparing marketing materials for the Eisteddfod it was decided to have a new logo for the Pension Fund as the previous logo was outdated. A graphic designer from the Finance Department designed it for us bilingually.</p> 
<p><u>Policy and Standards Issues</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Staff language skills – number of Welsh speakers and learners within the department (latest data Language Designations). ii. Barriers - are there any barriers to your ability as a department to offer a full service in Welsh (i.e. act on the requirements of the Welsh Language Policy and Standards)? iii. Praise and Complaints – please provide information about any praise or complaints the department has received during the year about Welsh/bilingual services. 	<p><u>Staff Language Skills</u></p> <p>Following recent work to review the language requirements of all Department posts, identify the posts’ language designations, and then to assess the language of Department staff, we can report that 220 Department staff (representing 98.18%) have now submitted a self-assessment, and 214 of those (99.07%) are reaching their job language designations.</p> <p><u>Obstacles</u></p> <p>Maintaining the ability to offer our services through the medium of Welsh is ongoing work, and we consider staff language requirements in our daily work, whilst recruiting and appointing, induction and conducting ongoing evaluation conversations. We offer support to staff to develop their language skills, so that they can give the best service to the people of Gwynedd in Welsh and keep a high standard in the context of the language.</p> <p><u>Praise and Complaints</u></p> <p>In May 2023 the Council received the final report of a Standards enforcement investigation: Report and decision notice from the Welsh Language Commissioner. The Commissioner had carried out an investigation in accordance with section 73 and section 74 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 following a complaint from a member of the public. The complainant claimed she received an English-only letter on 06/04/2022 from the Pensions Service. The letter related to the pension of the complainant's late mother. The English only letter was sent back to the Council noting that she would not respond until she received a Welsh letter. The Council sent a Welsh version of the letter to the complainant on 21/04/2022 but the complainant remained dissatisfied as it appeared that the headline and closing greeting of that letter again was in English only. She also noted that the Council had not acknowledged its error with the original letter or offered her an apology for sending her a letter in English only.</p>

	<p>The Pensions Service takes full responsibility for this error, which arose as a result of a mistake as the letter had been prepared outside the standard system and the relevant officer had prepared an English-only letter. The Council accepts that we failed to comply with the requirements of Language Standards 5, 6 and 7 in this particular case, but it is emphasised that this was a one-time error and is not a reflection of the normal arrangements of the Pensions Service or the Finance Department. Officers have been reminded of the requirements placed on them in terms of expected language standards so that this does not happen again.</p>
<p>Development Opportunities Do you have ideas for new ways we could be promoting the Welsh language within the county's communities – either within your own services or working with others?</p>	<p>Courses for Staff The Information Technology Service has been promoting language refresher courses amongst all of its units, with several members having taken the opportunity and the course is now mandatory for new members to the Digital Learning Service Helpdesk.</p> <p>User Group A User Group has been set up for a system created by the Information Technology Service development unit to carry out Individual Development Plans (IDPs) within Additional Needs and Inclusion (ALN). This is a statutory provision with other bodies taking advantage of the use of the system provided by Cyngor Gwynedd and as it is new, a User Group has been set up to make their voices heard and shape the future of the product. Membership includes a range of Councils from Anglesey to Bridgend and colleges across Wales, with the group's activity being conducted bilingually and the virtual meetings bringing on a simultaneous translation service inviting and promoting discussions in Welsh.</p> <p>Day-to-day use We are proud that the whole department provides its services through the Welsh language, and we believe that the ability to work day-to-day through the medium of Welsh has been a great help in attracting and appointing new staff. We have evidence that this culture has built the confidence of many of our new staff and strengthened their use of the language.</p>

Audit Wales

Department officers hold meetings in Welsh only with Audit Wales officers. We believe this has given Audit Wales the impetus to strengthen their Welsh language arrangements and we believe this has been an opportunity for Audit Wales staff to also develop their Welsh and make more use of it.

Computer provision for Gwynedd Schools

The Digital Learning Service was established to provide digital leadership and support to the County's schools at the start of April 2022 and the implementation of the Gwynedd Schools Digital Strategy.

A laptop has now been rolled out to all teachers, and the roll-out of a laptop for all secondary pupils (Yr 7 -11) is underway, with the default language of each laptop presented in Welsh.

The Future

Over the next year the Finance Department will:

- Conduct initial discussions about aiming to work towards obtaining "Investors In People" accreditation, and the work element relating to Welsh Language will form a significant part of this task.
- Over the last year we as a department have started working closely with the Welsh Language Learning and Development Officer from the Learning and Development Service. We will continue to strengthen this collaboration over the next year.



Draft Promotion Plan Monitoring Report 2018-2023

End of five-year period report - initial findings

1. Background

We present this report as an overview of the monitoring work done in regards to the implementation of the Council's language strategy - the Welsh Language Promotion Plan for Gwynedd 2018-2023.

This is an initial report and the result of the reviewing and reflecting done as we have been developing the next language strategy for 2023 onwards.

Further work will be done to detail some activities and show the impact of the interventions held in response to the objectives.

The Promotion Plan was adopted during October 2018, setting out the Council's vision for how the Council could promote the Welsh language and increase opportunities to use the Welsh language over the following five years.

The strategy set a general, long-term aim, to see the percentage of Gwynedd speakers increasing again to the 70% mark.

As the strategy was published so close to the year of the last census, this was not an aim we expected to see being realised before that census, or in the strategy period, but rather it is a long-term goal and a vision to protect the Welsh language in the county.

The strategy also set a target in the context of school pupils' use of Welsh, to increase the opportunities for people to use the Welsh language, and to boost the confidence of individuals who do not consider themselves as Welsh speakers.

The implementation period of the Promotion Plan was challenging for many reasons. One of the most prominent of these was the Covid-19 pandemic period. Obviously, the long periods of isolating and not socialising or being involved with community activities was a huge change, and hugely impacted the opportunities available for people to use the Welsh language from day to day. The impact on the education world was also substantial, with schools having to adapt overnight to challenges and a different teaching environment.

This period has also changed people's habits substantially, has increased the influence of technology and social media on our lives, and this has led to changes and new challenges in our geographical communities, which in turn impacts linguistic prosperity.

With such a substantial change occurring in the middle of the implementation period, it is inevitable that no steps were taken on some of the objectives, and that we had to change priorities as we went and in response to new situations. As a result, and due to the general squeeze on resources, establishing detailed and robust monitoring arrangements for the Promotion Plan proved to be a challenge. Consequently, the contents of this monitoring report are only a part of the picture.

Nevertheless, we hope that this report shows that we as a Council have been able to act consistently on most of the objectives set in the Promotion Plan. Many services hold regular activities in different locations across the county, and due to the strength of the Language Policy, those activities across the board are held through the medium of Welsh.

A lot of data has been gathered by the Council's services, therefore, which shows the regular Welsh-medium activity being provided by the Council to contribute to people's daily use of Welsh in various contexts.

2. Accountability and internal reporting arrangements

The Council's departments and services report on their work in many ways. We were conscious when trying to monitor the implementation of this strategy that we did not want to duplicate work and add to the services' reporting workload. We have therefore sought, as much as we could, to gather information from the various sources which are currently reported by departments. Here, we provide an overview of the various reporting methods for the activities and plans which contribute to the strategy's objectives.

- ***Collecting annual data on activities***
Many specific activities were identified under each action field where we were aware that data was already being collected annually. We have collected this data for every year, and this is the main data you will see in the tables in this report.
- ***The Welsh Language Grant monitoring reports***
The language initiative is implementing a work programme that has been agreed upon between the Council and Welsh Government, which is funded through an annual Government grant. As a part of the conditions for that grant, regular reports have been produced which detail the work and provide a quantitative report on the number of activities and attendees.
- ***Challenging Performance***
Any projects that have been included within the Council Plan report regularly through performance challenging meetings. This includes reporting on key data and on any barriers which prevent development or slow down the progress of a project.
Each Cabinet Member also reports on the work of the Council's main plans, by means of their reports to the Cabinet.
- ***Language Committee Departmental Reports***
[Language Committee \(llyw.cymru\)](http://llyw.cymru)
Every department within the Council now prepares a report once a year to be submitted to the Council's Language Committee. These reports are an opportunity to show how they develop the workforce's language skills, comply with the Welsh Language Standards, and also how they contribute to the objectives of the language strategy. These reports have been very useful to identify projects or work streams that the Language and Scrutiny Unit would not have known about otherwise. This process was commenced during the 2021-22 year, therefore every department has reported twice to date, and we are now in the middle of the third reporting cycle.
- ***Strategic Plans' Annual Report***
Plans such as the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan have their own annual monitoring arrangements.
- ***Forums and project boards***

Many internal and external groups exist to monitor the progress of individual projects. A Project Board was set up for the Language Designations work, a project to monitor the workforce language skills in the Council, the Place Names Project and Prosiect 15. Also, an internal group has been established within the final period of the language strategy to look at the implementation of More Than Just Words within the Council. These groups will keep an eye on implementation in various fields and ensure that appropriate progress is being made against targets and work programmes.

3. Lessons learnt

Over the past few months we have been looking back at the Promotion Plan and developing the next language strategy for the 2023 period onwards at the same time. Reflecting on what worked and what did not work as well, in terms of implementation and monitoring, has helped us in looking ahead and improve arrangements for the next strategy.

There are many things the Council will need to work on and develop for the next strategy period, in order to ensure that they are able to gather the necessary evidence to show the impact and success of the strategy. There have been many challenges when trying to do this with the Promotion Plan.

3.1 Consistency in the type of data collected - for example, try to make sure that each project or service that contributes to a specific fields is reporting the same things.

3.2 Improve collaboration with external partners. - We were very aware that it would not be possible for the Council to implement the objectives of the strategy on its own and there would be a need to ensure effective collaboration to reach the aim. Although good collaboration has happened in various fields, we may not have found ways to capture that in a way which provides us with evidence of this collaboration and the resulting outcomes. Re-igniting any discussions with partners after the pandemic period was also difficult in some cases, with organisations focusing on their own priorities.

3.3 Maintaining the relationship with the Menter laith - We have been very reliant during the Promotion Plan period on the activities of Hunaniaith, the language initiative, especially in the area of the Language of the Community. The language initiative will move out of the Council, and establish itself as an independent entity, during the first year of the new language strategy, and the Council will need to ensure that it maintains a close relationship with the Menter laith, but also that they take more responsibility for their own actions in the area of community lanugage.

3.4 Assessing progress and the contribution of strategic projects - gathering robust evidence on the impact of some of the major schemes that the Council has in the pipeline (and which contribute to the prosperity or protection of the Welsh language in the county's communities), is difficult due to its long-term nature. Some work has been done on establishing the models to measure impact, but they are yet to be put in place, and there will be a need to look at this for the next strategy period.

3.5 The need to be able to adapt priorities - The pandemic period has shown us how circumstances can change substantially in a very short period. Five years can appear to be a short period in terms of language planning and in terms of showing the impact of



interventions which are often longer-term. It is clear that we have had to disregard some of the aims noted in the Promotion Plan because the context and the priorities of the Council have had to change in a short period. It will important that the aims and objectives in the new strategy are broad enough so that the Council does not leave itself open to failing to act, and that it is the work programme linked to the strategy that needs to be changed and adapted rather than the strategy itself during the 10 years.

DRAFFT

4. Reporting on outcomes

In this section, we provide an overview of what was implemented under each priority field in the Promotion Plan, along with a table which includes the quantitative data gathered during the five years.

4.1 Priority field 1 - Language of the family

The intention for this field was to identify ways of giving every child the best start and ensure that positive language patterns are set from the start.

Hunaniaith had been organising community **activities for families and young children** for many years, but one of the main things we wanted to look at during the Promotion Plan was see how we could **support care workers and community activity providers** and give them information to transfer positive messages to parents on the value of bilingualism and multilingualism, as well as how to increase the use of Welsh in their own activities and care settings. There has been some good collaboration with Cymraeg i Blant and the Council's early years' service to organise annual seminars in order to address this. Data on the activities can be seen below.

The **Gwynedd Libraries service** provide essentially important community locations, and they play a very important role when offering activities that are targeted specifically at new mothers and their babies. Weekly story and play sessions are offered at all of the county's locations and each of those are offered through the medium of Welsh and provide important socialising opportunities, as well as an opportunity to present the language to infants.

We were also eager to develop an **understanding among parents of the value of transferring the Welsh language to children**, and of the advantages of being multilingual. Many external partners are doing excellent work in this field, but the education department has also developed resources on the advantages of bilingualism to share with schools and are available on the Language Charter Hub for everyone's use.

AGC information in terms of the number of childcare providers in the County who note that they are a Welsh or Bilingual provision:

	Welsh	Bilingual	English
Childminders	22	14	10
Nurseries	11	6	2
Cylchoedd Meithrin	56	1	-
After School Club	8	5	-

Below is information reported as part of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) about Cylchoedd Meithrin in Gwynedd.

Gwynedd Cylch Meithrin Data 2018-19 (No data available for 2019-20 due to COVID):

Area	Cylch Meithrin Numbers	Number/ % of nursery three-year-old children transferring

		to Welsh-medium education	
Arfon	28	834	99.3%
Dwyfor	18	301	100%
Meirionnydd	19	346	100%

Gwynedd Cylchoedd Meithrin Data 2021-22:

Area	Cylch Meithrin Numbers	Number/ % of nursery three-year-old children transferring to Welsh-medium education	
Arfon	27	496	100%
Dwyfor	15	172	100%
Meirionnydd	19	186	100%

DRAFFT

Language of the Family Quantitative Data

Priority Area: Language of the family	2018-19/19-20 (2018-19 half year after publication therefore the figures were combined at the end of the first full year)	2020-21 (Bear in mind that this was during the pandemic period and that restrictions affected what could be done)	2021-22	2022-23
Number of family events held by the Council's libraries services, Flying Start service and the language initiative (Hunaniaith)	76 Roughly 550 families attended. Around 20 families at the libraries' sessions having regular activities.	No face-to-face activities in the libraries. Language initiative has held activities on-line. Uned Iaitth - Uchafbwyntiau 2020-21 Hunaniaith.pdf - Pob Dogfen (sharepoint.com)	3 activity, 25 family - hunaniaith 107 library events 788 attendees (around 370 families?)	127 library activities 1072 attendees (around 500 families?)
Number of training events for early years workers (led by Hunaniaith)	6 workshops 60 attendees	2 workshops 18 attendees	1 workshop 19 in attendance	1 event 3 attendees
Number of regular Flying Start activities for families	Grŵp Tots - 8 sessions per term in each area Camau Bach groups = 8 sessions per term in each area 30 fun days	Camau Bach - 8 virtual sessions 6 families. 9 outdoor fun day sessions	8 sessions (Dolgellau area) 3 families 9 fun day sessions	16 blocks of groups 174 children have attended 20 fun sessions 136 families attended
Percentage of children receiving care in locations with a Welsh-medium provision (care settings managed by the Council?)	86.5%	Numbers receiving 10 hours a week of Welsh-medium Nursery Education: 384 . Number of Flying Start children who have attended a Welsh-medium	Numbers receiving 10 hours a week of Welsh-medium Nursery Education: 442. Number of Flying Start children who have attended a Welsh-medium childcare	Number of children receiving 10 hours a week of Welsh-medium Nursery Education: 422. Number of Flying Start children who have



		<p>childcare setting per term = 642: Number of children who have attended a Welsh or bilingual childcare setting on the Welsh Childcare Offer: Welsh =553. Bilingual =237.</p>	<p>setting per term: Term 1 = 201. Term 2 = 198. Term 3 = 187. Number of children who have attended a Welsh or bilingual childcare setting on the Welsh Childcare Offer: Welsh = 585. Bilingual = 256.</p>	<p>attended a Welsh-medium childcare setting per term: Term 1 = 241. Term 2 = 214. Term 3 = 202. Number of children who have attended a Welsh or bilingual childcare setting on the Welsh Childcare Offer: Welsh = 890. Bilingual = 197</p>

4.2 Priority Field 2: Language of Learning

The pandemic period posed a particular challenge for the field of education, and led to huge changes in learning methods, but also huge changes in data collection methods. As a result of the fact that schools across Wales closed, and the curriculum delayed, in the summer 2020, e.g., it was not possible to conduct learner assessments, and external examinations, such as GCSEs and A Levels, were not held as normal. Consequently, no quantitative data is available as a part of the WESP annual review report for 2019-20.

Regardless of the lack of data on the number of young people who choose to study and receive Welsh-medium accreditations in the schools, as well as statistics about progress in skills between key stages, many key developments have occurred in this field over the Promotion Plan period.

We therefore focus here on important strategic developments that have happened in the field over the Plan period and which will set robust foundations to develop young people's use of Welsh in the future.

Development of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan

In September 2022, the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan was published by the department for a ten-year period up to 2032. The outcomes of monitoring the new WESP will be included in the monitoring reports of the new language strategy.

A new Language Policy was drafted and shared with the governing bodies of every primary and secondary school in the county, which reflects the expectations and ambition in terms of schools' use of Welsh beyond the education provision.

"An increase in the number of young people who choose to study and who gain qualifications through the medium of Welsh."

The Plan had noted the above as a priority in the language of learning field, which reflected the commitment in the WESP that the Council wished to see *"More learners study for assessed qualifications in Welsh (as a subject) and subjects through the medium of Welsh."*

During 2022, members of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee identified that attention needed to be given to the Welsh medium provision at the Secondary Schools in the County. A decision was made to hold an investigation which looked at the existing provision and consider what could prevent the Authority from achieving the targets and make recommendations.

A final report and recommendations were published during September 2023.

The findings were encouraging and showed that 97.6% of the KS3 learners at the three schools followed 80% or more of their courses through the medium of Welsh and that 87% studied at least 5 subjects excluding Welsh, through the medium of Welsh. The commitment of the schools in question to encourage learners to study through the medium of Welsh and to act in accordance with their Language Policy was evident. The Language Policy of Gwynedd secondary schools is central to the provision in the schools.

The report included a number of recommendations, which included establishing new arrangements to collect data on the language medium of study, setting specific targets to increase the Welsh medium provision for every secondary school in the county, that the authority continues to collaborate with both category 3T schools in the county to speed-up their journey to become



category 3 schools, and that there is closer collaboration with partners such as Y Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol.

Implementing these recommendations will be a part of the new language strategy.

The full report of the investigation and recommendations can be seen here:

[Item 6 - Gwynedd Category 3 Secondary Schools Scrutiny Investigation Report.pdf \(llyw.cymru\)](#)

Modernise and extend the immersion provision to teach Welsh to children

On 6 July 2021, the Cabinet approved a new vision for a modern Immersion Education System in Gwynedd. This followed a long process of reviewing the service and considering the future needs, which had commenced since the lockdown period. This new vision also includes a capital investment of £1.1 million from the Welsh Government for the purpose of establishing new immersion education sites in Bangor and Tywyn, as well as improving existing facilities at the Eifionydd site, Porthmadog.

The Welsh Government's Late Immersion revenue grant also enables the Education Department to modernise the immersion provision in the county's centres. Now, the Aberwla immersion scheme has been developed, which is a differential scheme that bridges the primary and secondary sectors. To accompany the scheme, we have the innovative digital project which places the Aberwla scheme and its characters on the VR stage. On 7 July 2023, training was held at the request of Welsh Government to share this innovative resource nationally. As a result of the training, other authorities are expected to trial the resource and offer feedback to further develop and empower the project. A successful launch of the resource was held on the Gwynedd stall on the afternoon of Tuesday 8 August, at the Llŷn ac Eifionydd National Eisteddfod site.

Raising the awareness of young people of the Welsh language as a skill

Hunaniaith acted on this priority during the Plan period by organising Language Awareness sessions with groups of pupils in schools, and by arranging 4 annual conferences with Grŵp Llandrillo Menai which looked at specific work fields and invited individuals from those fields - such as the creative industries and care - to talk about their experiences and why the Welsh language is a core part of their work.

A language awareness video was developed specifically for young people also, and the Menter have been working with the county's schools on many projects that gave the young people opportunities to use the Welsh language beyond their formal lessons. One example of this was the Cwis Dim Clem, run by Mentrau Iaith Cymru, and coordinated on a local level by Hunaniaith officers.

Language Charter and Strategy

Two schemes exist in Gwynedd to encourage the use of Welsh beyond the classrooms - Primary schools language charter (fframwaith-siarter-iaith.pdf (gov.wales)) and the Secondary Language Strategy (llyw.cymru).

We have not been able to get quantitative data for this work for the period of the Promotion Plan, but we are aware that both projects are very active, and that councils and language forums have been established at almost all schools so that the voice of pupils are at the core of any efforts to promote the use of Welsh among young people.



It is acknowledged that establishing the Language Forum at the secondary schools was a positive step to include the voice of the learner. In one of the schools, learners in year 11 are responsible for the Language Forum. It was noted that the main aim of the Forum is to organise and hold activities that encourage pupils to speak Welsh. Getting learners to take ownership of organising activities and promoting the language is most welcome.

Further information:

The Education Department submits regular reports to the Council's Language Committee, which has a responsibility for supervising the implementation of the Council's language strategy. See below the reports submitted on the implementation of the WESP, and the reports under the new system where individual departments will report on any activity to promote Welsh within their services.

[Language Committee January 2020- Adroddiad Adolygu Blynyddol ar Weithrediad CSGA Gwynedd ar gyfer 2018-19.pdf \(llyw.cymru\)](#)

[Language Committee January 2021 - ADRODDIAD ADOLYGU BLYNYDDOL CSGA.pdf \(llyw.cymru\)](#)

[Education Department's Report on Promoting the Welsh Language - Language Committee January 2022.pdf \(llyw.cymru\)](#)

[Education Department's Report on Promotion - Language Committee January 2023.pdf \(llyw.cymru\)](#)

The Language of Learning Quantitative Data

Priority Area: The Language of Learning	2018-19/19-20 (2018-19 half year after publication therefore the figures were combined at the end of the first full year)	2020-21 (Bear in mind that this was during the pandemic period and that restrictions affected what could be done)	2021-22	2022-23
Number of extended learning opportunities	17 Apprentices 15 Trainees 32 Work Experience opportunities 24 young people obtained accreditations through the youth service	10 Apprentices 6 trainees	11 Apprentices 5 trainees	20 apprentices/trainees
Awareness of the language of work and skills	1 conference, 46 young people 6 YI activities, 145 young people	1 conference, 27 young people	1 conference, 72 young people	Not held

4.3 Priority area 3: Language of Work and Service

Cyngor Gwynedd takes pride in being able to offer all its services actively bilingually. Nevertheless, we realise that many of our partners in the public sector cannot do so seamlessly. We are also aware that many Welsh speakers choose not to exercise their rights to Welsh language services on every occasion.

We had said that we would be looking for ways to increase people's use of Welsh-medium services. This is certainly a priority that was delayed because of the pandemic period, but where steps have also been taken to encourage people to use their rights, and also to understand behaviours in order to be able to plan interventions in the future.

The Council has been sharing messages on social media as a part of the **Commissioner's Rights Promotion Day**, to encourage the public to use the Welsh language at every possible opportunity in their dealings with the Council.

During the final period of the strategy, we commenced important work to develop our understanding on how people use Welsh language services. The Council joint-funds a **PhD research** project with Bangor University, which will research people's attitudes towards Welsh services, and it is hoped that this will give the Council ideas about interventions that could be implemented to increase use. This research will continue during the period of the new language strategy.

The Welsh Sub-group of the local Services Board commissioned a piece of research that would help the various organisations to consider how they can encourage the public to use the Welsh language every time when they make the initial contact with public bodies. Observation work was conducted at various organisations and recommendations were presented to the Services Board members on steps that can be taken to improve the Welsh offer in their initial contact with service users. The hope is that individual organisations will respond to this research and act on the recommendations during the next strategy period.

In terms of developing the language skills of the Council's workforce, great emphasis was placed during the period of the Promotion Plan on implementing the **Language Designations** project in the Council, which is a project that has transformed the way that language requirements are considered as a part of the recruitment process. Robust arrangements have been established to assess the language requirements of every post in the Council, and to assess the language skill level of every staff member. This means that we have a better understanding of many training and development requirements of our staff. The following table shows the staff numbers who have received language training during the plan period. The Organisational Learning and Development service provides annual data on the Standards and presents an annual Training Report to the Council's Language Committee every June, which includes more information on how the Council supports learners.

[Welsh Language Training Report 2021-22.pdf \(llyw.cymru\)](#)

[Appendix 1.pdf \(llyw.cymru\)](#)

The Council was also involved with piloting a Bangor University research and behaviour change project, **Arfer** ([The ARFer Programme, Canolfan Bedwyr, Bangor University](#)), which works with work teams where the language of communication has started to or has turned to English, to try and



establish new language patterns and encourage Welsh as the main language of communication. One team from the Council's Consultancy department was involved in the pilot scheme before lockdown, and other teams have committed to be involved by the end of the Plan period. This work will continue into the period of the next strategy.

Increasing the use of the Welsh language in the private sector is an ongoing challenge. The Council does not have many enforcement powers, and therefore we are reliant to a vast degree on the goodwill of owners and on trying to persuade them that there are advantages to be had from providing bilingual services. Hunaniaith has worked with businesses on a community level and has encouraged them to make small changes and work with them to hold Welsh community activities. They have also given attention to businesses that make good use of Welsh, to give prestige and status to those businesses. Various businesses have been given praise and attention as a part of the Business of the Month campaign during the Plan period.

Council Services responding to the recruitment challenges:

Recruitment problems seem to be increasing, with many departments noting in their reports to the Language Committee that recruiting people with the correct linguistic skills can be challenging in some work fields.

However, many services and departments are taking proactive steps to address these challenges, and the Council has established a Workforce Planning project, which is seeking to anticipate these problems in the future. See below an excerpt from the Education Department's Report to the Council's Language Committee, explaining how they have addressed the challenges in one specific work field.

"The Catering and Cleaning service has been key throughout the pandemic in order to ensure a safe environment for learners and staff at our schools, as well as ensure a school dinner provision. Staffing challenges in the context of long-term sickness, the impacts of Covid and recruitment difficulties affect this service daily, and there are challenges in ensuring a workforce that is proficient in Welsh in some areas of the county. In response, the service has taken advantage of the Welsh Government's Kickstart scheme to offer work placements from January onwards to people aged 16-24 years who receive Universal Credit and who are at risk of long-term unemployment. As part of the staff appointment pack, we ask every member of Catering and Cleaning service staff to complete a language assessment questionnaire to see their level of understanding in the language and whether they need assistance to improve their skills. The service will collaborate with Learning and Development to identify a suitable provision to improve the staff's language skills. Currently, there are some examples of the service's staff choosing to follow on-line self-study units to improve their Welsh language skills."

The Language of Work and Services Quantitative Data

The Language of Work and Services	2018-19/19-20 (2018-19 half year after publication therefore the figures were combined at the end of the first full year)	2020-21 (bear in mind that this was during the pandemic period and that restrictions affected what was possible to do)	2021-22	2022-23
Support for Businesses	6 campaigns, 265 businesses by Hunaniaith			
Awareness of the Council's Staff	126 staff members completing the YI e-module	133 staff completing it.	131 staff completing it.	567 staff completing it
Number of staff being supported to develop skills				
Arfor	27 commercial businesses in Gwynedd receiving financial support from ARFOR phase 1 plans.			

4.4 Priority Area 4: Language of the Community

The way we interact with each other as communities has changed substantially over the past years, and the lockdown periods of the pandemic, and the subsequent long periods of social-distancing, had a far-reaching impact on community activities. Therefore, the Council's role when holding Welsh medium activities in the communities is more important than ever.

The contribution of the language initiative, which thus far has been a part of the Council's Language Unit, has also been key, and has targeted specific areas and held various and regular activities in an attempt to expand the Welsh medium provision in the communities.

The intentions of the Promotion Plan for the language of the community was clear, to **increase the opportunities for people to use the Welsh language** in various contexts and support, and equip, groups and social enterprises to ensure that more Welsh is heard and used in community events.

The vision of the Plan in this field noted a desire by the Council to see "*residents confident to use whatever skills they have in Welsh as they live their daily lives in our communities*", and for "*different cohorts of the community to feel that they are a part of the "Welsh community"*".

The work of Hunaniaith, the language Initiative

2019-2021

As a result of Covid, the language initiative had to adapt the work programme substantially. We had to stop doing face-to-face activities and focus on offering support and activities in an alternative way. New resources were developed, and various activities were held on-line by using social media and Zoom.

A number of activities were provided including science and arts workshops via Zoom for school-age children, on-line social night down the pub, quizzes, a gig, video games for all ages, film clips including lectures and activities for children to do at their leisure, a Zoom social event on local place names and history as well as an on-line conference for young people on the value of Welsh in creative media and the business world. Also, an on-line language awareness pack was developed, which included a digital quiz and video for children and young people.

2021-2023

With restrictions being eased, it was possible to recommence face-to-face activities whilst also continuing with on-line and hybrid events. In line with Welsh Government's wishes, we gave more attention to supporting and equipping community groups to promote Welsh on an ongoing basis.

An example of this is the support given to establishing chat groups for Welsh learners in various locations across the county. Nevertheless, the initiative has continued to hold activities, focusing mainly on children and young people and giving learners informal practice opportunities. A series of regular events were organised for learners, such as walking trips and social evenings, like a hybrid wine tasting evening. It is hoped that providing these practice opportunities will encourage them to seek out other opportunities and increase their confidence integrate into their communities. We

also collaborated with the language immersion centres to support families that have moved to the area.

One area that has received considerable attention by the initiative in the final period of the Plan therefore is providing opportunities for people, specifically learners, to practice their skills and develop confidence in a relaxed and informal environment. When the restrictions began to ease, the initiative arranged many walks, jointly with local Learn Welsh officers, which gave people an opportunity to come together and practice their Welsh in a different environment. These trips were a huge success, and Mentrau Iaitth Cymru disseminated the model across the whole of Wales.

Supporting community groups and enterprises

Following a series of community seminars in 2017 it was decided to earmark a small sum of the grant to offer **simultaneous translation support** to community groups and committees. This was in response to a concern that many groups were in danger of having to change their operational and administrative language by welcoming new members who do not speak Welsh. There was a clear demand for this support, and the only restriction was that it was only a small sum that could be allocated for the project every year it ran.

Two phases of the **Arfor** schemes have been operational during the Plan period. [Rhaglen ARFOR](#)

This scheme is the output of an agreement between Plaid Cymru and the Welsh Labour Government in the Senedd, with money being earmarked in an attempt to address the specific challenges facing the strongholds of the Welsh language in terms of retaining young people in their communities and economic opportunities. During phase 1 of Arfor, each of the four counties (Gwynedd, Môn, Ceredigion and Caerfyrddin), implemented individual projects and piloted different interventions. Gwynedd had many grant schemes which provided support to individuals, businesses and social enterprises, with an emphasis on innovation and creating new employment opportunities. As expected, the pandemic had a substantial impact on the implementation of the schemes, and priorities had to be adapted to continue and complete the scheme. The outcomes of many of the initiatives are noted in the table below, with the number of businesses recorded under the Work and Service priority above.

A quote from the Arfor evaluation report:

The coronavirus pandemic had a substantial impact on the programme in many ways. The general aim of job creation was adapted to include safeguarding jobs. Individual projects and grant holders amended, deferred or, on rare occasions, stopped the plans proposed in the applications. To that end, field work for the purposes of the evaluation report was restricted to collecting data on-line and remotely.

Phase 2 -

The second Arfor scheme was commenced, following a period of evaluating phase 1 schemes, and funding discussions with the Welsh Government. Agreement was reached on many schemes to be implemented across the 4 counties for phase 2. This means that there is consistency in the objectives, and although every county Council is responsible for implementing and approving applications at local level, this implementation method means that the potential positive impact across the region will be greater. To date, 5 new enterprises and 14 existing enterprises in Gwynedd have been approved to receive a grant via the Enterprising Communities fund, with an estimated 84 new jobs being created, 96 existing jobs being secured, and 18 Welsh spaces being created.

Native Welsh Place Names Project

This project was established in 2021 in response to many public calls and concerns about the loss of Welsh names in the county's landscape. The project has been looking at the Council's different powers and influence when safeguarding and protecting Welsh place names. This has strengthened arrangements and provided additional support to the Council's building control officers when dealing with applications to change property names. The project officers have also been holding discussions with key partners, such as the Eryri National Park and the Ordnance Survey. They have also been meeting regularly with Welsh Government officers (who are responsible for the commitments made in the field under the Plaid Cymru/Labour collaboration agreement), and several other local authorities which are eager to see a change and collaboration in the field.

An important policy statement was made when reviewing the Council's Language Policy in 2022, with the decision that the Council would only use its Welsh name only from now on. This coincides with important statements made by other organisations in Wales, such as Eryri National Park, which gives more status to the Welsh language in public life. The policy also noted the Council's intention to always use the Welsh names of locations and street names in their documentations and correspondence.

A **Local Names Map** - an interactive map which allows people to create a record of local names/dialectal names for locations within their local areas - was launched at the end of 2022, and the project officer held many activities with schools in the Dwyfor area in the months prior to the summer 2023, leading up to the National Eisteddfod in Boduan. A successful panel session was held at the Eisteddfod, with the Minister for the Welsh Language, Jeremy Miles, contributing to an interesting discussion which deliberated the opportunities and barriers in the field.

Until the end of March 2023, the project had also...

- Consulted on **43** applications to change house names during the year.
- Shared the occasional snippet (two or three a month) about place names in posts on social media to, e.g., collect examples of names that included numbers in them.
- published **11** *Enw a'r Hanes* items on the Council's intranet to raise awareness of the meaning of local names amongst Council staff.
- held **2** interviews on Radio Cymru to promote the project.

Prioritising the Welsh language in strategic plans (economic, housing and planning)

During the Promotion Plan period, the Council worked on many strategic plans in field of key importance to the prosperity of our communities. Each one has placed the Welsh language at the centre of its operations and seeks to address some of the specific challenges in those fields which affect the population and the viability of the Welsh language.

The new **Housing Plan** ([Housing Action Plan \(llyw.cymru\)](#)) has been published, which is a multifaceted, ambitious plan that seeks to address the challenges in terms of housing affordability. For many years now, there has been concern that young people are unable to afford to buy a house in their local communities, and that they are, therefore, more likely to move from the county, taking their Welsh language skills with them. The housing plan, through a combination of many rental and



homebuy plans, seeks to ensure a fair opportunity for all to stay in their communities if that is their wish.

New economic plans were also developed, with the **Sustainable Visitor Economy Plan** being an attempt to set a clear vision to change the way we consider the tourism industry in Gwynedd. These plans respond directly to the concerns about how tourism affects communities, economically, culturally and socially.

The Council also developed new impact assessment arrangements within the planning process. Since the publication of the *Supplementary Planning Guidance - Maintaining and Creating Distinctive and Sustainable Communities* in 2019, applicants have been required to provide a linguistic and community statement or assessment if their planning application meets specific criteria. The content of these statements and assessments are verified by the Council's language officers, and they offer observations on the evidence base and suitability of the impact assessments to assist the Members of the Planning Committee to see whether the applicant has considered the potential impacts correctly and appropriately. Since 2019, the Language Unit has processed and made observations on approximately **135 planning applications**.

Language of the Community	2018-19/19-20 (2018-19 half year after publication therefore the figures were combined at the end of the first full year)	2020-21 (Bear in mind that this was during the pandemic period and that restrictions affected what could be done)	2021-22	2022-23
Objective	Numbers			
Working with community groups that are traditionally English speaking to increase their use of Welsh.	2018-19 - Brownies Dolgellau 5 events 67 children	<i>No activities - the initiative's priorities changed</i>		
General community activities			1 event (outdoor gig), 45 attendees	22 (<i>on-line</i>) 141 attendees
Activities targeted to specific cohorts of the community.				
Supporting Learners				
Hunaniaith Work	2 activities, 30 attendees 6 activities, 84 attendees	6 sessions, 8 attendees (on-line event for the residents of Llanberis) 10 sessions, 6 attendees	69 events (43 on-line, 25 face-to-face, 1 hybrid) 773 attendees <i>(Various activities including arts, drama workshops, workshop on the value of Welsh and the digital world, on-line awareness pack, on-line quizzes, monthly video games club, on-line science workshops and video clips)</i>	90 1144 attendees <i>(including 22 walks for new speakers, weekly chatting club for new speakers at Llanystumdwy, Llanberis, Bangor, Trawsfynydd, Groeslon and a jogging club in Bangor)</i>
Children and Young People				
Hunaniaith Work	Rap and video - 3 workshops, 38 young people Vlogging - 1 workshop, 7 young people	<i>(No data - lockdown)</i>	10 face-to-face events, 79 on-line activities	67 activities 1699 attendees

Council's Youth Service		2850 opportunities provided and 13453 attendees (across 2020/21 and 2021/22)	3250 sessions arranged through the medium of Welsh, 17625 attendees across the year
Intergenerational Event	6 pupils, 14 adults		
Older people (Dementia activities)	<i>(No data available)</i>	Weekly events Around 77 regular attendees (on average)	Weekly events 3745 attendees across the locations and the year
Community Interpretation Plan	14 organisations or groups receiving simultaneous translation support at meetings	<i>Plan not operational</i>	Weekly events Total attendees: 7056 face-to-face attendees: 5954 On-line attendees: 1102
Support for community groups and enterprises through Arfor phase 1 funding	3 enterprises receiving support		8 community groups receiving support and equipped to ultimately hold their own sessions
			Total number of opportunities: 18, Attendees 684 (<i>Virtual and face-to-face support for 2 community enterprises and 2 social organisations to enable meetings to be held through the medium of Welsh. Between April and September 2021, the resource was used in 14 individual events, with a total of 575 individuals attending. (Q3 - 4 events, 109 attendees)</i>)



Conferences/community seminars and support for Community Councils	5 Community Councils receiving guidance on the use and status of Welsh in community events.	<i>No activities - the initiative's priorities changed</i>
---	---	--

4.5 Priority Area 5 - Research and Technology

Research

The Language and Scrutiny Unit has been working to develop the relationship with prominent academics in the field of language planning, and a network of language officers from Arfor area authorities, and representatives from Welsh universities, have been meeting to share information about the research work undertaken and that is in the pipeline.

The Council has been developing a specific relationship with Bangor University and has commissioned two pieces of **research**. A joint application for seed funding was made with the University to carry out initial research into the link between language and the economy, looking specifically at the visitor economy and the impact of the World Heritage Site designation on the Welsh language. The Council is also part-funding **PhD research** which will look at people's attitudes and their use of Welsh when dealing with public services.

Technology

The Promotion Plan noted an intention to seek to influence people's use of Welsh when using technology.

The Council has held events to contribute to the voice data collection work of the Common Voice project, and has been instrumental in ensuring that key on-line services provided by central Government are available in Welsh for the public. Over the years, the Council's officers have provided specialist advice, a proof-reading service, and has done translation work for many new systems, including DBS checks, Blue Badge, and have ensured that IOSH training resources are available bilingually. Not only does this ensure resources and opportunities for Council staff to use Welsh, but it also ensures that the public receives the quality services that they deserve, in Welsh.

With the far-reaching changes that have occurred over the past years in terms of the use of technology, it is fair to say that acting in this field has been an additional challenge for the Council.

During the lockdown, the education department, and the Council's entire workforce, in reality, **had to adapt to working and offering services remotely**. The Education Department and school staff worked hard, not only to provide virtual learning opportunities, but to make sure that a variety of **digital resources** were available for pupils to be able to continue with their Welsh-medium education. The Council's services also adapted, with more services being offered via the self-service and on-line, with all of these available in Welsh.

The Council was innovative in its use of technology in response to the new ways of working, and specifically so when ensuring that the Council's public meetings were able to continue operating bilingually. Many challenges emerged when moving to the remote working arrangements, and subsequently with holding hybrid meetings, but the Democracy and Language Service, including the translation unit, has been at the forefront in overcoming any barriers, when discussing and collaborating with the national company that provides hybrid services for public organisations, and when influencing other organisations (and by going as far as arranging meetings on behalf of others when some organisations were prohibited from using Zoom). These successes were reported upon in the annual reports of the Language Unit on the implementation of the Language Standards. The 2021-22 report, for example, can be seen here: [The Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2021-](#)



[2022. Language Committee.pdf \(llyw.cymru\)](#)

Following the lockdown period, and the acknowledgement of the increased use of social media, there was an investment from the Council to implement and extend **Prosiect 15**, to work specifically on increasing the Welsh medium content being created for social media. During 2023, various social accounts were established, focussing mainly on Instagram and TikTok. Competitions were held to encourage children and young people to create video clips on various themes and we attended the Llŷn ac Eifionydd National Eisteddfod to hold specific events and raise awareness of the project by targeting children and young people. We collaborated with local sports clubs and schools to create material associated with the Rugby World Cup as well as student unions for the Freshers' Week video series. We also held workshops in a secondary school to produce many videos and info-graphs based on the theme 'Facts on Welsh Innovators'.

Technology has also played a key role in the Welsh Place Names project, with the launch of the interactive map. The Language and Scrutiny Unit have also developed an interactive activities map, which has been designed to show where Welsh language activities are held around the county. Any group, organization or club that hold regular activities in the community can add their information to the map in order for other people to find them.

It is also worth noting again the work of the Education Department in developing Aberlwa ,the VR world that has been created to be used side by side with the new language immersion plan. This has been an innovative development in language immersion education, and since it was first shown publicly in the 2022 national Eisteddfod, it has gained support from Welsh Government and is being shared nationally. This shows that Cyngor Gwynedd is once again leading the way in developing new projects that support the Welsh language, and is building on the success of the language charter in the past.