

MEETING:	LANGUAGE COMITTEE
DATE:	1ST May 2019
TITLE:	Cabinet Member Report
AUTHOR:	Councillor Nia Jeffreys
PURPOSE OF REPORT	Give members an update on the main developments in respect of the Welsh language

1. Dafydd Orwig Award

Two awards are given each year by now, to acknowledge individuals within the Council who have learnt the Welsh language, and also to recognise individuals or teams who have made an exemplary effort, or who have gone beyond their day to day work, to promote the Welsh language, and to ensure that the public and service users can access Welsh language services without any barriers.

The awards were won this year by Nancy Wilkinson (Environmental Officer in YGC) and the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service (for their work in securing Welsh language resources for the IOSH accreditation).

2. The Welsh Language Priorities set in the Council Plan

2.1 *Developing a Welsh Language Strategy*

Work is progressing, but needs to pick up momentum over the next few months. Priority will be given to establishing the procedure for collecting information and examples of work that contributes to the *Welsh Language Promotion Plan*.

Since the beginning of April a development officer is being shared between the Language Unit and the Learning and Development team, with the plan that the time of the officer will be split between supporting the work on the language specifications and the implementation of the monitoring aspect of the language promotion plan.

2.2 *Promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language as a natural means of communication in the community through the work of Hunaniaith*

There is a report on the work of Hunaniaith as part of this meetings programme.

3. The Projects of the Council Plan

3.1 *Businesses using the Welsh Language*

The Committee will have a presentation from the Gwynedd Welsh in Business Support Officer in this meeting. The Welsh in Business project is one example of work being done outside and beyond the services of the Council to encourage businesses in Gwynedd to use the Welsh language, and to offer Welsh language services.

A piece of mapping work is being done at present to look at what support is offered by Council staff and external partners, in order to try and identify the gaps and provide recommendations for further steps the Council can take.

3.2 *Welsh language and the Public Services*

The Welsh Language sub-group meets regularly to develop projects on the basis of the priority set by the Public Service Board to promote the language. Projects are being developed to try and tackle varying issues, but there are two main themes to the work:

Theme 1: Sharing good practice amongst the public bodies – how we learn from each others experiences as public bodies, and move towards an unified approach to the way we deal with varying challenges in regards to providing bilingual services.

Theme 2: The experience of the citizen – how we ensure consistency in the way the Welsh language is seen and heard in the first contact between service and user, and how we can encourage more people to use the Welsh language services offered.

This work is in it's first stages, and we will update the Language Committee as things progress.

3.3 *Welsh in the Workplace*

The work on the language specifications is moving along well, and the Welsh Language Learning and Development Officer is reporting a good response from the front line services that have been targeted so far, and an increase in the number of staff that are enquiring about training or help of some sort to improve their Welsh language skills.

4. Other developments

4.1 The new Supplementary Planning Guide for the Welsh language is due to be adopted soon, and discussions are being undertaken between the language unit and the planning department to ensure that the referral arrangements needed will be in place.

4.2 A campaign was run recently to promote and support the work of the Common Voice project. This is a project being lead by Bangor University, in conjunction with Mozilla, to develop the language data sets needed to develop language recognition software and technology. The campaign in the Council was launched over St Davids day, and the language unit will be working with the communication team over the next few months to raise awareness of the project and to encourage staff members to take part.

4.3 The Council have been trying to make small changes to strengthen the status of the Welsh language as the administrative language of the authority. Gwynedd Council is one of the only, if not the only public body to be using llyw.cymru exclusively for their email addresses, and there is a mission across the council departments to encourage more staff members to use the Welsh interface on their computers.