

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| COMMITTEE | Language Committee |
| DATE | 19/10/ 2021 |
| SUBJECT | Welsh Placenames Project |
| PURPOSE | To submit a report by the Project Officer giving an update on the work of the new project to Members. |
| RECOMMENDATION | Members are asked to accept the report and make any relevant observations. |

BACKGROUND

1. In April 2018, a draft report was submitted to the Language Committee, outlining the Council's responsibilities and powers regarding place naming.
2. The report was the result of research undertaken, in response to concerns by Committee members at the time, regarding the Anglicization of names or the coining of new names for geographical features and houses.
3. A draft policy document had already been drawn up by the Council addressing house and street names, but there was a desire to look at the wider issues, and to consider how we could also set out principles for the way the Council uses and protects names for villages and geographical features. The report therefore sought to provide a picture of the current situation and the responsibilities and powers the Council had to take action in this context.
4. Many valuable suggestions were made in the report about actions that could be taken, and the Language Committee itself provided the following recommendation when receiving the report:

"To agree to continue to work on the main purpose of the report, to gain clarity, especially on the naming of geographic features and how we could influence the names used by external bodies such as the Royal Mail and the Ordnance Survey, and report back to the Committee on any developments."
5. As a result of the area of work also being identified as a priority in the Council Plan - the Improvement Plan for 2021/22 includes a Native Welsh Place Names Project under Improvement Priority 5, with the explanatory note that ***"we are concerned that native Welsh place names are disappearing from the landscape of Gwynedd as a result of a lack of use of Welsh names and an increase in renaming places in English"*** - we have also managed to secure funding to work specifically on the project and a Project Officer was appointed and started working in September 2021.
6. The contents of the 2018 report and the recommendation of the Language Committee is now the foundation for the work of the Place Names Project Team, and the report being submitted provides an outline of the direction of the work as it stands.