

MEETING	Language Committee
DATE	10 October 2022
TITLE	Report of the Highways and Municipal Department
PURPOSE	To present information about the Department's contribution to the Language Policy
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1. BACKGROUND

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

2. RESPONSE TO THE COMMITTEE'S QUESTIONS

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

Outsourcing and letting third party agreements

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

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

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

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

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

5.11 Gwynedd Council Welsh Language Policy 2016

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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