



## Report to a full meeting of Cyngor Gwynedd

**Date of meeting:** 7 December 2023  
**Title:** Gwynedd Language Strategy 2023 - 2033  
**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn  
**Contact Officer:** Ian Jones  
Head of Corporate Support Department

### 1. THE DECISION SOUGHT

The Full Council is asked to adopt the Language Strategy 2023-2033.

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### 2. THE REASON FOR THE DECISION

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Since the period of the current Language Strategy (Welsh Language Promotion Scheme in Gwynedd) is coming to an end, the next language strategy for Gwynedd is expected to be published by the end of 2023.

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### 3. INTRODUCTION

3.1 The Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011) places a requirement upon the Council to produce a five-year strategy noting how it intends to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language within the county, and how it intends to contribute to the national objectives of Cymraeg 2050 to increase the number of Welsh-speakers.

3.2 Since the current promotion strategy ends in October, the review process was commenced early in 2023. During January, discussion sessions were held with Cabinet members, Language Committee members and members of the Gwynedd Language Forum, in order to collect ideas and gain their input regarding the possible content of the strategy.

3.3 A consultation draft of the new strategy was drawn up based on the discussions held during the consultation period on the draft strategy between **17 April and 21 May 2023**.

3.4 This draft strategy has therefore been created as a follow-up to the work of the current strategy (*Welsh Language Promotion Plan for Gwynedd 2018-23*) in order to reflect the Council's commitment to promote the language across the county and to meet the statutory requirements set within the Welsh Language Standards. The vision is to create an inclusive strategy that seeks to increase the use of the Welsh language in various contexts.

#### **4. SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS OF THE CONSULTATION**

4.1 A questionnaire was drawn up that asked several questions in order to gather the opinions of the public on the draft strategy's content, the aims noted, and the action areas that were suggested.

4.2 **159 responses** were received to the on-line consultation, and the analysis report that has been presented in **Appendix 1** reflects those responses. 1 response was received via e-mail (that did not follow the consultation questions template).

4.3 There was a good cross-section of responses from every part of the county. Most of the responders were between 35-74 years of age. There were only 3 responses from people under 34 years of age, which is a little concerning, and we will need to carefully consider how we gather opinions from this age group in the future.

4.4 Generally, the response to the draft strategy's content was good. The agreement rate for the work-streams in all the action areas was high. 72.3% of the respondents agreed with the intention to focus on increasing opportunities for people to use the Welsh language.

4.5 In terms of the common themes that emerged from the responses, ensuring adequate and suitable opportunities for people to learn Welsh and gain

confidence when speaking Welsh was a theme that came up regularly, and in response to several questions. There were less positive comments too, such as that the Council should not use the Welsh language as a way of discriminating, and should not be wasting scarce resources on the language - these were themes that came up more than once.

- 4.6 An analysis of the consultation was presented to the Language Committee on 27 June and members were given an opportunity to offer any comments on the content and responses and for any possible adaptations to the final strategy in response to the consultation.

## **5. ADJUSTMENTS**

- 5.1 Although numerous comments were received in the questionnaires, the recommendations or practical ideas offered to be added to the final strategy were scarce. Adra proposed a specific offer to collaborate on their Community Strategy, and a further discussion will be held before a target is added to the work programme. Therefore, only minor adjustments have been made to the strategy.
- 5.2 Changes have been made to section 4.2 (that has been renamed from the draft from Challenges to Influence on language use) to respond to the importance put on some matters in the consultation. We felt that there was a need to give specific attention to people's attitudes, and to the economic challenges impacting the use of the Welsh language. It was decided that including these was more important than the pieces about demographic challenges and the Evidence Basis in terms of the comments in the consultation.
- 5.3 The main adaptation made as a result of the consultation was to give more attention to technology under every action area since numerous people noted it as a challenge in every area. Although we had intended for technology to refer to the entire span of ways that technology is a part of our lives, from self-service, apps to internet and social media usage, it appears that this was not entirely clear in the consultation draft and many responders had noted the influence of

social media as a challenge and so there will be a need to consider if there are any specific steps we can take to try and increase the presence of Welsh on social media whilst developing the work programme.

- 5.4 The consultation results were presented to a meeting of the Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet on 10 October 2023 for their comments. The adjustments were supported unanimously. A copy of the Language Strategy following the above adaptations can be seen in **Appendix 2**, for adoption.

## **6. IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING THE STRATEGY**

- 6.1 An initial work programme has been created for the strategy which reflects some of the plans currently underway to address the objectives. It must be stressed that this is a live work programme, with projects and targets added as they are identified. Further discussions will be held with services and partners regarding the work programme over the coming months. A copy of the initial work programme in draft form can be seen in **Appendix 4**.
- 6.2 We will need to ensure that a sufficient budget is available to implement the projects of the work programme and submit funding bids when appropriate through the corporate bid system. The work programme will be reviewed regularly. Departments will report on their contributions as part of their annual reports to the Language Committee, and they will be expected to share data with the Language and Scrutiny Unit at the end of the financial year. The Language and Scrutiny Unit will update the Cabinet on the progress of the work programme and the implementation of the Strategy as part of their annual report about the Welsh language.

## **7. THE RATIONALE AND JUSTIFICATION FOR RECOMMENDING THE DECISION**

- 7.1 The Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011) places a requirement upon the Council to produce a five-year strategy noting how it intends to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language within the county. Since the period of the current Language Strategy (Welsh Language Promotion Scheme in Gwynedd) is coming to an end, the next language strategy for Gwynedd is expected to be published by the end of 2023.

## 7.2 Impact Assessment

An impact assessment has been created for the strategy which anticipates a positive effect on the population of Gwynedd. The assessment acknowledges the possibility that some residents could feel that they will experience negative effects, associated with race and disability characteristics, and sets out how the strategy seeks to ensure equality of opportunity for all of Gwynedd's residents to see, learn and use the Welsh language. It notes the gaps in terms of the evidence base, mainly due to the lack of individual impact assessments on some projects which have been included in the Council Plan and because the 2021 Census data has not been fully analysed yet. It also notes a gap in the evidence due to the lack of response from young people to the consultation.

## 7.3 The Well-being of Future Generations Act

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 involves improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The act places a well-being duty on public bodies which is aimed at delivering the seven well-being goals, namely a prosperous, resilient, healthier, more equal Wales with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language which is globally responsible. The Strategy has been prepared by paying attention to the Act's requirements and addressing the five ways of working.

## 7.4 Equality Act 2010

The Council is subject to public sector duties under the Equality Act 2010 (including Welsh public sector duties). In accordance with these legal duties when making decisions, Councils must pay due regard to the need (1) to eliminate unlawful discrimination (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) encourage good relations based on the protected characteristics and pay due attention to the socio-economic duty under Section 1 of the Act. An equality impact assessment was prepared and is attached in **Appendix 3**. The assessment does not identify any specific negative impact resulting from the decision.

## 8. **VIEWS OF STATUTORY OFFICERS:**

**i. The Monitoring Officer:**

I am satisfied with the propriety of the decision sought.

**ii. Head of Finance Department:**

I have no observations on the content of the Strategy from a financial propriety perspective.

Paragraph 6.2 of the report refers to the resources which will be available in the future in order to support the Strategy; there are specific arrangements in place in the Council to submit applications for additional resources and I expect any application for resources to support the Language Strategy will be presented in accordance with those arrangements.

**Appendices attached to this report:**

Appendix 1: Analysis of the results of the Language Strategy Consultation

Appendix 2: Language Strategy 2023 - 2033

Appendix 3: Language Strategy Impact Assessment

Appendix 4: Initial Work Programme of the Language Strategy