

Title	Report of the Corporate Services Department on the implementation of the Language Policy and contribution towards the realisation of the Welsh Language Strategy 2023 – 2033
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Department	Corporate Services
Author	Ian Jones, Head of Department

1. What policies and plans are in place within your department to contribute to the objectives of the language strategy? Identify the priority area (early years, learning, work and service, community or research and technology)

The Corporate Services Department has specific policies, strategic plans, projects and work streams that contribute to the objectives of the language strategy.

Below are examples of how the Department contributes to the objectives of the language strategy:

Relevant strategic policies and plans:

Procurement Policy - A Sustainable Procurement Policy and Procurement Strategy already exists and includes Language requirements. The policy and strategy will be updated during 2025.

Cymraeg 2050 – 'A million Welsh-speakers' – The Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 Strategy sets out the Government's long-term approach to achieving the target of one million Welsh-speakers by 2050. There are three main themes, 'increasing the number of Welsh-speakers', 'increasing use of Welsh' and 'creating favourable conditions'. We are constantly working towards trying to promote the use of Welsh in line with the Welsh Government's Strategy.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 – 'A Wales with a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language' is one of the main well-being goals of the Act.

Equality Plan 2024 – 2028 - 2028 - The purpose of the equality plan is to reduce inequality between people who have equality characteristics and people who do not share one of the characteristics. The objectives of the plan touch on all areas of work within the Council, and put in place a framework to improve fairness within the organisation and to ensure that we treat people according to needs. The Welsh language is central to all aspects of the plan.

Council Plan Projects 2023 - 2028

- **Keeping the Benefit Local** - The Keeping the Benefit Local project seeks to maximise the local benefit and in turn promote and develop the language. It is possible for us to assess tenders based on this and language measures have been developed. The measures include an assessment of the financial amount and time resource that companies offer when carrying out work. The Unit has also been working with the Language Team to identify companies to target for the Welsh Language Commissioner's 'Welsh Language Offer' scheme.
- **A Welsh Gwynedd** - 'A Welsh Gwynedd' is a work stream of the Council's Plan, with the Corporate Services Department leading on projects to 'Promote the use of Welsh by Gwynedd residents'. All projects under the Gwynedd Language Strategy 2023 - 2033 contribute to the work. The work of the Gwynedd Language Strategy is divided into 5 action areas, and we also show how the objectives of our strategy contribute to the 3 main areas of the Cymraeg 2050 strategy.
- **Research** - The Research and Information Service analyses and shares information about the Welsh language situation in the county, to inform decisions and policies across the Council including the Council Plan.

Ffordd Gwynedd Plan Priorities 2023 - 2028

- **A Satisfied and Healthy Workforce**
 - A Satisfied and Healthy Workforce is one of the work stream priorities of the Ffordd Gwynedd Plan. A staff Well-being Plan has just been adopted as part of that work stream and the well-being support available to staff is fully bilingual with a great emphasis on the language in the procurement process on matters such as staff Counselling Service etc.
- **Workforce Planning and Talent Development** – Workforce Planning and Talent Development is a Ffordd Gwynedd Plan work stream. The project focuses on attracting and retaining staff in the long term, by ensuring that there is an adequate supply of staff available to meet service needs, and in particular therefore Welsh-speaking staff.
- **The Council's Digital Plan:** The Council's Digital Plan is part of the Ffordd Gwynedd Plan's Digital Transformation priority work stream. Work on information and data is being undertaken by the Research and Information Service and in collaboration with other Departments, to facilitate access to data and information both inside and outside the Council. This includes information about the Welsh language and through the medium of Welsh.

Other projects and schemes by the services of the Corporate Services Department:

- **Research and Information Service** – The service is in constant discussions with the Office for National Statistics about their plans to (possibly) not conduct future

Censuses but to collect data in other ways, seeking influence to make sure that (at least) Census-like information will continue to be available.

- **Procurement Service** – Complying with existing Language Standards is challenging in itself, requests for support to tender arrive last minute and obtaining a bilingual package is difficult within a tight timescale.
- **Support Service** – The modules for staff within the Staff Self-Service system are developed bilingually. The Support Service is awaiting a response from DBS in Liverpool on when the on-line application form will be developed in Welsh.
- **Customer Contact and Registration Service** – All marriage / civil partnership ceremonies are welcomed bilingually even if the couples are monolingual in English.

The offer is given at the start of all registrations (birth and death) if they wish to register bilingually.

The Customer Contact and Registration Service have pressed on the Welsh Government several years ago to change the way of undertaking a face-to-face assessment for a blue badge, rather than sending out an interpreter the assessor carries out the assessment in Welsh (if this is the customer's choice).

There were changes to the Death Registration Legislation in September 2024, where the coroner has the ability to register deaths – this template is provided by the General Register Office but is currently available in English only. Gwynedd Coroner and Registrars have requested a bilingual sheet to enable bilingual registration.

The Customer Contact and Registration Service is collaborating with the General Registration Office to test the new DRS (Digital Registration System) system which will be introduced during the year.

An automation system has been provided bilingually at Galw Gwynedd – Welsh first / then English to promote the language to customers.

- **Health, Safety and Well-being Service** – Occupational Health Doctor – this is a highly specialised area where the availability of doctors is rare but obtaining a Welsh-speaking qualified doctor in the field has so far proven impossible. Innovative work is taking place to find a successor for the current doctor by collaborating with a local GP and providing her with shadowing experiences while she qualifies in the field. This provides us with a succession plan when our current non-Welsh speaking doctor retires within the year.

Work is taking place jointly with IOSH (the leading professional organisation for Health and Safety nationally) to be accrediting a Managing Safely course in Welsh and Cyngor Gwynedd will be the only organisation in North Wales to offer it in Welsh. This work is taking place in collaboration with Aberystwyth University.

- **Communications and Engagement Service - Social media** – a single account is used where messages are published in both languages. This means that all our followers

see our messages in Welsh as well as English. Each message is published in such a way that the Welsh message is at the top of the stream.

Videos - We produce our social media video clips in Welsh and add English subtitles to normalise the use of the language.

The press and the media - We provide answers all through the medium of Welsh to the Welsh media. As our officers, Leader and Cabinet Members are Welsh-speakers, we provide a large number of contributors for Welsh language media.

Communicating with staff - Cyngor Gwynedd is innovative in how we communicate with staff and it helps normalise the language through technology, e.g. our use of the staff Facebook group / Chief Executive live session. The home page and news section on the intranet and staff magazine are monolingual, with an English copy available on request.

The Council's Website - All on-line content and services on Cyngor Gwynedd's website and app are bilingual and we are taking proactive steps to encourage users to use the website in Welsh.

Public Engagement – All engagement exercises are conducted entirely bilingually and any focus groups, public meetings, drop-in sessions etc. are conducted by bilingual facilitators and officers.

- **Democracy and Language Service** - Language awareness - In addition to the on-line mandatory sessions, efforts have been made to hold face-to-face sessions on language awareness for councillors and staff. A session was held for 16 councillors to talk about plans and projects that contribute to the promotion of the Welsh language, the Council's statutory role and responsibilities in terms of promoting the Welsh language and the role of members to influence within communities. There are also upcoming presentations to managers regarding language policy, face-to-face sessions have been held with the Education and Corporate Services Departments. A session for finance managers will be held over the next few months, and an on-line session will be developed which will be available on the staff intranet.

Gwynedd Language Forum - Cyngor Gwynedd's Language Unit administrates the Gwynedd Language Forum with around 20 organisations acting in the interests of the Welsh language, meeting on a quarterly basis. A young people's sub-group is organising a consultation to gather the response of young people about their attitude and use of Welsh. A questionnaire and focus groups will be shared in January with results shared with the sub-group.

Welsh in business - The Language Unit has discussed regularly during the year with the Economy and Planning Departments, with positive steps made to strengthen the Welsh language within businesses. There is now a standard sentence included in a newsletter for businesses and planning documents referring to the support available in terms of translating and naming businesses.

Partnership boards - The Language Unit representative is a member on several partnership boards, including representing the Council on the Welsh Language Sub-group of the Public Services Board, contributing to a piece of work that examines good practice in recruiting employees with Welsh language skills and the internal More than Words group. They also represent the Welsh language on the World Heritage Site Partnership Board and the benefits sub-group, with the hope of working further over the year to gather the benefits evidence and data.

Place Names Project - Several elements of the project's original programme of work have been achieved, including holding a property naming training session for the Language and Scrutiny Unit and the Environment Department as well as numerous workshops in schools on place names and how to record on Cyngor Gwynedd's place name map. Cyngor Gwynedd's official name list app has been created and collaboration is in place to organise the installation of new signs in certain places and streets to visually promote the Welsh language in society.

Visitors from the Basque Country - A conversation was held in December between two visitors from the Basque Country and officers from the Language Unit and the economy department. A discussion was held on the relationship of the Language Initiative with the council and language policy developments, with the visitors able to see similarities between our work as a Council and their own.

- **Organisational Learning and Development Service –**

Training – The majority of sessions that are ran are through the medium of Welsh (with Welsh language resources available where possible). An option to have an interpreter for those learning (e.g. in the Welcome Workshop).

There is specific reference to the ability to deliver training bilingually in the specification created for the procurement process.

E-learning - Providing training through the medium of Welsh, e.g. Microsoft Excel, Basic Digital Skills, DiSC (other than the report), Digital Skills 1:1. The e-learning modules created in-house are available in Welsh.

Developing Language Skills

Welsh Tip of the Month:

The **Welsh Tip of the Month** continues to be produced and shared with staff (via the Intranet, Language Training Hub, staff Facebook group and Gair Wythnosol e-mail). It is also shared with Nant Gwrtheyrn and with one language tutor.

Cynllun Cyfeillion (Buddy Scheme):

The **Cyfeillion Cymraeg (Welsh Friends)** scheme has existed for some years now, but in the last year the 'Cylch Cyfeillion (Circle of Friends)' has been established, which meets every 6 months for members of staff who volunteer their time to support others who are learning or developing their Welsh skills. It is an opportunity for the

Welsh Language Learning and Development Officer to support them and for everyone to have the opportunity to share any challenges and good practice.

5 members of staff are currently receiving support through the Cyfeillion Cymraeg scheme, with a further 2 waiting for a Buddy.

Language Training:

24 members of staff are currently receiving language training, with 7 registered for training which is yet to commence. A consultative conversation was held with 5 other members of staff who have yet to register on a suitable course.

Enquiries were made about interest in a Language Refresher course and a Confidence Building course. 21 members of staff showed interest in a Language Refresher course (as well as one manager showing interest for team-wide training), and 18 in the Confidence Building course. These courses will be organised with Learning Welsh North West through the Work Welsh scheme for 2025.

Opportunities to develop Welsh language skills have been promoted through the intranet, the Language Training Hub, the Gair Wythnosol e-mail and e-mails including forwarding information to members of the Language Designations Forum who forward the information to their department staff. Information about language training is also shared with the North and Mid Wales Trunk Roads Agent.

The Welsh Language Learning and Development Officer is seeking opportunities and responds to requests to submit information about the support available for staff to develop their language skills, e.g. presenting at the Healthy Living HR Panel meeting.

In November, the Welsh Language Learning and Development Officer held an 'Experts Session' with the new apprentices and trainees to make them aware of the status of Welsh here at the Council as well as to ensure they know about the support available to them to develop their language skills.

Staff Language Skills:

Information on staff language levels is reported quarterly to all Council Heads of departments in the form of a report. The report includes information about the number of staff who have not completed the language self-assessment, the number who are not reaching their job language designations and information about department staff undertaking language training.

Through the Language Designations Forum (which meets on a quarterly basis) the departments are encouraged to ensure that all staff complete the language self-assessment or receive a simple assessment from their line manager. It is also stressed that all managers are required to ensure staff receive language training if they do not meet their job language designations.

In conjunction with the Language Unit, work is underway to address the standard of written Welsh used across the Council. The work will focus on the challenge of

ensuring language accuracy across all Council documents (particularly those published), the skill of writing in simple and clear Welsh, dispelling some misconceptions about Welsh at Cyngor Gwynedd, and re-examining job descriptions.

Staff Benefits - Information about benefits to staff is all offered bilingually where possible.

There is a negotiation with several companies for them to provide us with Welsh information sheets instead of English-only ones. icom Works/Terryberry; CSSC, Give as you Earn, RAC. In some cases we arrange to send them a translation and another time they arrange to translate things themselves and send it to us before publication.

Our Visits/Roadshows with staff are conducted bilingually as requested and the documents we share with them are also bilingual. Staff were part of Roadshows with Carers last year and were able to promote the language support/training at the sessions.

The Local Business Promotion Scheme is also a way to promote the Welsh language. Businesses have a bilingual advert on our site. When they are Business of the Month their story needs to be in Welsh.

Talent and Apprenticeships - We have a Welsh Language Ambition statement which sets out clearly what our ambition is and outlines the linguistic expectations on the apprentice, the Council and the provider. The practical sessions discuss the Welsh language in our Apprentice Networks every few months.

Language refresher / support sessions for staff at different language levels are offered. We are collaborating with providers such as Grŵp Llandrillo Menai, Bangor University and Coleg Cambria on increasing the Welsh language provision. A report (Providers' Language Report 2024) has been produced with the support of officers and the Senior Language and Scrutiny Advisor which presents the current situation and outlines our plans for the next 3 years to improve the situation.

We are nominated this year for the Employer of the Year award by the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol at the North Wales Work-Based Learning Awards 2025.

Work is being undertaken to look at commissioning Confidence Building training in the workplace to be part of an apprentice development programme (through the support of the Welsh Language Learning and Development Officer and Dr Elin Angharad Davies, Workplace Tutor-Organiser, Bangor University).

We collaborate with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol – sharing opportunities and inviting them to discuss what materials they have that can benefit apprentices in networks.

Stories, experiences and case studies about individuals who have succeeded are shared on the social networks and in media such as Gair o Gyngor.

A collaboration is taking place with Urdd Gobaith Cymru to promote and share the success of a recent member of staff as he qualifies and is offered a job after pursuing his apprenticeship entirely through the medium of Welsh.

A half-hour podcast was recently recorded for Profi, the Llwyddo'n Lleol Scheme about working for Cyngor Gwynedd and using Welsh in the workplace.

Ensure a presence in Bwrlwm ARFOR - a programme powered by the ARFOR regions to unlock businesses and communities thriving with Welsh in Carmarthenshire, Gwynedd, Ceredigion and Anglesey. An opportunity to let other organisations and businesses in the area know what opportunities are available at the Council to work and celebrate the Welsh language.

Learning and Development Apprentice - Two main projects – Work Tasters and Undeb y Dyfodol – that promote the Welsh language. The 2 projects are innovative as they are through the medium of Welsh, where such projects are not available in other organisations through the medium of Welsh.

- **Human Resources Advisory Service:-** the Service ensures that staff have access to information and advice about all aspects of their employment through the medium of Welsh, and works with trade union officials to ensure that staff can receive support from them through a choice of staff language. This includes arranging that an interpreter is available at formal employment hearings.

All Council recruitment and appointment arrangements are bilingual including the procedure of receiving application forms for vacant posts.

2. What more needs to be addressed in the next year to raise the status of the Welsh language and ensure opportunities for people to use Welsh?

(e.g. education, resources, families, promoting service use through Welsh)

Over the next year, ongoing work will take place within the Department to raise the status of the Welsh language and ensure opportunities for people to use Welsh.

Procurement templates will be updated and translated in the new year. The intranet and the buy wise link are also updated and an opportunity to review the content. A change in procurement regulations is also an opportunity to reinforce the system, it needs to be highlighted that this has been challenging in the past. There are very few Welsh language responses from businesses tendering for the Council's work.

Work in the **occupational health** and **health and safety** field that is outlined in question 1 continues.

The **Research and Information** Service will continue to monitor and try to influence the national developments in gathering information on the Welsh language situation if no Census will be carried out again.

A great deal of work is undertaken by the **Democracy and Language** Service, including:

Attitude towards the Welsh language and use of the language by Gwynedd residents

- The language and scrutiny unit has been collaborating with Bangor University on two research projects. The first looks at people's attitude towards the Welsh language and use of the language through an on-line questionnaire. The work of analysing the results of the questionnaires is currently taking place.

The second project focuses on public language choice when using front-line services provided by or on behalf of Cyngor Gwynedd. The language use of the public was observed at 'Siop Gwynedd' receptions, libraries and leisure centres in three different geographical locations in Gwynedd namely Caernarfon, Pwllheli and Dolgellau. Data about people's language choice was also collected when they contacted the Galw Gwynedd centre, which provides a front-line service to deal with phone calls from residents across the county. A data sample of over 3200 was obtained. The work of analysing the results is currently taking place with a view to formulate recommendations to be included in the Gwynedd language strategy programme of work over the coming year, to promote the use of Welsh.

Project 15 - The work of Project 15 (which aims to promote the social use of Welsh on social media) has been announced for tender bids on Sell to Wales. It will undertake the creative work for a year and create a report about the future options of the project to develop it according to the needs of the audience. It is hoped that someone will start work in the new financial year.

Clear communication - Efforts are being put into improving the Council's language of communication and dispelling the myth that perfect Welsh is needed to work for Cyngor Gwynedd. By collaborating together within the department's teams, the Language Unit, Learning and Development, HR and Communications have set up projects to adapt job descriptions to make them simpler and more accessible, created training on how to use clear Welsh and videos that dispel the myth of working for the Council.

Gwynedd language initiative - Considerable work has been undertaken in recent years to provide support to establish Menter Iaith Gwynedd into an independent and sustainable language initiative that will support the Welsh language in communities across Gwynedd. Transfer agreements have now been signed, and following the TUPE process in the new year, it is hoped that staff will transition to the independent language initiative by 1 April 2025. Collaboration for the benefit of the Welsh language will continue with the Menter Iaith in future.

3. Has the development of technology interfered with your ability to provide opportunities to use Welsh? If applicable please provide an example. How do you ensure

that the development of technology does not affect your ability to provide opportunities to use the Welsh language?

The Procurement Service has recently seen that businesses are starting to use Artificial Intelligence or *AI to create tender responses, this technology will obviously be in English initially.*

The Research and Information Service has researched, and solved, how to design information dashboards bilingually so that they work the same in both languages and without the need to populate them twice, and that it can be easily moved between one language and another. They have also been working with the Welsh Government to ensure the adoption of Welsh names on neighbourhoods (Lower Layer Output Areas) in Gwynedd, to use them when reporting information about areas.

The lack of adequate provision on 'Teams' to enable simultaneous translation has been a barrier for some years, with the Council successfully using Zoom to overcome the problem. However, that has also created some hurdles, with a few partners refusing to use the technology. Further steps have been made very recently by further developing Teams, and we will be experimenting with the provision and technology we have within the Council over the coming months.

Social media analytics technology does not work in Welsh (e.g. measuring sentiment, the use of "tags", organising campaigns). This means we are unable to use the technology to the fullest.

Press monitoring services do not monitor Welsh language media, so we are forced to do the monitoring ourselves.

Platforms like YouTube offer auto-generated subtitles and transcription, but it does not work in Welsh, which means we have to produce it ourselves, which takes longer.

The Council's website is being developed using artificial intelligence. The fact that it needs to be "learned" in two languages slows down the process.

4. How do you keep a record of the people who use your service through the medium of Welsh? Can you share relevant data?

The **Procurement** Service does not collect data at present. National procurement systems are being developed to capture information about companies, as part of this there has been a reference to the possibility that the number of Welsh speakers within companies will be captured. However, we will continue to push for improvement in this area and the Council will need to report on this measure as part of the Social Partnership and Public Procurement Act.

The **Communication and Engagement** Service collects data on uptake of the Council's website through the medium of Welsh.

A lot of data is collected by the **Organisational Learning and Development** Service, which includes:

Language training - The Welsh Language Learning and Development Officer retains information on the language levels of all Council staff (using the language self-assessment questionnaire available on Staff Self-Service) as well as information on all Council staff attending language training.

Across the Council, 24 members of staff are currently receiving language training, with 7 registered on training which is yet to commence. A consultative conversation was held with 5 other members of staff who have yet to register on a suitable course.

Apprenticeships – General data is collected about language mediums in relation to providers, but no data is currently collected about provision within the Council e.g. "7.5% choose to study their subject through the medium of Welsh (at University/College)".

Provider Language Report (Apprenticeships) - A report has been produced with the help of officers and the Senior Language and Scrutiny Advisor which presents the current situation and outlines our plans for the next 3 years to improve the situation by collaborating with the apprentices themselves and the external providers, e.g. Grŵp Llandrillo Menai, Bangor University and Coleg Cambria. To monitor the situation, we will collect information annually through a questionnaire which is sent to all Council apprentices.

Corporate Training – It is on the MoDS system that a record of what medium staff have carried out their training is collected. The data for 2024 is:

Hyfforddiant Corfforaethol2024	Cymraeg	Saesneg	Dwyieithog
Nifer Digwyddiadau	320	60	16
Nifer Unigolion Unigryw	1,192	208	98

5. What are the language skills of your staff?

There are 176 staff members in the Corporate Services Department. Of the 176, **166** have completed the language questionnaire and 168 have some form of language assessment (they completed the questionnaire or received a simple assessment from a line manager).

In terms of dispersion of language levels, there are 8 individuals at Intermediate level, 39 at Advanced level and 119 at Proficiency level. 2 individuals have received a language assessment from their line manager and 8 do not yet have a language assessment.

6. Please provide examples of any obstacles, complaints and praise associated with the provision and promotion of Welsh-medium services.

Below are examples from the Corporate Services Department of obstacles, complaints and praise associated with the provision and promotion of Welsh-medium services:

Praise:

Menter Iaith Gwynedd officers came out on top in the Mentrau Iaith Cymru awards. There was an award of excellence for the work undertaken with the Croeso Cymraeg project - North Wales Africa Society. It was also good to hear praise at a seminar by the Welsh Language Commissioner on the good practice of language strategies for Cyngor Gwynedd's decision to produce a 10-year rather than 5-year Welsh language strategy. In addition, very positive independent observations have been received from visitors from the Basque Country and Bangor University regarding the bulk of work being undertaken to promote the Welsh language on the ground through so many different projects led by the Language Unit and the Council.

Obstacles:

Lack of availability of Welsh-medium provision by public sector partners such as WLGA and North Wales Police. This shortcoming means that we as an organisation are given extra work to constantly establish an alternative way of working. The field of training is one example.

The Procurement Service states that businesses do not look at Welsh versions of tenders and that they tend to respond in English. Procurement regulations, templates and guidelines tend to be produced in English, cost and time of translation, higher costs of obtaining systems/services through the medium of Welsh, and an argument that there is less risk in having a monolingual contract.

The department's report to the Language Committee in 2024:

[Corporate Support Department Welsh Language Promotion Plan.pdf](#)