ANNUAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS 2018-19

GWYNEDD COUNCIL

1. Background

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 establishes a legal framework that places a duty on the Council to comply with the standards in relationship to the Welsh language. The individual standards explain how organisations are expected to use the language in different situations.

The duties that derive from the standards mean that the Council should not treat the Welsh language less favourably than the English language, and that the Council should promote and facilitate the Welsh language (namely making it easier for people to use it in their everyday lives).

The Language Standards are divided into five fields:

- service delivery
- policy making
- action
- promotion
- record keeping

This Council received a compliance notice from The Welsh Language Commissioner under Section 4 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, on 30 September 2015. This notice specified the precise standards the Council is required to comply with and on 30 March 2016 a 147 standards came into effect, with four further standards coming into effect on 30 March 2017.

As a result of the Council's historical commitment to the Welsh language, it had already been complying with a significant number of the standards set through the implementation of its Language Plan and indeed, this plan went further than the Welsh language standards in several fields.

It was considered that the Council's current commitment to the Welsh language should not be weakened by limiting its commitment by complying with only the Welsh language standards, and consequently a new Language Policy was developed.

The aim of the Council's Language Policy - namely its primary medium of ensuring compliance with the Language Standards - is to ensure that all the county's residents can use the Council's services through the medium of Welsh and English. The principle that Welsh and English should be treated equally is followed, but by working proactively to ensure that Welsh is prioritised at all times.

2. Compliance with the Standards

The Council's Language Policy and procedures ensure that all Council services are offered bilingually. As a result of years of setting language requirements when recruiting, and of offering training to improve skills and learning Welsh, we have ensured that the vast majority of Council staff are able to speak Welsh and are able to act in accordance with this policy, thus normalising the use of Welsh and ensuring that Welsh services are available without having to ask.

Standards are noted in this section where the Council have had to take additional steps or give special consideration to compliance - beyond the implementation of the Language Policy - during the past year. Action is taken to ensure that we do our very best on behalf of Gwynedd's residents in proactively offering Welsh services and in encouraging and promoting more use of the Welsh language while accessing services.

SERVICE DELIVERY STANDARDS

Gwynedd Council has a duty to comply with 70 service delivery standards and six additional service delivery standards. As a result of the Council's historical commitment to the Welsh language, it was already operating in accordance with or beyond the requirements of many of these standards when they were imposed on the Council by the Welsh Language Commissioner.

STANDARD	CONTENTS OF THE STANDARD	ACTION
7+14+21+ 30+32	Service Delivery Standards regarding **asking** an individual whether they wish to receive a Welsh service, or state that we welcome contact in Welsh.	As a result of the Language Policy and the Council's historical commitment to the Welsh language, the use of Welsh has been normalised and there is high awareness amongst the public that they can get services and correspond with the Council in Welsh. The principles of the Language Policy, along with the Council's wider operational principles, mean that staff are expected to act in accordance with the principle of the active offer, i.e., that the language of choice and the Welsh language service is always available, as a first choice, and that nobody should have to "ask" for this service. Accepting that mistakes will happen occasionally, we are confident that working proactively will remove the need to ask and state, and that there is a good understanding amongst residents that all services are available bilingually. Nevertheless, we acknowledge that people's habits change, and we intended to conduct

		research over the coming year to look at users' attitudes, and their findings about the language medium of services, in order to ensure that this aspect of the policy is still relevant and effective.
52+55+56+ 57+58+ 59+60	Service Delivery Standards dealing with the website, apps, social media and self-service machines	We still face some obstacles in regards to apps and websites, especially when purchasing external systems. We continue to deal with these cases individually to ensure that the public receive the best service and options. We need to work consistently to raise the awareness of external companies of the need to develop bilingual apps from the start, rather than having to adapt the app further down the line. It also continues to be a challenge when the Council's websites or services need to transfer to external websites, such as on-line payment services, to ensure that everything is available through the medium of Welsh. More services and forms are now submitted on-line, and the Council itself has been developing a number of on-line services recently in order to enable the public to make requests and payments via the Council website. These are all available bilingually. During the past year, there has been a change in the Blue Badge and DBS on-line application services. The Council has attempted to influence the changes in order to ensure that the services reach our standards, but these two matters are ongoing, and have been referred to the Language Commissioner for support for a resolution.
SUPPLEMENTARY 155+156+157+ 158+159+160	Service Delivery Standards dealing with the compliance arrangements with Service Delivery Standards	The corporate complaints procedure is followed when dealing with language complaints, and this procedure is on the Council's website. The Council formulates and publishes an annual report in accordance with the Welsh language Standards.

POLICY MAKING STANDARDS

Gwynedd Council has a duty to comply with 10 policymaking standards, and six supplementary policy making standards. Again, the Council is already operating in accordance with or beyond the

requirements of many of these standards when they were imposed on the Council by the Welsh Language Commissioner.

STANDARD	CONTENTS OF THE STANDARD	ACTION
88+89+90+94	Policy Making Standards dealing with considering the impact on the Welsh language and on Welsh speakers.	The Language Unit plays a greater role in impact assessments, by offering an expert and independent voice when assessing the impact of policy changes or restructuring of services. The procedure of assessing impact on equality matters includes the impact on people's opportunities to use Welsh, and the Unit will contribute to, and check any assessments in order to ensure a minimum impact. During the year, we have identified that the existing procedure does not achieve the desired outcomes in terms of ensuring that the Council takes advantage of every opportunity to promote the use of the Welsh language. The Language Commissioner's Assurance Report in summer 2018 also drew attention to the need to look at this matter, and therefore the Language Unit and the Equality Officer have been working together to consider changes to the process, in order to ensure that we get the best out of the practice as departments assess the impact of their policy decisions on various equality and language characteristics. The Council's work on developing the impact assessment guidelines for planning applications have also helped to develop our understanding in this field. From May 2019, the Language Unit will take an active role in validating any language assessments (concise or full) that are submitted as part of planning applications, and recommend steps to be taken if we see a potential impact on the prosperity of the Welsh language in our communities as a result of the proposed development.

OPERATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARD	CONTENTS OF THE STANDARD	ACTION
127+136+136A+	Operational Standards dealing with assessing the	Every year, the Council gathers information from each department to determine the number of staff who are Welsh speakers.

	language skills of our employees	The requirement to speak Welsh has been placed as an essential skill for each post within the Council; this means that some level of ability and understanding is required for every post. During 2018/19, a new procedure was established to determine linguistic requirements when appointing new posts. Welsh language skills are still an essential requirement for all posts; however, when drawing up job descriptions and person specifications, managers are now asked to consider the level of linguistic skills required for the role in question, and differentiate between written, oral, and reading and comprehension skills, based on a framework developed by the Welsh Language Learning and Development Officer. In addition, during the year, the first part of the work of mapping the linguistic skills of the posts that already exist in the Council was completed. Every department within the Council has now looked at the person specification for every post within their services, and validated that the language levels are appropriately placed for the requirements of the role. The second phase of this work, which is already ongoing, is to identify whether the officers currently in these posts reach the language requirements or not. This work takes time, as it involves intense contact with managers and units, completing self-assessments, and offering immediate support and training to individuals if it is found that they are at a lower level than the current desired skills. This work initially focused on front-line services, and up to the end of March 2019, the project was completed in nine front-line services, and was ongoing in another seven services. The individuals who do not reach the requirements of the post will receive another assessment to confirm the self-assessment, and will then receive training in order to close the gap. This questionnaire allows officers to respond to the individual's specific needs following a detailed analysis of the responses. This work has lead to an added and unexpected benefit as we are not only seeing many staff members with higher linguisticskills than those

		specified for their post, but also the work has lead to an increase in the number of staff who are asking for training, like grammar lessons, to improve their skills further.
128+129+130 +131+132+133+	Operational Standards dealing with general training, language and awareness training	The majority of the Council's training is provided in Welsh, with English courses only available at request. Specialist courses in specific fields, where an external service would need to be bought in, remains a barrier, despite the Council's consistent efforts to influence providers, and many of these course are provided bilingually. For the most part, Welsh language materials are successfully acquired, but not the trainers. Wherever possible, the Council responds to the challenge by holding train the trainer sessions, and develop the skills of the Learning and Development Team in order to ensure that they are able to provide the training themselves. During the past year, for example, Gwynedd Council officers were key in the efforts to ensure health and safety training (IOSH) entirely through the medium of Welsh. Up to this point, Council officers had to hold the course themselves, but were unable to acquire the accredited materials in Welsh. The course can now be followed entirely through the medium of Welsh.

PROMOTION STANDARDS

In 2018-19, the Council's new strategic plan to promote the Welsh language was published in accordance with the requirements of the Standards. The ***Welsh Language Promotion Plan for Gwynedd 2018-2023*** is an effort to identify the main challenges and opportunities that face the Welsh language in Gwynedd. The overall aim is to increase the opportunities for people to use Welsh, through the Council's services and in the community. The Council's Language Committee was a key part of drawing up this plan, and they keep an overview of its implementation by receiving regular reports on various projects and work streams that contribute towards the vision.

A copy of the Promotion Plan can be seen here [link]

3. Report on the number of staff members who can speak Welsh

REPORTING IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF STANDARD 170 ***(a) the number of employees that have Welsh language skills***

The following data reports on the number of employees who have Welsh language skills, giving an analysis of the skills level per service:

This data does not contain information about GwE or North and Mid Wales Trunk Roads Agency (NMWTRA) as they are regional divisions that are administered by Gwynedd Council.

SERVICE	TOTAL NUMBER OF STAFF	NUMBER OF FLUENT WELSH SPEAKERS	NUMBER OF LEARNERS / ABLE TO UNDERSTAND AND TALK SOME WELSH	NUMBER WHO DO NOT SPEAK OR UNDERSTAND ANY WELSH
Education – Central staff	185	185		
Teaching Staff [1]				
Ancillary Staff	775	716	-	59
Environment	162	159	3	
Finance	206	204	2	
Corporate Support	184	184		
Economy and Community	406	395	11	3
Adults, Health and Well-being **Children and Supporting Families**	1290	1163	127[2]	
Highways and Municipal	546	530	16	
Consultancy	118	105	12	1
Corporate Leadership Team	33	33		
TOTAL	3,905	3,674		234
		94%		**6%**

[1] Although we have not been collecting detailed data on the linguistic ability of education and schools staff in the past, a piece of work has been completed in 2018, under the guidance of GwE, to

assess the skills levels of the entire education workforce. This survey shows that **87.1% of the 1,345** members of staff who responded to the information request are able to communicate fluently and confidently in Welsh, and only **0.7%** have no Welsh language skills at all.

[2] The data shown for the two social services departments is data submitted by the Adult and Children's services for their annual data report (the STF). This data had not been fully verified at the time of publishing this annual report on 28th June 2019, and so the data will be revised and updated if and when needed.

4. Reporting on Staff Training Through the Medium of Welsh and the Development of Language Skills

REPORTING IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF STANDARD 170 –
(b) number of members of staff who attended training courses offered in Welsh during the year (based on the records kept in accordance with standard 152);

(c) if a Welsh version of a course was offered by you during the year, the percentage of the total number of staff who attended the course and who attended the Welsh version (based on the records kept in accordance with standard 152);

Welsh is the language of every course within the Council, with English courses available upon request. If non-Welsh staff members or learners attend induction courses, the training will be offered bilingually. This can be done in many ways, depending on the circumstances, and the number of non-Welsh speakers at the session - by using an interpreter, or with the leader/trainer presenting in both languages alternatively.

The only exception, where training will be conducted exclusively in English is when training is required within specialist fields, where specialist trainers will be bought in. Even then, every effort will be made when commissioning services to obtain bilingual materials, and every opportunity will be taken to attempt to influence on national providers.

During the past year, for example, a major step forward was taken in the field of Health and Safety by ensuring that the national IOSH training will be available entirely through the medium of Welsh for staff members from now on.

The Council had drawn the Commissioner's attention to the obstacles with this type of training after we received complaints from staff members, and to request their support to influence on the providers, but it is fair to say that the perseverance of Council staff on this matter has made an enormous difference to ultimately change attitudes and decisions within the establishment.

Number of internal training **"events"** during the period from 1 April 2018 to 30 March 2019: **798**

This is a combination of 'corporate' and 'specialist' titles, which include a variety of training – face to face, e-modules and webinars.

Number of training titles within the same period: **252**

TRAINING EVENTS	NUMBER	ATTENDEES
Welsh	381	1483
English	218	1067
Bilingual	208	1140

5. Welsh Language Training Report 2017-2018

Regarding the provision offered to the learners, the below arrangements were used as needed:

- Community based courses over a prolonged period of time (learners attending once or twice weekly within the community)
- Welsh Improvement Sessions held regularly held by the Learning and Development Officer (Welsh Language) e.g. Mutations, Basic Welsh
- 1:1 individual sessions with the Learning and Development Officer (Welsh Language) at the request of individuals
- 1:1 individual sessions with external tutors at the request of individuals
- Intensive courses (a week or more - at the Universities or Nant Gwrtheyrn)
- Occasional courses - e.g. *Welsh in the Workplace* (two days)
- Summer Schools (held by Learn Welsh - North West)
- On-line course by Learn Welsh i.e. Croeso Cymraeg Gwaith
- One class takes place internally: Master level classes (Higher Level 2) - one morning per week.

The following tables show the record of numbers who received training to develop language skills as it stood on 31 March 2019.

Level	Total
ENTRY	28
FOUNDATION	15
INTERMEDIATE	16
HIGHER	10
MASTER	13
WELSH LANGUAGE IMPROVEMENT	90
	172

The learners follow a wide range of courses, as follows:

Learning methods - TOTAL	
Course	**Total**
Community courses	35
Master Level Classes	8
1:1	14
1:1 external (Learn Welsh -North West)	2
Work Welsh - On-line	15
Welsh in the Workplace	3
Summer School	2
New Year Course	1
Nant Gwrtheyrn	4
Mutations	34
Basic Welsh	12
1:1	1
Welsh Language Improvement	33
Total	**171**

These learners are divided across the Council's departments as follows:

Departments	**Total**	**%**
Education	25	15%
Environment	8	5%

Finance	2	1%
CS	10	6%
Economy	9	5%
Adults	40	23%
Children	35	20%
Highways	5	3%
YGC	21	12%
NMWTRA	6	3%
LEISURE	9	5%
MEMBERS	2	1%
	172	

2017 - 2018 Dafydd Orwig Memorial Prize

Two awards are now presented each year, to recognise individuals in the Council who are learning Welsh, but also individuals or teams who make a particular effort, or go beyond their normal roles, to promote the Welsh language and ensure that residents and service users are able to use Welsh without any hindrance.

The awards were presented this year to Nancy Wilkinson (Environment Officer in Gwynedd Consultancy) and the Health, Safety and Well-being Service (for their work of securing Welsh language resources for the IOSH training).

6. Reporting on language requirements when appointing

REPORTING IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF STANDARD 170 –

Ch) the number of new jobs and empty jobs advertised by you during the year categorised as posts that require -
(i) that Welsh language skills are essential
(ii) that Welsh language skills need to be learnt when appointed to the post,
(iii) that Welsh language skills are desirable, or
(iv) that Welsh language skills are not essential (based on the records kept in accordance with standard 154)

That Welsh language skills are essential	**500**
That Welsh language skills need to be learnt when appointed to the post	**0**
That Welsh language skills are desirable	**0**
That Welsh language skills are not essential	**0**

Every post advertised by the Council includes the ability to speak Welsh as an essential skill. However, during the past year, the Council has established a new system for identifying the exact linguistic requirements that are required for various posts, and now every post is advertised with a clear explanation of the required oral, written, and reading and comprehension skills.

This is part of the Language Specifications' wider work.

7. Reporting on language complaints

REPORTING IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF STANDARD 170 –

(d) number of complaints received

The Language Commissioner conducted one inquiry into an alleged failure to adhere to the Standards during 2018-19.

CSG236 Inquiry

In March 2019, it was deemed that the Council had breached two Standards and had failed to deal with correspondence and an appeals process in its entirety through the medium of Welsh. The Council has already taken steps to ensure that the situation does not arise again, and the Council's Language Policy clearly states that any member of staff has a right to submit complaints and follow the complaints procedure through the medium of Welsh.

Inquiries by the Commissioner and internal complaints:

Number of direct complaints received through the Council's complaints process:

Department	The number of complaints	The matter relating to the complaint
Environment	1	The documents of the Planning process were not available in English
Corporate Support	2	The Council's official address on-line An enquiry from a GwE officer after an internal message was sent in Welsh only, with the English version as an attachment, according to the practice for internal communication. It was confirmed that the message complied with the requirements of the Language Policy.
Corporate Leadership Team	1	On-line questionnaire was not available in Welsh
Economy and Community	2	Business Loans Fund Terms - a new business had not used Welsh Communities for Work leaflets were not available in Welsh
Finance	2	Answering machine: 1 English only message on the answering machine of the service that deals with bus pass applications. 1 Welsh only message on the answering machine of the Council's taxation service.
Total	**8**	

Developmental work:

We have established a work stream titled “Cymraeg yn y Gweithle” (“Welsh within the Workplace”) which looks thematically at various aspects of compliance and looks into new means of developing the Council’s ability to proactively provide linguistic options and to encourage more members of the public to use our Welsh language services.

We have been focusing mainly on the work of setting language specifications for jobs during the past year, and have identified thematic fields including the use of language while developing on-line services and using apps.

In the coming year, we will be focusing on

- Continuing with the work of identifying the language skills of officers through the work of the Language Specifications.
- Understand how people use our services and how we can encourage more people to use Welsh forms and on-line services.
- Develop a training programme that will focus on ensuring that staff use legible, simple and clear language when writing and communicating
- Expand the awareness programme to develop staff's understanding of their responsibilities when promoting the Welsh language - on a wider level than offering a bilingual service only.
- Contribute to the Arfer pilot project by Bangor University that looks at attempting to change language habits amongst teams where there is an established habit of speaking English.

We will also:

- Develop arrangements and an understanding of the means the Council assesses the impact of decisions on the Welsh language more effectively, and ensure that every decision is supportive of the Welsh language.