INTERIM REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS

2015-2016

1. The background of setting the Language Standards

The Council received the compliance notice for the Language Standards in September 2015, and they came into force on 31 March 2016.

From that date, there was no statutory requirement on the Council to report on the implementation of their Language Plan, which came to an end on the date the standards came into force. The Council will, from now on, produce an annual report that will include the details required according to the Standards.

As the Standards did not come into force until the end of the financial year, this report will mainly concentrate on reporting the steps taken and the procedures put in place to ensure that the Council are complying with the Standards.

2. Steps taken so far

After receiving the compliance notice, a number of meetings were held with leaders of the Council, heads of services and elected members to assess if there were any standards that caused great concern or any that would mean having to take some kind of action.

It was judged that most of the Standards were already being met by staff and services in the Council, and that only a small number would call for action or changes to be put in place before the end of March in order to facilitate compliance.

The general steps taken to deal with the changes needed, and in response to the initial discussions included:

- Publishing a copy of the Standards which the Council needs to comply with on the public website, and send copies to each one of the main receptions in order to notify the public.
- Hold meetings with individual officers in services that would be most likely to be affected by the Standards, including the Procurement, Human Recources, Social Services (discussing in particular the relationship between the standards and the More than Words strategy), and Learning and Development teams.
- Publish the Council's new Language Policy that will strengthen the commitment to the Standards, and outline the mode of practice that will ensure that the Council comply with the standards and continue to urge the Council's Services to operate beyond the statutory requirements and promote the Welsh language in every part of their work.
- Create supplementary guidance notes to the Language Policy that will help Council staff in their day to day work. So far, two set of guidance notes have been developed so far.
    1. Staff guidance to the Welsh Language Policy
    2. Guidance to setting Welsh language conditions in work contracts.

Work still in development phase:

- **Language Awareness Module –** language awareness is already offered as part of the internal training programme in the Council, but following a discussion with officers from the Learning and Development team we agreed to work on a new e-module that would be available to all staff members and that will aim to improve their understanding and awareness of the responsibilities set by the Language Standards and the Council Language Policy, as well as good practice in communicating with the public.
- **Language skills assessment** – work has started in the Human Resources department on a plan to assess language skills and look at the language requirements set for new jobs. It will also look at the way in which the Council monitors the progress of members of staff as they try to improve their language skills. This will enable us to target training and get a better idea of the abilities of the staff to provide all aspects of the Council services in Welsh.

As well as the general actions, some specific steps were taken to ensure that the Council conforms with some of the Language Standards:

Stand-ard	**Class**	**Wording of Standard**	**Action Taken.**
67	Service Delivery	You must display a sign in your reception which states (in Welsh) that persons are welcome to use the Welsh language at the reception.	Packs containing poster, badges and lanyards were distributed to all main receptions, with an explanation of the responsibility to use them under the standards. The same resources are available to any front line member of staff who wishes to use them.
68	Service Delivery	You must ensure that staff at the reception who are able to provide a Welsh language reception service wear a badge to convey that.	
98	Operational	You must develop a policy on using Welsh internally for the purpose of promoting and facilitating the use of the language, and you must publish that policy on your intranet.	The Council's new Language Policy was adopted by the Full Council on 3rd of March 2016, and published on the Corporate website on 30th of March 2016.

127	Operational	You must assess the Welsh languages skills of your employees.	The Council already collects annual data on staff ability to speak Welsh, but there is a desire within the Council to go a step further, as noted in Standard 151 and keep a record of the language skills of staff. A new assessment scheme has been approved for development by the Language Committee that will set practical language levels that are based on the CBAC/WJEC language skill levels and allow the assessment of progression against the language requirement set.
134	Operational	You must provide text or a logo for your staff to include in e-mail signatures which will enable them to indicate whether they speak Welsh fluently or whether they are learning the language.	While publicising the new Language Policy internally, a link was provided to the Language Commissioner's website where an email logo is available denoting that it is possible to correspond in Welsh and English with the person in question. Further publicity will be given to this during the year.

3. Reporting on performance

3.1 Language Complaints

A new method of recording language complaints has been set up, for complaints received from Marth 2016 onwards, that will differentiate between complaints relating to the Language Standards and complaints relating to the internal Language Policy. We will also keep a record of the class of standard the complaint relates to, as well as recoding any additional action taken to strengthen the Service as a result of the complaint.

For the purpose of this annual report, we record those complaints received for the year ending March 2016, as they were reported to the Language Committee.

Reported to the Language Committee 23 April 2015

DATE	COMPLAINT	RESPONSE
March 2015	A complaint through the Office of the Commissioner about a weakness in the provision by Cyd-Cymru to which the Council refers residents to try to save home energy costs	A reply was provided noting that this was not a Council service but that steps had been taken to ensure that as much of the service as possible was available through the medium of Welsh (all the steps bar one). We are awaiting the Commissioner's response.

Reported to the Language Committee 18 June 2015

DATE	COMPLAINT	RESPONSE
April 2015	Complaint referred by Welsh Language Commissioner's Office regarding an English only sign in one of the Council run carparks in Caernarfon.	The relevant Service looked into the matter and found that the Welsh sign had disappeared overnight (more than likely stolen). There had been a delay in responding to the matter due to the absence of the responsible officer, but arrangements were made to get a replacement sign by the end of the same week. The Welsh Language Commissioner's office was contacted to explain background and confirm the problem had been rectified.
April 2015	Complaint by a member of the public after they received English only correspondence from Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water.	The relevant service was contacted and a copy of the original correspondence was sent to the complainant to

	The letter was sent as a result of correspondence from Gwynedd Council to Dŵr Cymru so the complainant was seeking confirmation about the language of the original letter from Gwynedd Council.	confirm that Gwynedd Council had written to Dŵr Cymru bilingually and so acted according to the Language Scheme.
April 2015	Complaint by an officer in the Education Department regarding a letter received from the Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Wales that included incorrect and incoherent Welsh.	The officer in question contacted the Tribunal office directly to bring the matter to their attention and an amended letter was received within the week.
April 2015	Complaint by a member of the public that received a postal vote form in English only	The matter was referred to the Senior Manager responsible for the Electoral Unit. It was explained that the process of registering on-line happens through the website of central government in London. If a request is made for a postal vote, the form is sent directly as an attachment to the acknowledgment email, as it appears happened here. The Councils is not responsible for sending the form. On the other hand, if the Council receives a request directly, a bilingual form is sent to the applicant.
May 2015	Complaint by a member of the public about a Parking Enforcement Officer not able to speak Welsh.	The matter was referred to the Regulatory Department, and they apologised and responded to the complaint made, and abolished the parking ticket that was owed due to the special circumstances of the complainant at the time.
June 2015	Complaint by a local Councillor regarding English only signs on College Road, Bangor	The matter was referred to an officer in the Highways department who contacted the contractor, who in turn agreed to move the signs. They had not asked or received consent from the Council to use the signs

Reported to the Language Committee 22 October 2015

COMPLAINTS RELATING TO THE LANGUAGE SCHEME

DATE	COMPLAINT	RESPONSE.

May 2015	Complaint regarding an English only out of office message from a Councillor (on email).	It was confirmed that members are not accountable to the Language Scheme in the same way as officers of the Council, but a discussion was held regarding the need to give clear guidance to members on the expectation that they will communicate bilingually.. The complaint was drawn to the attention of the Councillor, who apologised and confirmed it had been a mistake. A response was sent to the complainant and a reply was received accepting the explanation.

INFORMAL COMPLAINTS

DATE	COMPLAINT	RESPONSE.
July 2015	Complaint regarding English only materials being used as part of a Public event in Fairbourne (Coastline Management Plant)	It was confirmed that Welsh versions of the reports and posters in question were available in Welsh. A response was sent to the complainant, and the mater moved on to be a Freedom of Information case and is being dealt with by an Officer in the Freedom of Information department.
July 2015	A complaint was referred regarding the lack of Welsh materials on a website that schools are referred to by the Welsh Government for guidance specialist advice on matters relating to outdoor activities (OEAP website)	It seems this matter had already been flagged by the Education Department in late 2014. A new enquiry was sent to the Education and Skills Department of the Government asking if there was any possibility of translating the main guidance material. A response was received from the Government explaining the reasons for not translating the materials. The response was sent to the Council in English only.

Reported to the Language Committee January 2016

FORMAL COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE LANGUAGE PLAN

DATE	COMPLAINT	RESPONSE.
June 2015	A complaint was received from the Welsh Language Commissioner (ref. 1970) regarding an alleged failure to provide a Welsh language service. The complaint was in connection to documents listed on the Council website as part of the public consultation on the Joint Local Development Plan. A list of documents had been published on the website with a note explaining to the public that copies could be had, but in English only. These were technical documents from an external company.	Having looked into the mater, it was confirmed that the documents had been offered in English only, but that they would be translated in due course as part of the usual post-consultation process. The Planning Department had not received any requests for these documents in English or in Welsh, and they had not been published in full on the Council website as they were not a part of the official document bundle of the consultation on the Development Plan. The list had been prepared and offered as documents holding additional information that could be of interest, rather than documents which held information essential to the consultation process. The Planning (Policy) Manager of the Joint Planning Policy Unit took full responsibility for the decision to include the list only on the website, and not to include the full documents bilingually. There was regular correspondence between the Commissioners' officers and the Language Unit in the Council over some months, and the matter was bought to a close in December 2015 without any further action. The Commissioner is of the opinion that the Council have broken the terms of the language plan as the documents we're listed publicly, and that they were as a result "public documents". The Council was clear that there was no intention by the Planning Department to mislead or withhold information relevant to the consultation. The wording of the new language policy being developed for the Council will be looked at carefully to ensure that the guidance on public documents is clear.
September 2015	A complaint was received from the Welsh Language Commissioner (ref 2057 – received 10 September	As a result of the sensitive nature of the complaint, a thorough investigation of the circumstances was held. It was confirmed that the Council Registry Office was not

	2015) regarding an alleged failure to provide a bilingual death certificate and to fail to note the cause of death in Welsh.	responsible for sending out English only/bilingual certificates to the complainant, but that hey had in fact been sent by the Coroners office. The Registry office had issued a bilingual certificate to the complainant in August 2015 (and explained that it was not possible to issue a Welsh only certificate), but had failed to note the cause of death in Welsh as a result of constraints put upon the Registrars by the Registration of Births and Deaths (Welsh Language) Regs, 1987 and the guidelines by the General Registry Office, that state that the cause of death must be recorded exactly as it appears on the certificate by the Coroner. It appears that this is a common problem, and that causes of death are frequently noted in English only, as there is only one Coroner who is a Welsh speaker. A response was sent to the Commissioner's office explaining the circumstances and also asking for any help or advice they could offer to influence these external departments of the government, which have not been devolved, but which are having an impact on the Council's ability to provide a full bilingual service to the residents of Gwynedd.

INFORMAL COMPLAINTS

DATE	COMPLAINT	RESPONSE.
September 2015	An English only invitation was forwarded to us (for our information) by a member of the Pwllheli Town Council. The invitation was for an event to be held in Plas Heli. A general dissatisfaction was expressed in the email sent to us about the use of the Welsh language by Plas Heli and a query was made about the Language Policy of the Plas.	Plas Heli was contacted, and it was reported that they had used an external agency to promote the event in question, and that they were unaware that an English only invite had been sent. They contacted the agency and a Welsh invite was sent within a few days. On the mater of the language policy: It is not clear if Plas Heli has an official language policy or not. According to the service level agreement between the Council and Plas Heli, they were expected to adopt and publish a Welsh Language Policy along side other

	.	health and safety and operational policies, but we have not been able to get a copy despite several requests.
December 2015	A freedom of information request was received regarding the Gwynedd and Anglesey Housing and the Welsh Language Survey commissioned by hunaniaith. A claim was being made that the research had not been weighed properly and that the Council had not received advice from an independent, professional statistician on the methodology used.	A reply was sent from the Democratic and Delivery Senior Manager, stating clearly that the intention of the research was not to provide a detailed, comprehensive picture, and that the work had accomplished the brief set by hunaniaith.

3.2 Language Skills of Staff (Standard 170 (2) a))

As previously noted, there are plans to improve the way in which the Council collects data retaining to language skills, but we present here the data about the number of staff, in each service, who can speak Welsh, and how many of them can not speak Welsh.

SERVICE	UNIT	AREA	NUMBER	NUMBER OF NON-WELSH SPEAKERS
Education	Management Team	Arfon	7	0
	Pupils and Inclusion: **ADY:** Senior psychologist Language and Communication Difficulties ABC Units Learning and Cognition **Inclusion** Trac Pecyn 25 EMAS Safety	Arfon, Meirion and Dwyfor	 1 10 7 11 7 5 4 1	 0

	Counselling Primary Behaviour Support Extended Work Experience Well-being Service Home Training Support Staff		5 4 1 7 3 3	
	Wages and School Contracts	Arfon	4	0
	Governors	Arfon	2	0
	Catering and Cleaning	Arfon, Meirion a Dwyfor	5	0
	Ancillary services	Arfon	3	0
	Education Support Unit	Arfon Dwyfor	1 10	0 0
	Scholl Organisation	Arfon	7	0
	Welsh Language: Language Unit Language Charter	Arfon, Meirion a Dwyfor	 11 1	0
Total			**119**	**0 (100% speak Welsh)**

SERVICE	**UNIT**	**AREA**	**NUMBER**	**NUMBER OF NON-WELSH SPEAKERS**
Corporate Support	Support	Arfon	34	0
	Achieving and Supporting Change	Arfon Môn	40 5	0
	Customer Contact and Registry Service	Arfon Dwyfor Meirion	18 4 24	0
	Developing the Establishment	Arfon	3	0 0 0
	Democracy and Achievement	Arfon Meirion	46 2	0
	Learning and Development	Arfon	9	0
	Human Resources Consultancy Service	Arfon	13	0
	Health, Safety and Well-being (internal)	Arfon	13	0
	Management Unit	Arfon	7	0

	Information Unit	Arfon	6	0
Total			**224**	**0 (100% speak Welsh)**

SERVICE	UNIT	AREA	NUMBER	NUMBER OF NON-WELSH SPEAKERS
Finance	Internal Audit	Arfon	8	0
	Investment and Treasury Management	Arfon	3	0
	Payroll	Arfon	10	0
	Accountancy	Arfon	39	0
	Pensions	Arfon	17	0
	Revenue – Income/Debtors	Arfon	11	0
	Payments /Creditors	Arfon	7	0
	Revenue – Taxes and Benefits	Arfon Dwyfor Meirion	30 15 9	0 0 0
	Risk Managements / Insurance	Arfon	2	0
	Management Unit	Arfon	6	0
	Information Technology	Arfon	53	0
Total			**210**	**0 (100% speak Welsh)**

SERVICE	UNIT	AREA	NUMBER	NUMBER OF NON-WELSH SPEAKERS
Economy and Community	Community Regenration	Arfon Dwyfor Meirionnydd	13 1 2	0 0 0
	Museums	Arfon Dwyfor	6 3 5	1 part time 0 0

	Archives	Arfon Meirion	9 3	0 0
	Business Support	Arfon	6	0
	The Arts	Arfon	1	0
	Performing Arts	Dwyfor Meirion	18 7	1 (reserve)
	Youth	Arfon Bangor/Ogwen Dwyfor Meirion Full Time	16 34 23 38 11	0 0 4 part time 0
	Maritime	Dwyfor Meirion	16 2	0 1
	Galleries	Arfon Anhysbys	1 1	1 part time 0
	Country Parks	Arfon	6	0
	Major Projects	Arfon Meirionnydd	5 1	0 0
	Skills and Enterprise	Arfon	3	0
	Strategic and Development	Arfon	3	0
	Tourism, Marketing and Customer Care	Arfon Dwyfor Meirion	14 7 6	0 0 0
	Management Unit	Arfon	7	0
	Libraries	Arfon Dwyfor Meirion	29 9 15	0 0 0
	Leisure Centres	Arfon Dwyfor Meirion	124 65 70	1 0 2 non-Welsh 4 learner (speaks a little)

Total			**580**	**15 (97.4% Speak Welsh)**

SERVICE	UNIT	AREA	NUMBER	NUMBER OF NON-WELSH SPEAKERS
Adult, Health and Well Being Service	Housing Management	Arfon Dwyfor	3 1	0 0
	Supporting People	Arfon	3	0
	Homelessness and Supported Housing	Arfon Dwyfor Meirion TOT Arfon Hosteli	10 4 4 7 7	1 0 0 0 2
	Private Sector housing	Arfon Meirion Dwyfor	7 10 8	0 0 1
	Healthy Communities		6	
	Safeguarding and Quality		17	
	Business		98	0
	Provision Service		1178	134
	Adult Services		136	4
	Management Unit		35	5
	Corporate Director		1	0
Total			**1516**	**139 (90.4% speak Welsh)**

SERVICE	UNIT	AREA	NUMBER	NUMBER OF NON-WELSH SPEAKERS
Children and Supporting Families	Management Team		5	
	Admin (Management Team)		1	0
	Children's Team	Arfon Dwyfor Meirionydd	18 7 8	 (1+ 1 temporary)
	Children's Referral Acceptance Team		9	0
	Fostering		13	0
	Adoption		2.5	0

	16+		8	0
	Derwen	Staff cyflogedig gan y Cyngor Staff cyflogedig gan Bwrdd Iechyd Gweithwyr Cefnogol	24 13 86	0 1 4
	Supportive Team		39	0
	Care Threshold		14	0
	Safeguarding and Quality Unit		10	0
	Youth Justice Team		29	2
	Gyda'n Gilydd		7	0
	Sure Start		42	0
Total			**322.5**	**9 non-Welsh speaker (97.2% speak Welsh)**

SERVICE	**UNIT**	**AREA**	**NUMBER**	**NUMBER OF NON-WELSH SPEAKERS**
Highways and Municipal	Commissioning	Arfon Dwyfor Meirion Anhysbys	20 10 10 15	0 0 0 0
	Fleet	Arfon Dwyfor Meirion Anhysbys	9 9 7 4	0 0 0 0
	Municipal Work	Arfon Dwyfor Meirion Anhysbys	104 71 79 75	2 1 5 0
	Highways Work	Môn Arfon Dwyfor	2 21 17	0 1 0

		Meirion Anhysbys	30 39	3 0
	Waste Treatment	Arfon Meirion Anhysbys	2 10 5	0 1 0
	Management Unit	Arfon Anhysbys	3 1	0 0
Total			**543**	**13 (97.6% speak Welsh)**

SERVICE	**UNIT**	**AREA**	**NUMBER**	**NUMBER OF NON-WELSH SPEAKERS**
Regulatory				
	Transportation (Including Enforcement Officers and Children's Crossing officers) (	Arfon Dwyfor Meirionydd	38 9 11	2 2 4
Total			**58**	**6**

Note: Data not complete. Service still collecting data at time of writing this report.

SERVICE	**UNIT**	**AREA**	**NUMBER**	**NUMBER OF NON-WELSH SPEAKERS**
Consultancy (YGC)	Building	Arfon Meirion Dwyfor	13 0 0	1 0 0
	Projects	Arfon Meirion Dwyfor	16 1 3	1 0 0
	Business Unit	Arfon Meirion Dwyfor	9 0 0	1 0 0
	Management Unit	Arfon Meirion Dwyfor	3 0 0	0 0 0
	Technology Unit	Arfon Meirion Dwyfor	28 1 0	1 0 0
	Water and Environment Unit	Arfon Meirion	12 2	0 0

		Dwyfor	7	0
	Building Regulation Unit	Arfon Meirion Dwyfor	11 3 0	0 0 0
Total			**109**	**4 (96.34% speak Welsh)**

3.2 Number of staff receiving Welsh language training (Standard 170 (2) b) and c))

Standards 152 and 170 ask the Council to keep a record of the number of staff that attended training courses through the medium of Welsh during the last financial year.

The Learning and Development team, up to March 2016, has not been keeping records of the exact number of staff that attend Welsh medium courses, compared to the number attending English medium courses, as the vast majority of the corporate training is conducted in Welsh. The figures for 2015-15 here show the number of training sessions held in each language.

Arrangements have been made to change the way in which the Council records attendance of courses to ensure we comply with the need of the Standard.

During the period April 2015 to March 2016, here are the number of courses held in each language.

TITLES	**NUMBER**	**PERCENTAGE**
Welsh	358	81.7%
Bilingual	30	6.8%
English	50	11.4%
TOTAL	**438**	

All internal training courses are offered bilingually, and approximately 95% of all the training offered during the period was internal training.

A total of 3,218 members of staff attended these training sessions, which means, at an average of 7 attendees for each session, that about 2,700 (84%) of those that attended training did so through the medium of Welsh.

The only time training will be offered in English only is when specialist training is needed and no expert trainers are available who can conduct the training in Welsh. In this case, we have been considering ways of facilitating the process of making more of these sessions bilingual (by ensuring that there is a need for trainers to provide bilingual reading materials for example). Further work on this matter is ongoing.

During 2015-16 also, **40** members of staff received training to learn Welsh.

The Welsh learners receive their training by the following providers:

- Internally – Tutor/Welsh Language Co-ordinator, Gwynedd Council
- Bangor University
- Aberystwyth University
- Group Llandrillo Menai Colleges

The nature of the provision include one or a combination of the below:

- Regular courses during the year – weekly (once or twice a week)
- Intense courses – Summer/Autumn Schools in Aberystwyth, Dolgellau, Bangor, Pwllheli, Yr Wyddgrug organised by the providers
- September 3 days courses – Welsh in the Workplace – Bangor University. Provided for organisations providing public services in north Wales to improve the Welsh language skills in the workplace.
- Gloywi Iaith, improving written Welsh, courses – Accredited courses for a specific period of time provided by Group Llandrillo Menai Colleges

As well as this, **11** individuals received training to improve their written Welsh during 2015-16.

3.3 Categories of language skills for jobs (Standard 170 (2) c))

The Welsh language is given top priority in recruitment to Gwynedd Council. No job is advertised without including the ability to speak Welsh as a requirement.

During the period between April 2015 and March 2016, **397** jobs were advertised across the Council, all with the requirement that Welsh language skills are essential.

Despite this, difficulties in recruiting in some areas have resulted in a need being recognised to develop a new system for assessing the exact language level need of each job (new and existing) that will allow the Human Resources department to ensure that the most appropriate language skill level is being assigned to each job. As part of this new skills assessment system, detailed records will be kept of the new jobs advertised, and their language requirements. This will also allow better monitoring of the development and progress of staff that are appointed to jobs without the required language skills. Welsh language skills will continue to be essential to work in Gwynedd Council, but that the exact level of those skills can be adjusted according to the nature of the job in question.

June 2016