CYNGOR GWYNEDD COUNCIL

Welsh Language Promotion Plan for Gwynedd 2018-2023

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1. Introduction

Standard 145 of the Welsh Language Standards, as imposed on Gwynedd Council in accordance with Section 44 of the **Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011** sets a requirement on the Council to produce a 5-year strategy that will show how we intend to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language in the county.

Gwynedd Council has a long history of promoting and protecting the Welsh language as a natural means of communication in all of its services.The language is given a prominent place in the strategic plans of the Council, and the Language Policy sets out our commitment to the Welsh language by noting that it is the responsibility of **all** staff and council Members to promote the Welsh language in all aspects of their work.

The **Gwynedd Council Plan 2018-23** sets as one of its well-being objectives the aims to ensure that all residents can live in a community where the Welsh language is a natural part of life.

This is not the Council's first language strategy as the Gwynedd Welsh Language Strategy (latest version 2014-2018) had set out the priority and foundations for the work of Hunaniaith, the language initiative that has been operating as part of the Council's Language Unit, for several years.

This strategy, therefore, sets out the current opportunities available to promote and increase use of the Welsh language as a natural part of everyday life in the county, and also reflects the Council's wider commitments in relation to the Welsh language, in areas such as education, planning and care and social services[1], and complements the priorities noted in the **Gwynedd Council Plan** and the **Gwynedd and Anglesey Well-being Plan.**

The Strategy will also show how Gwynedd can contribute towards the **Welsh Government Language Strategy: Cymraeg 2050**, which sets the target of getting a million Welsh-speakers in Wales by 2050.

The implementation and success of the Strategy will depend on cooperation with many partners, such as public bodies and community groups, in order to tackle the various challenges and barriers that face the Welsh language across the county.

1 More than just words…. Follow-on strategic framework for Welsh language services in health, social services and social care
http://gov.wales/topics/health/publications/health/guidance/words/?skip=1&lang=en

2. Summary of the present situation and challenges

2.1 Key statistics

According to the 2011 Census 65.4% of the population of Gwynedd can speak Welsh.

There was an increase in the percentage of Welsh-speakers in some parts of the county, namely the wards of Waunfawr, Ogwen, y Groeslon, Llanbedr, Corris/Mawddwy and an increase back over the 70% mark in the ward of Clynnog.

However, there was a general decline in the number of wards with over 70% of the population able to speak Welsh, with only 39 left of the 71 wards according to the 2011 census.

The largest drop in Welsh-speakers was seen in the 65+ age group, with the biggest increase amongst the youngest of our population, with an increase from 70.9% to 73.0% in the 3-4 age group and from 91.8% to 92.3% in the 5-15 age group, which suggests that early years programmes and the education system is doing a good job of setting strong foundations for the children and young people in regards to their abilities and use of the language.

2.2 Summary of the challenges

In order to find the opportunities to increase the use of the Welsh language that will lead to the increase in the number of speakers, we must also acknowledge the challenges and barriers that stop that from happening. We need to be able to identify those areas in the county or parts of life where people use less of the language during their day to day lives, and understand the factors that can affect the personal language use of individuals.

Certainly, the challenge, and one of the most important factors in the prosperity of the language in Gwynedd, is to get people to use the skills and abilities they have in as many situations and circumstances as possible.

In order to encourage that increase in use, we need to consider the effects of the following factors, and how we can counteract them to increase the opportunities available to people in all parts of the county to use and feel a connection with the language.

- **Geographical challenges :**
  Varying levels in the number and percentage of Welsh-speakers across the county, and the range of jobs/services available in some rural areas, means that different answers and interventions are needed in different areas in order to protect the Welsh language.

- **Mobility and migration:**
  Young people moving out of the area to find work and fewer families moving in to some areas – particularly rural ones – because of a lack of services. The number moving into areas from other areas of the county and outside Gwynedd create demographic changes.

- **Transferring the language within the family:**
  Families not transferring the language to the children, leading to losing the language as a language of the home.

- **Losing Welsh-speakers after 16 years of age:**
  No steady progression in regards to language use as young people leave education and stop using the language when they move into work or in their social life as young adults.

- **The status of the Welsh language as a language of business:**
  The language not given a prominent enough place in business.

- **Opportunities and support for learners:**
  A number of newcomers who are keen to learn but find it difficult because of a lack of timely and convenient opportunities.

- **Technological influences:**
  Technology plays an increasing role in people's lives, particularly young people. The lack of Welsh-medium resources and developments means that there is an increasing English influence on everyday lives.

- **People's confidence in their own ability and skills:**
  A lack of opportunities to use the language regularly in socialising, and difficulties in accessing Welsh-medium services can lead to a lack of confidence, and to less use.

3. What we would like to see

Our wish for the long term is to see Gwynedd raise again over the 70% mark for the percentage of Welsh speakers, and the percentage being maintained above that number in the strongest communities.

Our successful education system already means that 92% of the 5-15 age group can speak Welsh. The challenge for us is getting those Welsh speakers to continue to do so through their lifes.

Our priority for the first period of this plant, leading up to the next Census in 2021, therefore, is to increase the opportunities for using the Welsh Language, to increase the confidence of those who don't consider themselves Welsh speakers, and also to look at opportunities that will help us keep young people in their communities.

To get to that point of increased use, these are the things that we need to see happening:

- Families that see the benefit of using the language as a language of the home.
- Schools and educational institutions that give encouragement and support to developing confident Welsh-speakers.
- Young people that see a value to the language as a skill for life and as a means of entertainment and socialising, and who use it in every aspect of their lives.
- Public bodies that offer Welsh language services regularly and to a high standard.
- Private and business sector that gives the Welsh language value and status and that understands its value as a skill and a business asset.
- The Welsh language is used naturally when developing and using technology.
- Community groups given support to maintain the language as the natural means of communication and to ensure that people of all linguistic and social backgrounds are included in community activities.
- The Welsh language given prominence in economic, housing and planning schemes locally in order to ensure that any schemes and developments contribute in a positive way towards the efforts to safeguard the Welsh language in our communities.
- Residents that are confident in using the Welsh language and show good will and a positive attitude towards it.

In the next part of the document, we will take a closer look at some of the points above under five thematic areas that also reflect the key strategic areas in the **Welsh Governments Language Strategy, Cymraeg 2050.**

Specific steps and work streams that contribute the vision and change we would like to see under the five main priority areas will be identified in an action plan, which will be an Appendix to this Promotion Plan.

3.1
Priority Area 1 –
The language of the family

The vision...

- Better collaboration between partner organisations to ensure that Welsh medium care providers are monitored and supported adequately.
- Better understanding amongst parents of the value of transferring the language to their children, and of the benefits of bilingualism and multilingualism.
- An increase in the number play opportunities available for pre-school age children through the medium of Welsh.
- An increase in the number of opportunities for families and parents to learn some Welsh in order to use those skills with their families.
- An increase in the number of children who come from homes where more than one language is spoken who can speak Welsh.

The statistics...

90% of 3-4 year olds in Gwynedd can speak Welsh if they come from homes where both parents speak Welsh.

63% of 3-4 year olds can speak Welsh when only one parent in the home can speak Welsh.

Even more positively, 35% of children in Gwynedd who are being raised in homes where neither parent can speak Welsh, are noted as Welsh-speakers in the 2011 census.

What needs to happen next?

In order for the Welsh language to be a natural means of communication in families, we must ensure that positive language patterns are set from early on in children's lives. The priority in this area as a results is to work with agencies and partners in the early years sector to ensure that positive and consistent messages are being shared with parents and carers about the value of the language, not only for the children but for the whole family, and also to ensure there are enough opportunities provided that will encourage more families to learn the language alongside their children.

We need to make sure that efforts are targeted effectively, and therefore we will need to ensure that resources and expertise are shared effectively between organisations and providers to ensure the widest and best possible reach and influence.

We need to ensure that early year care providers are given all the support they need to maintain the language medium of the care, and to have the best possible influence on the language acquisition of children in their care.

We need to make sure that enough informal play opportunities are available that will encourage parents and carers to learn and use the Welsh language with their children. They should be welcoming and supportive to anyone, whatever their own language abilities, and be available across the county.

There are also a host of independent groups and providers in Gwynedd, who provide a variety of informal play and socialising opportunities for young families, such as story and song sessions, swimming and keep fit sessions.

This provides an opportunity to influence those providers by offering them language awareness sessions and training tailored especially for them on matters such as their role in conveying positive messages about the Welsh language to parents. Hunaniaith has already done some work in this area, in partnership with **Cymraeg for Kids**, and we would like to see that work continued and developed over the next few years.

3.2
Priority Area 2 –
The language of learning

The vision...

- Schools that give the language prestige and value and encourage more use of the Welsh language as a medium of socialising, by continuing to implement the Language Charter in primary schools and the Language Strategy for secondary schools.
- An increase in the number of young people who choose to study and receive qualifications or recognised accreditations through the medium of Welsh.
- More pupils continuing to improve their Welsh language skills in transferring from primary to secondary, and on to post-compulsory education.
- More extended learning opportunities offered to young people – in the form of work experience and apprenticeships with employers that give the Welsh language a certain status. This will develop an understanding amongst young people of the demand for Welsh language skills in the workplace.

The statistics...

According to the 2011 Census, 1,997 or 73% of 3-4 year olds in Gwynedd can speak Welsh and 13,038 or 92% of 5-15 year olds.

According to the data of the Language Charter, published in the Gwynedd Well-being Assessment recently, only 41.2% of KS2 pupils use the Welsh language "all the time" on the schoolyard.

The percentage of Welsh-speakers in Gwynedd drops sharply when you move from the 3-15 age group to the 16-24 age group, from 89% to 58.6%.

The Welsh Language Strategy of the Welsh Government, Cymraeg 2050, notes that over half of Wales's learners leave school at 16 years of age, moving on to further education, work-based learning or employment.

What needs to happen next?

In order to ensure that the Welsh language remains the main language of education and learning in the county, the priority for this area will be to ensure a strong link between the language of learning and the language of work, and raising awareness and understanding amongst teaching staff and the wider family of the school and college of their role in promoting he Welsh language within their establishments and their contribution to the wider vision for the county.

Various projects are being implemented by the Council's Education Department in relation to this priority area, with Gwynedd Education Department's Language Policy and the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan setting strong foundations for that work. In extending the reach and operation of those projects over the next few years, we hope to have a positive effect on the language use and choices of our young people, which in turn will lead to a better attitude towards the language as they grow older.

The project that will be the main focus for the next few years will be the **Secondary Sector Language Strategy**, which has been developed as a continuation to the work of the Language Charter – a project developed under the previous Gwynedd Language Strategy. The aim of the strategy is to ensure that the Welsh language is an effective medium for schoolwork and life in all its variations, and to have a positive influence on the language used by young people in a curricular and social context.

Every school will implement the **Secondary Sector Welsh Language Strategy**, and work towards ensuring that all school stakeholders are a part of the scheme. It will try and ensure that more young people choose to study and gain qualifications through the medium of Welsh in the secondary schools -that will hopefully lead to more studying through the medium of Welsh on the higher and further education level; developing young leaders by giving young people and school councils a clear role in organising activities and influencing the language use of their peers; and ensuring that school staff understand the role they have to play as role model and in encouraging and supporting students to make decisions that will develop their language skills.

The **Language Charter** for primary schools is continuing to grow as well – having been rolled out across the whole of Wales under the guidance of the Welsh Government. This project means that schools are working hard to have a positive influence on attitudes and use of the Welsh language outside the classroom, and continuing to provide support to the staff and wider school family will be essential over the next few years.

Post-compulsory education

We will also be working to try to reduce the number of natural Welsh-speakers we lose in Gwynedd as they leave the influence of the school environment.

There is a strong link here with the use of the Welsh language in business and work, and the need for young people to see the value of the language as an asset and a skill. We will therefore be working with post-compulsory education providers to strengthen the link between occupational courses and the work opportunities and employers in the county who are looking for employees with linguistic skills, in order to ensure that the skills and abilities needed in the local workplace is provided through the education system.

3.3
Priority Area 3 – The language of work and services

The vision...

- An increase in the number of residents who use the Welsh language in work and in using services – face to face and online.
- An increased awareness amongst business owners and managers of the benefits of Welsh language skills in the workforce and the benefits of offering Welsh-medium services.
- A better understanding and awareness of the opportunities provided by technology and resources to increase the use of the Welsh language and confidence in doing so within the workforce.
- The Welsh language being given a central place in regional collaboration and in cross-county strategic plans.

The statictics...

According to the National Language Use Survey of 2013-15, 85% of the fluent Welsh-speakers in Gwynedd use the language every day. This has decreased from 90% in the 2004-06 survey.

Over 90% of Gwynedd Council staff can speak Welsh, which means that it is possible for the residents of Gwynedd to access Welsh-medium services wherever they are in the county.

What needs to happen next?

We will be trying to ensure that there are as few barriers as possible to using services through the medium of Welsh, in the public and private sectors, and that those services are as easy as possible to use and understand.

This will mean working together with the other bodies of the Public Services Board to increase the use of the Welsh language within public services in the county in order to encourage service users to use the Welsh language in their first contact with the public bodies, as well as developing an understanding amongst the bodies themselves of best practice in relation to greeting service users in that first contact.

The Council as an employee will develop a varied programme of language training in order to develop the skills of the workforce, to give people opportunities to learn whilst they work, to practice their newly acquired skills and to try to deal with the issues of confidence in written skills – all of this in order to lead to a positive change within the workplace. We will also work with Bangor University on behavioural change models in order to try to have a positive influence on the linguistic practices of the workforce. By developing the skills of the workforce we will ensure that our Welsh language services are provided consistently across the county.

We will need to find new ways of encouraging people to use Welsh language services, as online and face to face services change. And we will need to continue to ensure that the Welsh language is promoted and highlighted as part of contracts to co-provide or outsource services.
By setting and agreeing to strong conditions with partners and external providers, and insisting that working contracts adhere to our principles and standards, we can improve the quality of more services provided to the public.

In accordance with the commitment in the **Council Plan**, we will need to work with local businesses, and particularly in the tourism and leisure sectors, in order to provide clear guidance on giving the Welsh language a prominent platform in their activities, and to Welsh (and multilingual) skills in their recruitment policies.

This would raise the profile of the language as a working language, as well as raising its profile amongst international visitors and contribute towards the sense of place for tourists.
In ensuring that workforces have the necessary ability and skills, and that businesses understand the need to give the Welsh language status in recruitment practices, we will increase the opportunities for people to use the Welsh language while seeking services.

We will be encouraging more businesses and bodies to adopt the active offer principle, and to realise that linguistic courtesy and respect towards the language choice of users can create a lot of good will, and that we should always strive to offer the services that meets the linguistic needs of the public rather than waiting for them to have to ask for them.

To that end, we will need to ensure there is practical support available for businesses in order to help them increase the use of the Welsh language in signage and written materials and all other aspects of the business.

To echo the priority in the **Language of learning** field, we will work with businesses and establishments that give a clear priority and status to the Welsh language in order to promote them as employers of choice for work experience, and in order to strengthen the link between linguistic choices in education and the language of work.

3.4
Priority Area 4 – The language of the community

The vision...

- A population that is confident in using whatever Welsh language skills they have in their daily lives and in the community.
- The Welsh language being visible, in advertising and conducting events, and less events being held in English only in our communities.
- Different social and community factions, including less willing speakers of the language, being made to feel a part of the “Welsh community”.
- Working towards ensuring that more community events are inclusive - that learners and less confident speakers feel that they are supported in Welsh medium activities.
- Community groups and councils are aware of their role, and are given support to organise and put on activities that actively promote the Welsh language.
- Young people being encouraged to be community leaders by organising events that influence the language use of their peers.
- The Welsh language given a clear and obvious priority in economic, housing and planning schemes locally in order to ensure that any schemes and developments contribute in a positive way towards the efforts to safeguard and strengthen the position of the Welsh language in our communities.

The statistics...

The National Language Use Survey of 2013-15 (Welsh Government and Welsh Language Commissioner 2015) shows that an increasing number of people consider themselves Welsh-speakers, but not fluent speakers, with that number increasing from 13,800 in 2004-06 to 19,400 in 2013-15.

What needs to happen next?

The menter iaith (language initiative) in Gwynedd is Hunaniaith, and operates as part of the Council's language unit, and as such the work carried out by them and their partners will be crucial in implementing the vision in this specific area.

Hunaniaith will continue to develop projects, alongside community partners and organisations, that will:

- provide opportunities for people to use the Welsh language naturally in new and varied contexts
- look for opportunities to develop the use of the language in technology
- give those that are less willing to speak, or that are new speakers, the opportunities to practice and gain confidence
- offer support to local voluntary groups and community representatives
- raise awareness and understanding of the role each and every one of us has to play in sustaining the language, and to increase the pride in it as a living language.

Hunaniaith will also work with the Youth Service to ensure there are varied opportunities available to young people, who are at a very vulnerable and influential stage of their lives, to use the language in a variety of contexts. We will also be using schemes like PCAI (a project that aims to supports the language use of young people) in order to encourage confidence and skills in young people in organising activities and increasing the use of the Welsh language amongst peers.

We also aim to work with other bodies such as Grŵp Cynefin, Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd and Pontio, who work with communities, to ensure the widest possible reach and influence, and to offer support to locations who offer family activities and activities during school holidays in order to increase the Welsh offer.

In order to support this work, it is crucial that community representatives and elected members are aware of their potential role and influence, and that they use the local knowledge that they have to refer businesses and individuals for support, and to ensure that the Welsh language is given fair play in activities of all sizes in our communities. Raising the status of the Welsh language within some of the high profile large events, and seeing organisers giving Welsh language providers and entertainers a prominent platform would show the community as a whole and especially young people, that there is value to the language in all fields.

It will also be very important that the language is given the proper priority and attention in the Council's strategic plans and policies that have an effect on communities, and ensuring that any impact assessments on new proposals or policies take into consideration any possible effect on the ability of the local population to use and hear the welsh language.

The Council's Welsh Language Unit and Planning Unit will continue to work together in order to develop expertise in linguistic planning. The Language Unit will provide specialist and independent input for the Planning Unit in order to protect linguistic interests within the planning process.

3.5
Priority Area 5 – Research and technology – setting the right foundations

The vision...

- More people ready and willing to use the Welsh language in the context of technology.
- Supporting growth in the technology sector by promoting new developments and the development of young people's skills in the field.
- More public and educational bodies using Welsh language software and technology.
- Developing a better understanding of people's habits in using the Welsh language in order to find new ways of influencing and encouraging people's use of the language.

What needs to happen next?

We will try to use our unique situation and the large concentration of Welsh-speakers in the county in order to have a better understanding of the habits and trends of people in using the Welsh language, and in particular their use of the Welsh language while using technology.

We will develop the working relationship with Bangor University, and other universities in Wales, in order to identify opportunities to contribute towards research in the fields of language planning and behavioural change. This in turn will help us to have a better understanding of how people use the language in different contexts and how we can adapt to those changes. We will work in particular with Bangor University on behavioural change models, and to offer work experience opportunities for students that will give them a better understanding of the practical elements of language planning, and to contribute towards developing expertise in the field.

As a Council, we will look at projects that will encourage more people to use the Welsh language on the internet, on social media and in using self-service, and consider the most effective way of using the Welsh language in those contexts to encourage and increase use.

4. Implementing the Strategy

This Plan concentrates mainly on those areas on which the Council has direct influence, and on work that will be led by departments within the Council. However, as the priorities and plans of many other bodies and agencies overlap ours in some of the strategic areas, many other partners and community organisations will also have a role to play in working with us to implement this plan and promoting the Welsh language across the county.

In order to ensure that our plans have the best possible effect and that they contribute towards wider efforts to increase the use of the Welsh language – and as a result the number of Welsh speakers – we will need to ensure an appropriate platform for sharing information and coordinating efforts, as well as monitoring the progress of joint plans.

In working across Gwynedd and Anglesey, for example, the Public Services Board can influence other bodies like the Health Board and other bodies who provide services to the public.

Maintaining effective relationships with organisations such as Cymraeg for Kids, Mudiad Meithrin, the Urdd, and the YFC, who receive funding through the Welsh promotion grant distributed by the Welsh Government, will also be crucial in order to ensure there is no duplication of work, and that our efforts to protect and promote the language is going in the same direction.

The other main partners which have been identified include:

Internal services:
Early Years
Education Department
Libraries
Youth Service
Business Services
Economy and Communities
Planning Department

Hunaniaith
Menter Iaith Bangor
Business World Officer (Welsh Government and Mentrau Iaith)
Bangor University
Mudiad Meithrin

Welsh for Kids
Health Service – Betsi Cadwaladr
Snowdonia National Park
National Trust
Urdd
Ffermwyr Ifanc / YFC
Grŵp Llandrillo Menai
Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd
Grŵp Cynefin
Community and Town Councils
Community establishments and providers

The annual work programme for the Promotion Plan (the initial Year 1 Work Plan will be published with this final draft) will contain details of the ideas we have for interventions and working together to increase the use of the Welsh language.

All this will be in addition to supporting the numerous activities and campaigns to promote the Welsh language that are implemented directly by communities themselves.

The aim is that the Welsh language, and the promotion of its use, becomes a natural part of policy and the implementation of economic and regeneration plans, planning, housing policy, education and integration and that the Welsh language and language planning is an essential part of developing plans, strategies, programmes, policies and activities provided and held in Gwynedd.