Welsh Language Promotion Plan for Gwynedd Monitoring Report 2018 – 2023

End of five-year report

Cynllun Hybu'r Gymraeg yng Ngwynedd 2018-2023

Uned Iaith

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1. BACKGROUND

We present this report as an overview of the monitoring work undertaken with regards to the implementation of the Council's language strategy - the Welsh Language Promotion Plan for Gwynedd 2018-2023.

The Promotion Plan was adopted during October 2018, setting out the Council's vision for how the Council could promote the Welsh language and increase opportunities to use the Welsh language over the following five years.

The strategy set a general, long-term aim, to see the percentage of Gwynedd speakers increasing again to the 70% mark.

It must be emphasised that the aim is a long-term goal and a vision to protect the Welsh language in the county, it was not expected to be realised within the period of the Strategy or in the latest census figures in 2012.

The strategy also set a target in the context of school pupils' use of Welsh, to increase the opportunities for people to use the Welsh language, and to boost the confidence of individuals who do not consider themselves as Welsh speakers.

The implementation period of the Promotion Plan was challenging for many reasons. One of the most prominent of these was the Covid-19 pandemic period. Obviously, the long periods of isolating and not socialising or being involved with community activities was a huge change, and hugely impacted the opportunities available for people to use the Welsh language from day to day. The impact on the education world was also substantial, with schools having to adapt overnight to challenges and a different teaching environment.

This period has also changed people's habits substantially, has increased the influence of technology and social media on our lives, and this has led to changes and new challenges in our geographical communities, which in turn impacts linguistic prosperity.

With such a substantial change occurring in the middle of the implementation period, it is inevitable that no steps were taken on some of the objectives, and that we had to change priorities as we went and in response to new situations. As a result, and due to the general squeeze on resources, establishing detailed and robust monitoring arrangements

for the Promotion Plan proved to be a challenge. Consequently, the contents of this monitoring report is only a part of the picture.

Nevertheless, we hope that this report shows that we as a Council have been able to act consistently on most of the objectives set in the Promotion Plan. Many services hold regular activities in different locations across the county, and due to the strength of the Language Policy, those activities across the board are held through the medium of Welsh.

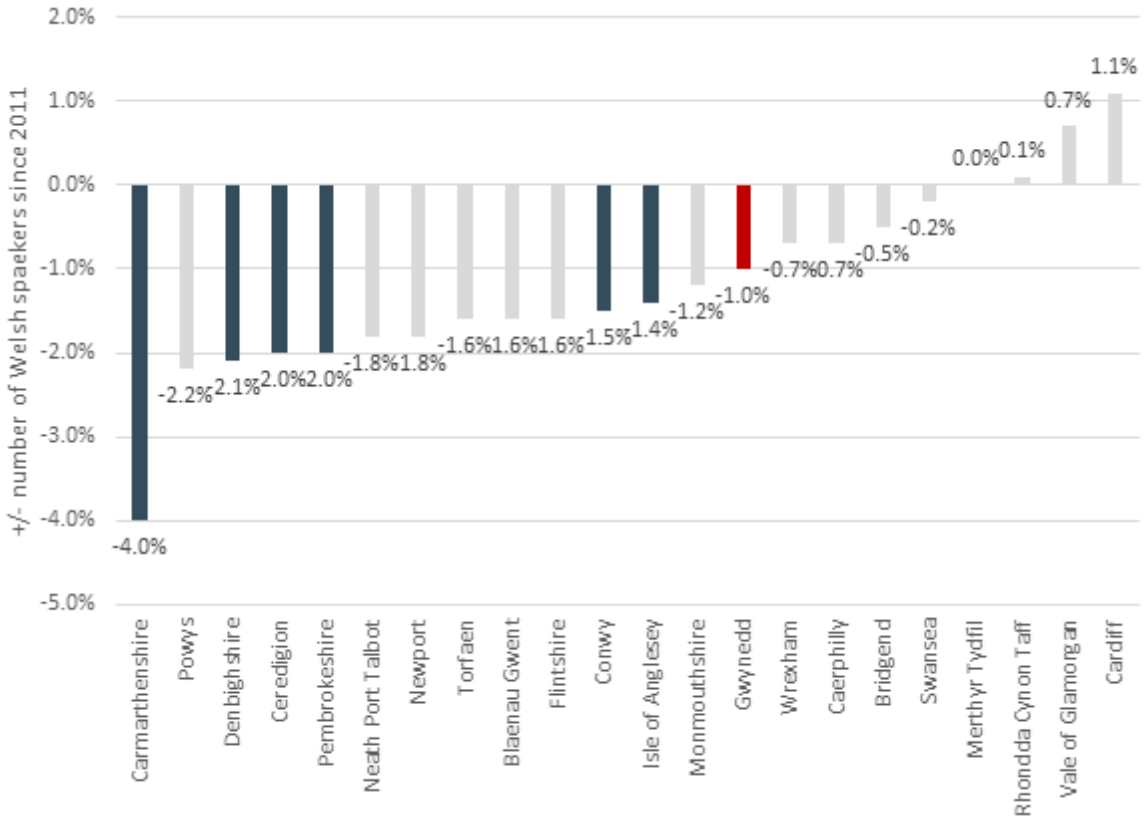
A lot of data has been gathered by the Council's services, therefore, which shows the regular Welsh-medium activity being provided by the Council to contribute to people's daily use of Welsh in various contexts.

2. WELSH SPEAKERS IN GWYNEDD

On Census day 2021 **73,560** people (aged 3+) were able to speak Welsh in Gwynedd, which corresponds to **64.4%.** In 2011 the corresponding percentage was **65.4%,** therefore the proportion has **decreased 1%.** (The number of Welsh speakers aged 3+ in 2011 was **77,000**).

Throughout Wales **17.8%** could speak Welsh which is a **decrease of 1.2%** since 2011.

The chart below shows the increase / decrease in the percentage of Welsh speakers in each local authority area in Wales and shows that 18 of the 22 areas have experienced a decrease since 2011:

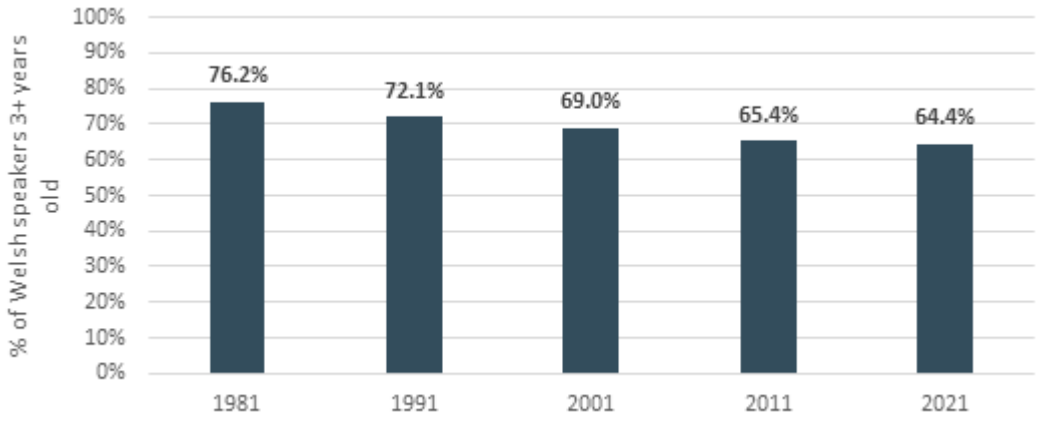


In the above chart the figure for the change in Gwynedd has been shown in red, the figures for other "areas where more Welsh is spoken" [1] shown in black, and other authorities in grey.

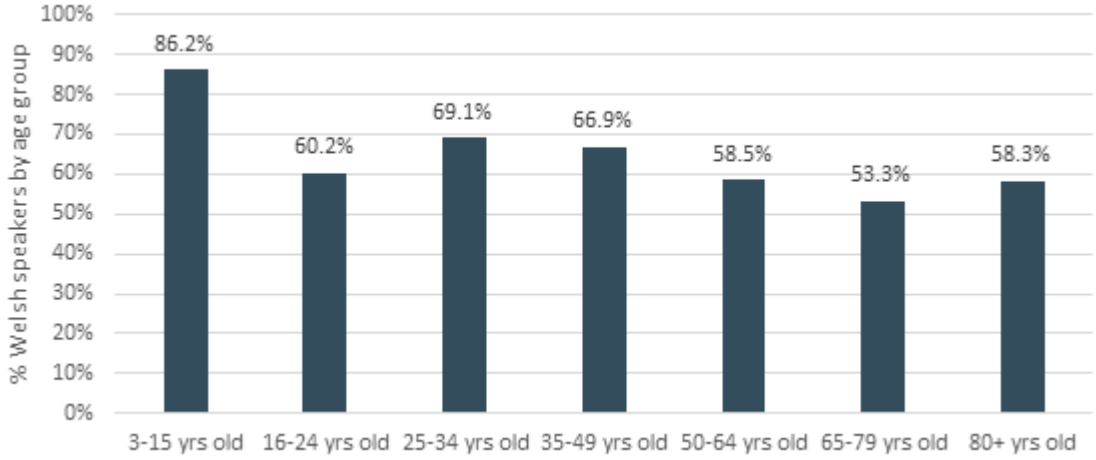
From this it can be seen that the decrease in Gwynedd (-1.0%) is smaller than the decrease in all of the other "areas where more Welsh is spoken", varying from -1.4% (Isle of Anglesey) to -4.0% (Carmarthenshire).

[1] For this purpose, "areas where more Welsh is spoken" are defined as those counties with a higher percentage of Welsh speakers than the all-Wales average (19.0%) in the 2011 Census.

Gwynedd has seen a decrease in the percentage of Welsh speakers at each Census since 1981, as shown below.



By looking at the different age groups in Gwynedd we can see that the proportion of Welsh speakers is at its highest in the 3-15 age group, and at its lowest in the 65-79 age group.



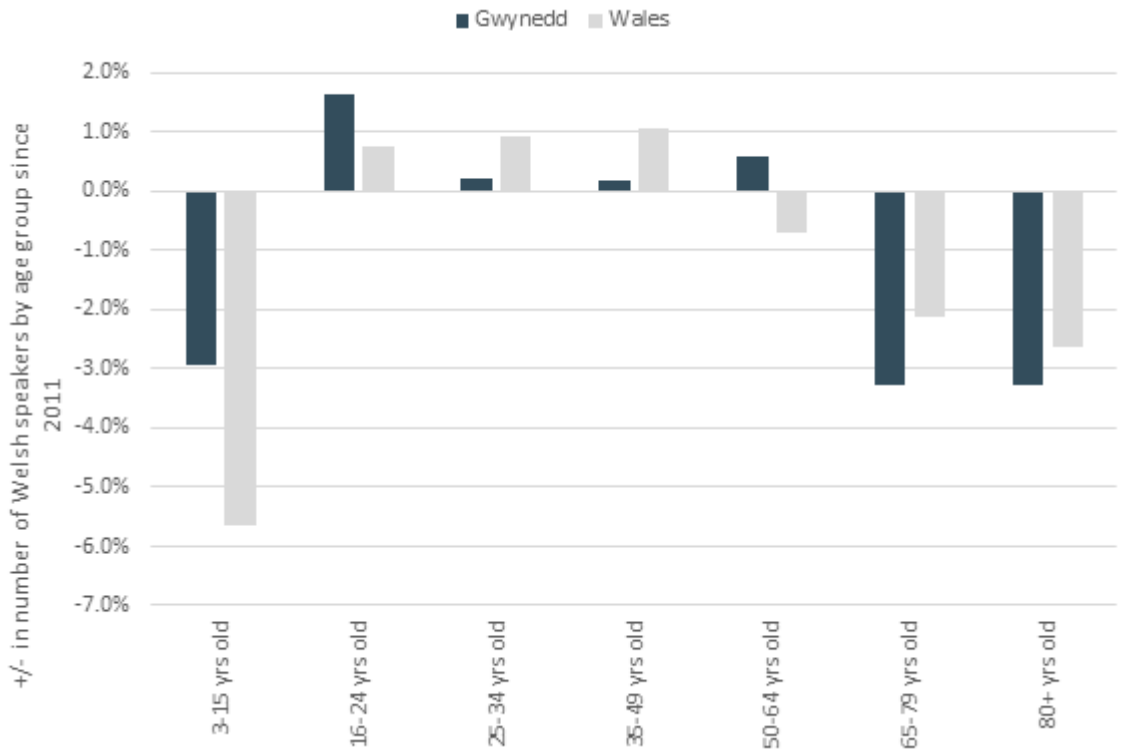
The following table below shows the percentages by age group. The largest decrease has occurred in the two oldest age groups, namely age 65-79 and age 80 and over. A decrease has also been seen in the 3-15 age group. In the other age groups the proportion has increased over the decade, with the proportion in the 16-24 age group 1.6% higher than in 2011.

Age Group	2021	2011	+/- %
Age 3 - 15	86.2%	89.1%	-2.9%
Age 16 - 24	60.2%	58.6%	+1.6%
Age 25 - 34	69.1%	68.9%	+0.2%
Age 35 - 49	66.9%	66.7%	+0.2%
Age 50 - 64	58.5%	57.9%	+0.6%
Age 65 - 79	53.3%	56.6%	-3.3%
Age 80+	58.3%	61.6%	-3.3%
All ages 3+	**64.4%**	**65.4%**	**-1.0%**

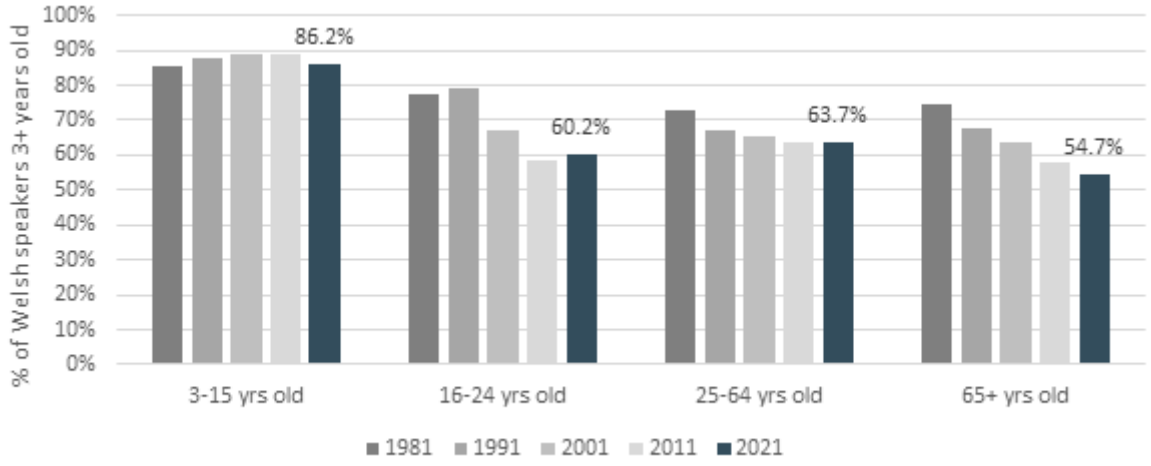
Looking at how the change by age group compares with Wales as a whole, we can see (chart below) that the changes in Gwynedd mirror to some degree the pattern throughout

Wales (except the 50-64 age group, where there was an increase in Gwynedd but a decrease throughout Wales).

In the two oldest age groups, however, the decrease in Gwynedd was greater than across Wales as a whole. On the other hand, it can be seen that the percentage of Welsh speakers in the 3-15 age group decreased less in Gwynedd than across the whole of Wales.



It is possible to look at Census data for broad age groups from 1981 onwards (chart below). The proportion of Welsh speakers has generally decreased across the age ranges but has remained relatively stable in the 3-15 age group.



3. ACCOUNTABILITY AND INTERNAL REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Council's departments and services report on their work in many ways. We were conscious when trying to monitor the implementation of this strategy that we did not want to duplicate work and add to the services' reporting workload. We have therefore sought, as much as we could, to gather information from the various sources which are currently reported by departments. Here, we provide an overview of the various reporting methods for the activities and plans which contribute to the strategy's objectives.

- *Collecting annual data on activities*
  Many specific activities were identified under each action field where we were aware that data was already being collected annually. We have collected this data for every year, and this is the main data you will see in the tables in this report.

- *The Welsh Language Grant monitoring reports*
  The language initiative is implementing a work programme that has been agreed upon between the Council and Welsh Government, which is funded through an annual Government grant. As a part of the conditions for that grant, regular reports have been produced which detail the work and provide a quantitative report on the number of activities and attendees.

- *Challenging Performance*
  Any projects that have been included within the Council Plan report regularly through performance challenging meetings. This includes reporting on key data and on any barriers which prevent development or slow down the progress of a project.
  Each Cabinet Member also reports on the work of the Council's main plans, by means of their reports to the Cabinet.

- *Language Committee Departmental Reports*
  Language Committee (llyw.cymru)
  Every department within the Council now prepares a report once a year to be submitted to the Council's Language Committee. These reports are an opportunity to show how they develop the workforce's language skills, comply with the Welsh Language Standards, and also how they contribute to the objectives of the language strategy. These reports have

been very useful to identify projects or work streams that the Language and Scrutiny Unit would not have known about otherwise. This process was commenced during the 2021-22 year, therefore every department has reported twice to date, and we are now in the middle of the third reporting cycle.

- *Strategic Plans' Annual Report*
  Plans such as the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan have their own annual monitoring arrangements.

- *Forums and project boards*
  Many internal and external groups exist to monitor the progress of individual projects. A Project Board was set up for the Language Designations work, a project to monitor the workforce language skills in the Council, the Place Names Project and Prosiect 15. Also, an internal group has been established within the final period of the language strategy to look at the implementation of More Than Just Words within the Council. These groups will keep an eye on implementation in various fields and ensure that appropriate progress is being made against targets and work programmes.

4. LESSONS LEARNT

Over the past few months we have been looking back at the Promotion Plan and developing the next language strategy for the 2023 period onwards at the same time. Reflecting on what worked and what did not work as well, in terms of implementation and monitoring, has helped us in looking ahead and improve arrangements for the next strategy.

There are many things the Council will need to work on and develop for the next strategy period, in order to ensure that they are able to gather the necessary evidence to show the impact and success of the strategy. There have been many challenges when trying to do this with the Promotion Plan.

4.1 **Consistency in the type of data collected** - for example, try to make sure that each project or service that contributes to a specific fields is reporting the same things.

4.2 **Improve collaboration with external partners**. - We were very aware that it would not be possible for the Council to implement the objectives of the strategy on its own and there would be a need to ensure effective collaboration to reach the aim. Although good collaboration has happened in various fields, we may not have found ways to capture that in a way which provides us with evidence of this collaboration and the resulting outcomes. Re-igniting any discussions with partners after the pandemic period was also difficult in some cases, with organisations focusing on their own priorities.

4.3 **Maintaining the relationship with the Menter Iaith** - We have been very reliant during the Promotion Plan period on the activities of Hunaniaith, the language initiative, especially in the area of the Language of the Community. The language initiative will move out of the Council, and establish itself as an independent entity, during the first year of the new language strategy, and the Council will need to ensure that it maintains a close relationship with the Menter Iaith, but also that they take more responsibility for their own actions in the area of community lanugage.

4.4 **Assessing progress and the contribution of strategic projects** - gathering robust evidence on the impact of some of the major schemes that the Council has in the pipeline (and which contribute to the prosperity or protection of the Welsh language in the county's communities), is difficult due to its long-term nature. Some work has been done on establishing the models to measure impact, but they are yet to be put in place, and there will be a need to look at this for the next strategy period.

4.5 **The need to be able to adapt priorities** - The pandemic period has shown us how circumstances can change substantially in a very short period. Five years can appear to be a short period in terms of language planning and in terms of showing the impact of interventions which are often longer-term. It is clear that we have had to disregard some of the aims noted in the Promotion Plan because the context and the priorities of the Council have had to change in a short period. It will important that the aims and objectives in the new strategy are broad enough so that the Council does not leave itself open to failing to act, and that it is the work programme linked to the strategy that needs to be changed and adapted rather than the strategy itself during the 10 years.

5. REPORTING ON OUTCOMES

In this section, we provide an overview of what was implemented under each priority field in the Promotion Plan, along with a table which includes the quantitative data gathered during the five years.

5.1 Priority field 1 - Language of the family

The intention for this field was to identify ways of giving every child the best start and ensure that positive language patterns are set from the start.

Hunaniaith had been organising community **activities for families and young children** for many years, but one of the main things we wanted to look at during the Promotion Plan was see how we could **support care workers and community activity providers** and give them information to transfer positive messages to parents on the value of bilingualism and multilingualism, as well as how to increase the use of Welsh in their own activities and care settings. There has been some good collaboration with Cymraeg i Blant and the Council's early years' service to organise annual seminars in order to address this. Data on the activities can be seen below.

The **Gwynedd Libraries service** provide essentially important community locations, and they play a very important role when offering activities that are targeted specifically at new mothers and their babies. Weekly story and play sessions are offered at all of the county's locations and each of those are offered through the medium of Welsh and provide important socialising opportunities, as well as an opportunity to present the language to infants.

We were also eager to develop an **understanding among parents of the value of transferring the Welsh language to children**, and of the advantages of being multilingual. Many external partners are doing excellent work in this field, but the education department has also developed resources on the advantages of bilingualism to share with schools and are available on the Language Charter Hub for everyone's use.

AGC information in terms of the number of childcare providers in the County who note that they are a Welsh or Bilingual provision:

	Welsh	Bilingual	English
Childminders	22	14	10
Nurseries	11	6	2
Cylchoedd Meithrin	56	1	-
After School Club	8	5	-

Below is information reported as part of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) about Cylchoedd Meithrin in Gwynedd.

Gwynedd Cylch Meithrin Data 2018-19 (No data available for 2019-20 due to COVID):

Area	Cylch Meithrin Numbers	Number/ % of nursery three-year-old children transferring to Welsh-medium education	
Arfon	28	834	99.3%
Dwyfor	18	301	100%
Meirionnydd	19	346	100%

Gwynedd Cylchoedd Meithrin Data 2021-22:

Area	Cylch Meithrin Numbers	Number/ % of nursery three-year-old children transferring to Welsh-medium education	
Arfon	27	496	100%
Dwyfor	15	172	100%
Meirionnydd	19	186	100%

Language of the Family Quantitative Data

Priority Area: Language of the family	**2018-19/19-20** (2018-19 half year after publication therefore the figures were combined at the end of the first full year)	**2020-21** (Bear in mind that this was during the pandemic period and that restrictions affected what could be done)	**2021-22**	**2022-23**
Number of family events held by the Council's libraries services, Flying Start service and the language initiative (Hunaniaith)	76 Roughly 550 families attended. Around 20 families at the libraries' sessions having regular activities.	No face-to-face activities in the libraries. Language initiative has held activities on-line. Uned laith - Uchafbwyntiau 2020-21 Hunaniaith.pdf - Pob Dogfen (sharepoint.com)	**3** activity, **25** family - hunaniaith **107** library events **788** attendees (around 370 families?)	**127** library activities **1072** attendees (around 500 families?)
Number of training events for early years workers (led by Hunaniaith)	**6** workshops **60** attendees	**2** workshops **18** attendees	**1** workshop **19** in attendance	**1** event **3** attendees
Number of regular Flying Start activities for families	Grŵp Tots - 8 sessions per term in each area Camau Bach groups = 8 sessions per term in each area 30 fun days	Camau Bach - 8 virtual sessions 6 families. 9 outdoor fun day sessions	8 sessions (Dolgellau area) 3 families 9 fun day sessions	16 blocks of groups 174 children have attended 20 fun sessions 136 families attended
Percentage of children receiving care in locations with a Welsh-medium	86.5%	Numbers receiving 10 hours a week of Welsh-medium Nursery Education: **384**.	Numbers receiving 10 hours a week of Welsh-medium Nursery Education: 442.	Number of children receiving 10 hours a week of Welsh-medium Nursery

provision (care settings managed by the Council?)		Number of Flying Start children who have attended a Welsh-medium childcare setting per term = **642**: Number of children who have attended a Welsh or bilingual childcare setting on the Welsh Childcare Offer: Welsh =**553**. Bilingual =**237**.	Number of Flying Start children who have attended a Welsh-medium childcare setting per term: Term 1 = 201. Term 2 = 198. Term 3 = 187. Number of children who have attended a Welsh or bilingual childcare setting on the Welsh Childcare Offer: Welsh = 585. Bilingual = 256.	Education: 422. Number of Flying Start children who have attended a Welsh-medium childcare setting per term: Term 1 = 241. Term 2 = 214. Term 3 = 202. Number of children who have attended a Welsh or bilingual childcare setting on the Welsh Childcare Offer: Welsh = 890. Bilingual = 197

5.2 Priority Field 2: Language of Learning

The pandemic period posed a particular challenge for the field of education, and lead to huge changes in learning methods, but also huge changes in data collection methods. As a result of the fact that schools across Wales closed, and the curriculum delayed, in the summer 2020, e.g., it was not possible to conduct learner assessments, and external examinations, such as GCSEs and A Levels, were not held as normal. Consequently, no quantitative data is available as a part of the WESP annual review report for 2019-20.

Regardless of the lack of data on the number of young people who choose to study and receive Welsh-medium accreditations in the schools, as well as statistics about progress in skills between key stages, many key developments have occurred in this field over the Promotion Plan period.

We therefore focus here on important strategic developments that have happened in the field over the Plan period and which will set robust foundations to develop young people's use of Welsh in the future.

Development of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan

In September 2022, the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan was published by the department for a ten-year period up to 2032. The outcomes of monitoring the new WESP will be included in the monitoring reports of the new language strategy.
A new Language Policy was drafted and shared with the governing bodies of every primary and secondary school in the county, which reflects the expectations and ambition in terms of schools' use of Welsh beyond the education provision.

"An increase in the number of young people who choose to study and who gain qualifications through the medium of Welsh."

The Plan had noted the above as a priority in the language of learning field, which reflected the commitment in the WESP that the Council wished to see "*More learners study for assessed qualifications in Welsh (as a subject) and subjects through the medium of Welsh*."

During 2022, members of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee identified that attention needed to be given to the Welsh medium provision at the Secondary Schools in

the County. A decision was made to hold an investigation which looked at the existing provision and consider what could prevent the Authority from achieving the targets and make recommendations.

A final report and recommendations were published during September 2023.

The findings were encouraging and showed that 97.6% of the KS3 learners at the three schools followed 80% or more of their courses through the medium of Welsh and that 87% studied at least 5 subjects excluding Welsh, through the medium of Welsh. The commitment of the schools in question to encourage learners to study through the medium of Welsh and to act in accordance with their Language Policy was evident. The Language Policy of Gwynedd secondary schools is central to the provision in the schools.

The report included a number of recommendations, which included establishing new arrangements to collect data on the language medium of study, setting specific targets to increase the Welsh medium provision for every secondary school in the county, that the authority continues to collaborate with both category 3T schools in the county to speed-up their journey to become category 3 schools, and that there is closer collaboration with partners such as Y Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol.

Implementing these recommendations will be a part of the new language strategy.

The full report of the investigation and recommendations can be seen here:
Item 6 - Gwynedd Category 3 Secondary Schools Scrutiny Investigation Report.pdf (llyw.cymru)

Modernise and extend the immersion provision to teach Welsh to children

On 6 July 2021, the Cabinet approved a new vision for a modern Immersion Education System in Gwynedd. This followed a long process of reviewing the service and considering the future needs, which had commenced since the lockdown period. This new vision also includes a capital investment of £1.1 million from the Welsh Government for the purpose of establishing new immersion education sites in Bangor and Tywyn, as well as improving existing facilities at the Eifionydd site, Porthmadog.

The Welsh Government's Late Immersion revenue grant also enables the Education Department to modernise the immersion provision in the county's centres. Now, the

Aberwla immersion scheme has been developed, which is a differential scheme that bridges the primary and secondary sectors. To accompany the scheme, we have the innovative digital project which places the Aberwla scheme and its characters on the VR stage. On 7 July 2023, training was held at the request of Welsh Government to share this innovative resource nationally. As a result of the training, other authorities are expected to trial the resource and offer feedback to further develop and empower the project. A successful launch of the resource was held on the Gwynedd stall on the afternoon of Tuesday 8 August, at the Llŷn ac Eifionydd National Eisteddfod site.

Raising the awareness of young people of the Welsh language as a skill

Hunaniaith acted on this priority during the Plan period by organising Language Awareness sessions with groups of pupils in schools, and by arranging 4 annual conferences with Grŵp Llandrillo Menai which looked at specific work fields and invited individuals from those fields - such as the creative industries and care - to talk about their experiences and why the Welsh language is a core part of their work.

A language awareness video was developed specifically for young people also, and the Menter have been working with the county's schools on many projects that gave the young people opportunities to use the Welsh language beyond their formal lessons. One example of this was the Cwis Dim Clem, run by Mentrau Iaith Cymru, and coordinated on a local level by Hunaniaith officers.

Language Charter and Strategy

Two schemes exist in Gwynedd to encourage the use of Welsh beyond the classrooms - Primary schools language charter (fframwaith-siarter-iaith.pdf (gov.wales)) and the Secondary Language Strategy (llyw.cymru).

We have not been able to get quantitative data for this work for the period of the Promotion Plan, but we are aware that both projects are very active, and that councils and language forums have been established at almost all schools so that the voice of pupils are at the core of any efforts to promote the use of Welsh among young people.

It is acknowledged that establishing the Language Forum at the secondary schools was a positive step to include the voice of the learner. In one of the schools, learners in year 11 are responsible for the Language Forum. It was noted that the main aim of the Forum is to

organise and hold activities that encourage pupils to speak Welsh. Getting learners to take ownership of organising activities and promoting the language is most welcome.

Further information:

The Education Department submits regular reports to the Council's Language Committee, which has a responsibility for supervising the implementation of the Council's language strategy. See below the reports submitted on the implementation of the WESP, and the reports under the new system where individual departments will report on any activity to promote Welsh within their services.

Language Committee January 2020- Adroddiad Adolygu Blynyddol ar Weithrediad CSGA Gwynedd ar gyfer 2018-19.pdf (llyw.cymru)

Language Committee January 2021 - ADRODDIAD ADOLYGU BLYNYDDOL CSGA.pdf (llyw.cymru)

Education Department's Report on Promoting the Welsh Language - Language Committee January 2022.pdf (llyw.cymru)

Education Department's Report on Promotion - Language Committee January 2023.pdf (llyw.cymru)

The Language of Learning Quantitative Date

Priority Area: **The Language of Learning**	**2018-19/19-20** (2018-19 half year after publication therefore the figures were combined at the end of the first full year)	**2020-21** (Bear in mind that this was during the pandemic period and that restrictions affected what could be done)	**2021-22**	**2022-23**
Number of extended learning opportunities	17 Apprentices 15 Trainees 32 Work Experience opportunities 24 young people obtained accreditations through the youth service	10 Apprentices 6 trainees	11 Apprentices 5 trainees	20 apprentices/trainees
Awareness of the language of work and skills	1 conference, 46 young people 6 YI activities, 145 young people	1 conference, 27 young people	1 conference, 72 young people	Not held

5.3 Priority Area 3: Language of Work and Service

Cyngor Gwynedd takes pride in being able to offer all its services actively bilingually. Nevertheless, we realise that many of our partners in the public sector cannot do so seamlessly. We are also aware that many Welsh speakers choose not to exercise their rights to Welsh language services on every occasion.

We had said that we would be looking for ways to increase people's use of Welsh-medium services. This is certainly a priority that was delayed because of the pandemic period, but where steps have also been taken to encourage people to use their rights, and also to understand behaviours in order to be able to plan interventions in the future.

The Council has been sharing messages on social media as a part of the **Commissioner's Rights Promotion Day**, to encourage the public to use the Welsh language at every possible opportunity in their dealings with the Council.

During the final period of the strategy, we commenced important work to develop our understanding on how people use Welsh language services. The Council joint-funds a **PhD research** project with Bangor University, which will research people's attitudes towards Welsh services, and it is hoped that this will give the Council ideas about interventions that could be implemented to increase use. This research will continue during the period of the new language strategy.

The Welsh Sub-group of the local Services Board commissioned a piece of research that would help the various organisations to consider how they can encourage the public to use the Welsh language every time when they make the initial contact with public bodies. Observation work was conducted at various organisations and recommendations were presented to the Services Board members on steps that can be taken to improve the Welsh offer in their initial contact with service users. The hope is that individual organisations will respond to this research and act on the recommendations during the next strategy period.

In terms of developing the language skills of the Council's workforce, great emphasis was placed during the period of the Promotion Plan on implementing the **Language Designations** project in the Council, which is a project that has transformed the way that

language requirements are considered as a part of the recruitment process. Robust arrangements have been established to assess the language requirements of every post in the Council, and to assess the language skill level of every staff member. This means that we have a better understanding of many training and development requirements of our staff. The following table shows the staff numbers who have received language training during the plan period. The Organisational Learning and Development service provides annual data on the Standards and presents an annual Training Report to the Council's Language Committee every June, which includes more information on how the Council supports learners.

Welsh Language Training Report 2021-22.pdf (llyw.cymru)

Appendix 1.pdf (llyw.cymru)

The Council was also involved with piloting a Bangor University research and behaviour change project, **Arfer** *(*The ARFer Programme, Canolfan Bedwyr, Bangor University*),* which works with work teams where the language of communication has started to or has turned to English, to try and establish new language patterns and encourage Welsh as the main language of communication. One team from the Council's Consultancy department was involved in the pilot scheme before lockdown, and other teams have committed to be involved by the end of the Plan period. This work will continue into the period of the next strategy.

Increasing the use of the Welsh language in the private sector is an ongoing challenge. The Council does not have many enforcement powers, and therefore we are reliant to a vast degree on the goodwill of owners and on trying to persuade them that there are advantages to be had from providing bilingual services. Hunaniaith has worked with businesses on a community level and has encouraged them to make small changes and work with them to hold Welsh community activities. They have also given attention to businesses that make good use of Welsh, to give prestige and status to those businesses. Various businesses have been given praise and attention as a part of the Business of the Month campaign during the Plan period.

Council Services responding to the recruitment challenges:

Recruitment problems seem to be increasing, with many departments noting in their reports to the Language Committee that recruiting people with the correct linguistic skills can be challenging in some work fields.

However, many services and departments are taking proactive steps to address these challenges, and the Council has established a Workforce Planning project, which is seeking to anticipate these problems in the future. See below an excerpt from the Education Department's Report to the Council's Language Committee, explaining how they have addressed the challenges in one specific work field.

"*The Catering and Cleaning service has been key throughout the pandemic in order to ensure a safe environment for learners and staff at our schools, as well as ensure a school dinner provision. Staffing challenges in the context of long-term sickness, the impacts of Covid and recruitment difficulties affect this service daily, and there are challenges in ensuring a workforce that is proficient in Welsh in some areas of the county. In response, the service has taken advantage of the Welsh Government's Kickstart scheme to offer work placements from January onwards to people aged 16-24 years who receive Universal Credit and who are at risk of long-term unemployment. As part of the staff appointment pack, we ask every member of Catering and Cleaning service staff to complete a language assessment questionnaire to see their level of understanding in the language and whether they need assistance to improve their skills. The service will collaborate with Learning and Development to identify a suitable provision to improve the staff's language skills. Currently, there are some examples of the service's staff choosing to follow on-line self-study units to improve their Welsh language skills."*

The Language of Work and Services Quantitative Data

The Language of Work and Services	2018-19/19-20 (2018-19 half year after publication therefore the figures were combined at the end of the first full year)	2020-21 (bear in mind that this was during the pandemic period and that restrictions affected what was possible to do)	2021-22	2022-23
Support for Businesses	6 campaigns, 265 businesses by Hunaniaith			
Awareness of the Council's Staff	126 staff members completing the YI e-module	133 staff completing it.	131 staff completing it.	567 staff completing it
Number of staff being supported to develop skills				
Arfor	27 commercial businesses in Gwynedd receiving financial support from ARFOR phase 1 plans.			

5.4 Priority Area 4: Language of the Community

he way we interact with each other as communities has changed substantially over the past years, and the lockdown periods of the pandemic, and the subsequent long periods of social-distancing, had a far-reaching impact on community activities. Therefore, the Council's role when holding Welsh medium activities in the communities is more important than ever.

The contribution of the language initiative, which thus far has been a part of the Council's Language Unit, has also been key, and has targeted specific areas and held various and regular activities in an attempt to expand the Welsh medium provision in the communities.

The intentions of the Promotion Plan for the language of the community was clear, to **increase the opportunities for people to use the Welsh language** in various contexts and support, and equip, groups and social enterprises to ensure that more Welsh is heard and used in community events.
The vision of the Plan in this field noted a desire by the Council to see "*residents confident to use whatever skills they have in Welsh as they live their daily lives in our communities*", and for "*different cohorts of the community to feel that they are a part of the "Welsh community".*

The work of Hunaniaith, the language Initiative
2019-2021

As a result of Covid, the language initiative had to adapt the work programme substantially. We had to stop doing face-to-face activities and focus on offering support and activities in an alternative way. New resources were developed, and various activities were held on-line by using social media and Zoom.

A number of activities were provided including science and arts workshops via Zoom for school-age children, on-line social night down the pub, quizzes, a gig, video games for all ages, film clips including lectures and activities for children to do at their leisure, a Zoom social event on local place names and history as well as an on-line conference for young people on the value of Welsh in creative media and the business world. Also, an on-line language awareness pack was developed, which included a digital quiz and video for children and young people.

2021-2023

With restrictions being eased, it was possible to recommence face-to-face activities whilst also continuing with on-line and hybrid events. In line with Welsh Government's wishes, we gave more attention to supporting and equipping community groups to promote Welsh on an ongoing basis.

An example of this is the support given to establishing chat groups for Welsh learners in various locations across the county. Nevertheless, the initiative has continued to hold activities, focusing mainly on children and young people and giving learners informal practice opprtunities. A series of regular events were organised for learners, such as walking trips and social evenings, like a hybrid wine tasting evening. It is hoped that providing these practice opportunities will encourage them to seek out other opportunities and increase their confidence integrate into their communities. We also collaborated with the language immersion centres to support families that have moved to the area.

One area that has received considerable attention by the initiative in the final period of the Plan therefore is providing opportunities for people, specifically learners, to practice their skills and develop confidence in a relaxed and informal environment. When the restrictions began to ease, the initiative arranged many walks, jointly with local Learn Welsh officers, which gave people an opportunity to come together and practice their Welsh in a different environment. These trips were a huge success, and Mentrau Iaith Cymru disseminated the model across the whole of Wales.

Supporting community groups and enterprises

Following a series of community seminars in 2017 it was decided to earmark a small sum of the grant to offer **simultaneous translation support** to community groups and committees. This was in response to a concern that many groups were in danger of having to change their operational and administrative language by welcoming new members who do not speak Welsh. There was a clear demand for this support, and the only restriction was that it was only a small sum that could be allocated for the project every year it ran.

Two phases of the **Arfor** schemes have been operational during the Plan period. Rhaglen ARFOR

This scheme is the output of an agreement between Plaid Cymru and the Welsh Labour Government in the Senedd, with money being earmarked in an attempt to address the specific challenges facing the strongholds of the Welsh language in terms of retaining young people in their communities and economic opportunities. During phase 1 of Arfor, each of the four counties (Gwynedd, Môn, Ceredigion and Caerfyrddin), implemented individual projects and piloted different interventions. Gwynedd had many grant schemes which provided support to individuals, businesses and social enterprises, with an emphasis on innovation and creating new employment opportunities. As expected, the pandemic had a substantial impact on the implementation of the schemes, and priorities had to be adapted to continue and complete the scheme. The outcomes of many of the initiatives are noted in the table below, with the number of businesses recorded under the Work and Service priority above.

A quote from the Arfor evaluation report:
The coronavirus pandemic had a substantial impact on the programme in many ways. The general aim of job creation was adapted to include safeguarding jobs. Individual projects and grant holders amended, deferred or, on rare occasions, stopped the plans proposed in the applications. To that end, field work for the purposes of the evaluation report was restricted to collecting data on-line and remotely.

Phase 2 -

The second Arfor scheme was commenced, following a period of evaluating phase 1 schemes, and funding discussions with the Welsh Government. Agreement was reached on many schemes to be implemented across the 4 counties for phase 2. This means that there is consistency in the objectives, and although every county Council is responsible for implementing and approving applications at local level, this implementation method means that the potential positive impact across the region will be greater. To date, 5 new enterprises and 14 existing enterprises in Gwynedd have been approved to receive a grant via the Enterprising Communities fund, with an estimated 84 new jobs being created, 96 existing jobs being secured, and 18 Welsh spaces being created.

Native Welsh Place Names Project

This project was established in 2021 in response to many public calls and concerns about the loss of Welsh names in the county's landscape. The project has been looking at the Council's different powers and influence when safeguarding and protecting Welsh place

names. This has strengthened arrangements and provided additional support to the Council's building control officers when dealing with applications to change property names. The project officers have also been holding discussions with key partners, such as the Eryri National Park and the Ordnance Survey. They have also been meeting regularly with Welsh Government officers (who are responsible for the commitments made in the field under the Plaid Cymru/Labour collaboration agreement), and several other local authorities which are eager to see a change and collaboration in the field.

An important policy statement was made when reviewing the Council's Language Policy in 2022, with the decision that the Council would only use its Welsh name only from now on. This coincides with important statements made by other organisations in Wales, such as Eryri National Park, which gives more status to the Welsh language in public life. The policy also noted the Council's intention to always use the Welsh names of locations and street names in their documentations and correspondence.

A *Local Names Map* - an interactive map which allows people to create a record of local names/dialectal names for locations within their local areas - was launched at the end of 2022, and the project officer held many activities with schools in the Dwyfor area in the months prior to the summer 2023, leading up to the National Eisteddfod in Boduan. A successful panel session was held at the Eisteddfod, with the Minister for the Welsh Language, Jeremy Miles, contributing to an interesting discussion which deliberated the opportunities and barriers in the field.
Until the end of March 2023, the project had also...

- Consulted on **43** applications to change house names during the year.
- Shared the occasional snippet (two or three a month) about place names in posts on social media to, e.g., collect examples of names that included numbers in them.
- published **11** *Enw a'r Hanes* items on the Council's intranet to raise awareness of the meaning of local names amongst Council staff.
- held **2** interviews on Radio Cymru to promote the project.

Prioritising the Welsh language in strategic plans (economic, housing and planning)

During the Promotion Plan period, the Council worked on many strategic plans in field of key importance to the prosperity of our communities. Each one has placed the Welsh language at the centre of its operations and seeks to address some of the specific

challenges in those fields which affect the population and the viability of the Welsh language.

The new **Housing Plan** (Housing Action Plan (llyw.cymru)) has been published, which is a multifaceted, ambitious plan that seeks to address the challenges in terms of housing affordability. For many years now, there has been concern that young people are unable to afford to buy a house in their local communities, and that they are, therefore, more likely to move from the county, taking their Welsh language skills with them. The housing plan, through a combination of many rental and homebuy plans, seeks to ensure a fair opportunity for all to stay in their communities if that is their wish.

New economic plans were also developed, with the **Sustainable Visitor Economy Plan** being an attempt to set a clear vision to change the way we consider the tourism industry in Gwynedd. These plans respond directly to the concerns about how tourism affects communities, economically, culturally and socially.

The Council also developed new impact assessment arrangements within the planning process. Since the publication of the *Supplementary Planning Guidance - Maintaining and Creating Distinctive and Sustainable Communities* in 2019, applicants have been required to provide a linguistic and community statement or assessment if their planning application meets specific criteria. The content of these statements and assessments are verified by the Council's language officers, and they offer observations on the evidence base and suitability of the impact assessments to assist the Members of the Planning Committee to see whether the applicant has considered the potential impacts correctly and appropriately. Since 2019, the Language Unit has processed and made observations on approximately **135 planning applications**.

Language of the Community	**2018-19/19-20** (2018-19 half year after publication therefore the figures were combined at the end of the first full year)	**2020-21** (Bear in mind that this was during the pandemic period and that restrictions affected what could be done)	**2021-22**	**2022-23**
Objective	**Numbers**			
Working with community groups that are traditionally English speaking to increase their use of Welsh.	2018-19 - Brownies Dolgellau 5 events 67 children	*No activities - the initiative's priorities changed*		
General community activities			1 event (outdoor gig), 45 attendees	22 (*on-line*) 141 attendees
Activities targeted to specific cohorts of the community.				
Supporting Learners				
Hunaniaith Work	2 activities, 30 attendees 6 activities, 84 attendees	6 sessions, 8 attendees (on-line event for the residents of Llanberis) 10 sessions, 6 attendees	69 events (43 on-line, 25 face-to-face, 1 hybrid) 773 attendees *(Various activities including arts, drama workshops, workshop on the value of Welsh and the digital world, on-line awareness pack, on-line quizzes, monthly video games club, on-line science workshops and video clips)*	90 1144 attendees (*including 22 walks for new speakers, weekly chatting club for new speakers at Llanystumdwy, Llanberis, Bangor, Trawsfynydd, Groeslon and a jogging club in Bangor)*

Children and Young People				
Hunaniaith Work	Rap and video - 3 workshops, 38 young people Vlogging - 1 workshop, 7 young people	*(No data - lockdown)*	10 face-to-face events, 79 on-line activities	67 activities 1699 attendees
Council's Youth Service		2850 opportunities provided and 13453 attendees (across 2020/21 and 2021/22)		3250 sessions arranged through the medium of Welsh, 17625 attendees across the year
Intergenerational Event	6 pupils, 14 adults			
Older people (Dementia activities)	*(No data available)*	Weekly events Around 77 regular attendees (on average)	Weekly events 3745 attendees across the locations and the year	Weekly events Total attendees: 7056 face-to-face attendees: 5954 On-line attendees: 1102
Community Interpretation Plan	14 organisations or groups receiving simultaneous translation support at meetings	*Plan not operational*	Total number of opportunities: 18, Attendees 684 (*Virtual and face-to-face support for 2 community enterprises and 2 social organisations to enable meetings to be held through the medium of Welsh. Between April and September 2021, the resource was used in*	8 community groups receiving support and equipped to ultimately hold their own sessions

			14 individual events, with a total of 575 individuals attending. (Q3 - 4 events, 109 attendees)	
Support for community groups and enterprises through Arfor phase 1 funding	3 enterprises receiving support			
Conferences/community seminars and support for Community Councils	5 Community Councils receiving guidance on the use and status of Welsh in community events.	*No activities - the initiative's priorities changed*		

5.5 Priority Area 5 – Research and Technology

Research

The Language and Scrutiny Unit has been working to develop the relationship with prominent academics in the field of language planning, and a network of language officers from Arfor area authorities, and representatives from Welsh universities, have been meeting to share information about the research work undertaken and that is in the pipeline.

The Council has been developing a specific relationship with Bangor University and has commissioned two pieces of **research**. A joint application for seed funding was made with the University to carry out initial research into the link between language and the economy, looking specifically at the visitor economy and the impact of the World Heritage Site designation on the Welsh language. The Council is also part-funding **PhD research** which will look at people's attitudes and their use of Welsh when dealing with public services.

Technology

The Promotion Plan noted an intention to seek to influence people's use of Welsh when using technology.

The Council has held events to contribute to the voice data collection work of the Common Voice project, and has been instrumental in ensuring that key on-line services provided by central Government are available in Welsh for the public. Over the years, the Council's officers have provided specialist advice, a proof-reading service, and has done translation work for many new systems, including DBS checks, Blue Badge, and have ensured that IOSH training resources are available bilingually. Not only does this ensure resources and opportunities for Council staff to use Welsh, but it also ensures that the public receives the quality services that they deserve, in Welsh.

With the far-reaching changes that have occurred over the past years in terms of the use of technology, it is fair to say that acting in this field has been an additional challenge for the Council.

During the lockdown, the education department, and the Council's entire workforce, in reality, **had to adapt to working and offering services remotely**. The Education Department and school staff worked hard, not only to provide virtual learning opportunities, but to make sure that a variety of **digital resources** were available for pupils to be able to continue with their Welsh-medium education. The Council's services also adapted, with more services being offered via the self-service and on-line, with all of these available in Welsh.

The Council was innovative in its use of technology in response to the new ways of working, and specifically so when ensuring that the Council's public meetings were able to continue operating bilingually. Many challenges emerged when moving to the remote working arrangements, and subsequently with holding hybrid meetings, but the Democracy and Language Service, including the translation unit, has been at the forefront in overcoming any barriers, when discussing and collaborating with the national company that provides hybrid services for public organisations, and when influencing other organisations (and by going as far as arranging meetings on behalf of others when some organisations were prohibited from using Zoom). These successes were reported upon in the annual reports of the Language Unit on the implementation of the Language Standards. The 2021-22 report, for example, can be seen here: [The Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2021-2022. Language Committee.pdf (llyw.cymru)]

Following the lockdown period, and the acknowledgement of the increased use of social media, there was an investment from the Council to implement and extend **Prosiect 15**, to work specifically on increasing the Welsh medium content being created for social media. During 2023, various social accounts were established, focussing mainly on Instagram and TikTok. Competitions were held to encourage children and young people to create video clips on various themes and we attended the Llŷn ac Eifionydd National Eisteddfod to hold specific events and raise

awareness of the project by targeting children and young people. We collaborated with local sports clubs and schools to create material associated with the Rugby World Cup as well as student unions for the Freshers' Week video series. We also held workshops in a secondary school to produce many videos and info-graphs based on the theme 'Facts on Welsh Innovators'.

Technology has also played a key role in the Welsh Place Names project, with the launch of the interactive map. The Language and Scrutiny Unit have also developed an interactive activities map, which has been designed to show where Welsh language activities are held around the county. Any group, organization or club that hold regular activities in the community can add their information to the map in order for other people to find them.

It is also worth noting again the work of the Education Department in developing Aberlwa ,the VR world that has been created to be used side by side with the new language immersion plan. This has been an innovative development in language immersion education, and since it was first shown publicly in the 2022 national Eisteddfod, it has gained support from Welsh Government and is being shared nationally. This shows that Cyngor Gwynedd is once again leading the way in developing new projects that support the Welsh language, and is building on the success of the language charter in the past.