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CYNGOR GWYNEDD

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Gwynedd Language Strategy

2023 – 2033

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INTRODUCTION

This strategy has been created as a follow-up to the work of the **Welsh Language Promotion Plan for Gwynedd 2018-23** (the Council's previous language strategy) in order to reflect the Council's commitment to promote the language across the county and to meet the statutory requirements set within the Welsh Language Standards. It demonstrates some of the projects and work that are currently being undertaken by the Council, and some of the matters we wish to address over the next few years.

This strategy has been developed based on internal and external consultation work. Discussions were held with the Council's Cabinet Members, the Language Committee and Gwynedd Language Forum members (which include representatives of organisations and community and partner establishments) and a public consultation period was held during May 2023.

The strategy sets a vision to increase the use of Welsh across the whole county, and the schemes or projects that are proposed focus on fields where the Council has the power and influence to act.

We set this strategy for a period of 10 years. This means that the strategy's period will correspond with the publication of census statistics, providing us with a more efficient measuring method. We will be reviewing the strategy formally after a 5 year period and will try to strengthen the evidence basis regularly during that time, to ensure that the activities reflect the community's developmental needs and that they respond to any arising challenges in a timely manner.

Another thing we must look at during the strategy's initial period is ensuring that young people's voices are heard, and that we are aware of the challenges facing them and what their aspirations are in terms of increasing the use of the Welsh language.

We have a responsibility, as stated above, to take the necessary actions to protect the Welsh language as a minority language, and to ensure that the increasing presence of the English language does not threaten the viability of the Welsh language and its use as a communication medium and natural expression by the county's residents. .

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VISION STATEMENT

We intend to create an inclusive strategy, with the main objective being increasing opportunities for everyone of Gwynedd's residents to see and use the Welsh language in different contexts. By working on raising status and increasing people's use of the language in every aspect of their lives, we will also hope to increase the motivation for others to learn the language.

We will give specific attention to try and increase young people's use of the language over the next years, including showing them the value of the language as a skill for the world of work, and attempt to increase the informal opportunities for them to use the Welsh language in their daily lives.

We will also try to give specific attention to how we can have a positive influence on the way residents use the Welsh language in the numerous ways that technology is a part of their lives. We intend to create an inclusive strategy, with the main objective being increasing opportunities for everyone of Gwynedd's residents to see and use the Welsh language in different contexts. By working on raising status and increasing people's use of the language in every aspect of their lives, we will also hope to increase the motivation for others to learn the language.

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CONTEXT OF IMPLEMENTATION

It is important to note that the Council is implementing schemes in several relevant national policy and statutory fields, and schemes on a local level that affect the County's communities, and the Welsh language, or are involved in some way with efforts seeking to maintain and promote Welsh.

The work undertaken in these fields - Housing, Education, Economy, Town and Country Planning for example - is an important part of realising this strategy's general objectives, and the interventions implemented by the Council to protect and encourage the prosperity of Gwynedd's communities have a direct and indirect effect on the population in those communities, and in turn on Welsh speakers.

Although this strategic document's main emphasis is on projects and schemes that are beyond these policies and strategies - by giving attention to work that is already under way, and identifying the new opportunities to go beyond the service provision requirements to promote the use of the Welsh language – it is also important that we refer to these strategic schemes in order to show how the Council prioritises the Welsh language through all of its schemes.

A number of these schemes exceed national guidance in those fields and seek to address the specific challenges facing Gwynedd communities and population and, as a result, affect the prosperity of the Welsh language.

Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. Education

A plan that meets the requirements of section 84 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) Regulations 2019 and sets the vision of having a Welsh-medium and bilingual education system that puts the need of all our learners at the heart of our provision. The Plan sets a clear commitment and direction for ensuring that learners in Gwynedd attain the highest standards to maintain the language, culture, and economy locally.

Gwynedd Housing Action Plan

The inability of the local population - and specifically the barriers facing young people being able to afford a house that would allow them to live within their communities - has been a subject of discussion for some years now and is considered a substantial threat to the Welsh language situation in the county since it forces people to move out of their communities.

The Gwynedd Council's Housing Action Plan 2020/21-2026/27 is worth over £140m and includes 30 ambitious projects that are attempting to realise the aim of ensuring that the people of Gwynedd have access to a suitable home of a high standard, which is affordable and improves their quality of life. Examples of schemes that are currently underway and coming to fruition include the Gwynedd Home-buy Scheme, First Time Buyers' Scheme to renovate empty houses and the buying and building affordable homes' scheme.

Cynllun Datblygu Lleol

Y cynllun a ddefnyddir gan y Cyngor i arwain a rheoli gwaith datblygu, a rhoi'r sail ar gyfer penderfynu ar geisiadau cynllunio. Mae hyn yn effeithio ar lle a phryd y caiff tai eu hadeiladu, ac ar faint o dai fforddiadwy sydd ar gael. Mae'r Canllawiau Cynllunio Atodol sy'n cyd-fynd â'r CDLl yn galluogi i'r Cyngor ofyn am asesiadau effaith rhai datblygiadau ar y Gymraeg a gosod amodau ar ddatblygiadau preswyl a busnes fydd yn ceisio hybu'r iaith.

Sustainable Visitor Economy Plan

By coordinating on the development of the Plan and identifying new collaboration arrangements, both bodies commit to take action to see *"A visitor economy for the benefit and well-being of the people, environment, language and culture of Gwynedd and Eryri"*.

This is a scheme that is breaking new ground and introduces a new way of measuring the impact of the visitor economy on our area in its entirety by considering the effects on our language, culture and heritage, the environment and on our communities.

Ardal Ni Regeneration Schemes

In 2021, Cyngor Gwynedd's Regeneration Board agreed to develop a new Regeneration Framework. The Framework's intention is to ensure that there are proactive steps in place to ensure coordination in improving the areas economically, environmentally, socially and culturally. The county is split into 13 regeneration areas. One of the regeneration plans' priorities is to recognise the Plans that support the activities that promote the Welsh language and culture and support learners of the language.

13 unique regeneration plans have been developed following the Ardal Ni consultation work in 2022, to reflect the aspirations of the local communities of Gwynedd.

Financial Context:

It must also be recognised that we are operating in a very challenging period on a financial level, and that the financial constraints will not allow us to do everything we wish to do during the period of the strategy, or to do everything at once. There is a need to be careful and realistic about what can be delivered within the resources that are available, to make the most of collaboration opportunities to share resources, and to review the work programme and projects when the financial situation changes. We will be doing as much as we possibly can with the resources that we have, by recognising collaboration opportunities with other organisations.

Language Planning Policy Context:

Cymraeg 2050

Cymraeg 2050 is the long-term strategy of the Welsh Government, which outlines how they intend to promote the Welsh language and work towards reaching the aim of a million Welsh speakers by 2050. A 5-year Action Plan was published for 2021 to 2026, which places a strong emphasis on increasing the number of Welsh speakers through the education system, but the strategy also includes aims and targets to increase the use of the language in every part of life. There are three main themes or aims for the Government's work, namely:

- Increase the number of Welsh speakers
- Increase the use of the Welsh language and
- Create favourable conditions

Although the work of Gwynedd's strategy has been divided into 5 main priority fields, we also show how these strategies' aims contribute towards 3 areas of action in the Cymraeg 2050 strategy.

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CURRENT SITUATION

summary of the statistical position and challenges

4.1 Y sefyllfa ystadegol

2021 Census
On the day of the 2021 Census, 73,560 people (aged 3 and over) were able to speak Welsh in Gwynedd which corresponds to 64.4%.

In 2011, the number of speakers in Gwynedd was 77,000, the corresponding percentage being 65.4%, therefore, the proportion has reduced by 1%.

Although only a small reduction was seen in the amount and percentage of Welsh speakers in the County, it remains to be a change in the wrong direction.

We have set a specific aim for this new language strategy's initial period to look in detail at the results of the census, to understand the exact changes happening across the different age groups, and areas of the county. Right after the census' results were published, our Research and Analytics service looked at the language profile, submitting an initial analysis to the Council's Language Committee and to the Cabinet Members.

See the link to the analysis below. The service has also undertaken some further work in starting to compare different sets of data available from the census.

Newyddlen-Iaith-Gymraeg

National Language Use Survey

The other evidence base we have is the National Language Survey, which is carried out by the Welsh Government. The previous survey was carried out in 2021-22 and notes the following general situation in Gwynedd:

The percentage of people from Gwynedd who participated in the survey, who said they were able to speak Welsh, was 64% for 2019-20 and it increased to 69% for 2021-22.

The proportion who noted they were able to speak Welsh daily, and more than a few words, was 61% in 2019-20 and 60% for 2021-22.

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It must be noted that the Use Survey is a survey with a specific and restricted sample of people and that the Census, in comparison, is a survey that includes the whole population. Therefore, there is a need to be cautious when making any comparison between the different figures. However, it is interesting to note that the percentage appears higher in the use survey, and it suggests that the statistical picture is very dependent on the question that is asked in both surveys. We are aware that the Welsh Government is currently looking at these differences when looking at the data needed for the future.

Stats Wales National Survey Results

Welsh language use in Wales (initial findings): July 2019 to March 2020

One current matter of concern is the possibility that another national census will not be held in 10 years. The National Statistics Office is currently consulting on the future of the census in its current form, and there are substantial consequences to the data we have on the Welsh language should a decision be made to not carry out the census again. The Council will need to keep an eye on this situation and consider the need to hold their own county surveys in order to monitor the language use as well as this strategy's success.

4.2 Influences on language use

In order for us to be able to find opportunities to increase the use of the Welsh language and to increase the number of speakers, we also need to be able to identify the challenges and obstacles that prevent it. We need to be able to identify the socio-economic factors that affect our communities and understand how these have a direct and indirect impact on the status and use of the language, and also on people's attitude towards the Welsh language. We must examine the situations and circumstances where people use less of the language in their daily lives, and what factors affect an individual's personal use of the language.

Certainly, getting people to use the skills and ability they have to speak Welsh confidently, and doing this in as many contexts as possible, is one of the most important factors for the success of the language in Gwynedd.

In terms of linguistic planning, there are several key factors to consider when discussing what affects the language use of individuals. These have been described as follows by the Welsh Language Commissioner: (Best practice guide WLC Promotion Standards point 3.36)

continuity

the continuation of experiences and opportunities from primary to secondary education; from secondary education to further or higher education; from education to the workplace, leisure, raising families, as well as social and community experiences, together with continuity between learning Welsh and becoming fluent.

opportunity

the quality and convenience of opportunities can greatly affect the use of the language and supporting future use of the language.

attitudes

it's important to consider how Welsh speakers feel about their ability and language use and the way in which they act on this, and how non-Welsh speakers feel about the language and how this is articulated and perceived.

confidence

the confidence of Welsh speakers can vary according to the situation (e.g., formal and

informal) and therefore consideration must be given as to how and where to target support effectively.

These are some of the main matters that influence the use of the language and also the number of speakers in Gwynedd at this point in time:

Transferring the language within the family:
Families not transferring the language to their children, leading to the loss of the Welsh language as the language of the home. Non-Welsh speaking parents not receiving sufficient encouragement and support to introduce the Welsh language to their families before the children reach school.

Young people's use of language:
Language use does not seem to reflect the number of speakers among the younger generation, and there is concern that we are "losing" several speakers as they leave formal education. Young people need more encouragement to see the language as an asset and relevant skill, and to see that there is a need for her as an education, social and working language.

Opportunities and status for people to use the Welsh language in the community:
The nature of society and communities has been changing constantly over the past few decades, with the balance between the Welsh and English languages gradually changing. More social activities are held bilingually or in English by now, and Welsh medium only events getting rarer. The visual status of the Welsh language is also affected by lack of use by the private and public sectors. There is a need to increase the status of the language as a work and play language and find ways to convince more businesses to use Welsh when dealing with the public. There is also a need to ensure that there is appropriate support for community groups to widen the opportunities available and to ensure that people of all linguistic and social backgrounds are included in community activities.

Creating new speakers:
There are many residents and newcomers within the county who are keen and enthusiastic to learn Welsh, but there is a need to ensure that varied, timely and convenient opportunities are available for them, not only to learn but to practise their Welsh to become confident speakers.

The influence of technology:

Technology plays an increasingly prominent role in people's lives, socially and in their public lives. The use and influence have intensified since the pandemic. The challenges are varied, since technology is used in a way that changes people's living habits - from using on-line public services instead of face to face, increasing use of self-service machines, and an increasing catalogue of on-line social platforms. We must acknowledge that the Welsh language can never compete with English and its increasing presence, but we can look at different ways of increasing the use of Welsh where Welsh digital services are available and ways of increasing the use of Welsh on social media platforms, so that more people can turn and keep to using the Welsh language in a more natural way whilst using technology.

Housing and Work - economic challenges

Although this strategy will not attempt to address the vast and complicated matters directly (other strategic plans are currently being undertaken by the Council in those fields that we are not duplicating) we must recognise that the economic challenges facing our communities will have an impact on Welsh speakers. The lack of various employment opportunities lead to emigration from rural areas and low average salaries means that many have difficulty being able to afford homes within their local community when they do want to stay.

People's attitudes:

We live in a time of polarized opinions, and the same is true when looking at people's attitude towards the Welsh language. We have a responsibility to try and foster a positive attitude towards the language, amongst native Welsh speakers, those who are new to the language and those who don't or don't want to speak the language and do not see the purpose. We must foster language endurance and robustness amongst Welsh speakers, to ensure that they do not lose confidence and turn to English, and we need to try and raise awareness and earn respect for the language, amongst those who do not speak Welsh as a living language of our communities.

5

NEXT STEPS

For the next few years, the focus will be on increasing the use of the Welsh language, and on ensuring that everyone who has the ability to speak it does so in as many situations and as often as possible. As a result, the main activities of the strategy come under Theme 2 of the Cymraeg 2050 Strategy, namely Increasing the Use of the Welsh Language.

But we also note what is the intention in terms of increasing numbers - Theme 1 Cymraeg 2050 - and what we intend to do in terms of laying firm and correct foundations for developing the use of the Welsh language in the county - Theme 3 Cymraeg 2050, Creating favourable conditions.

The Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language Measure) (Wales) 2011, also requires us to set a target for increasing or maintaining the number of Welsh speakers during the strategy period.

5.1 Increasing the Number of Speakers Target (Theme 1 Cymraeg 2050)

We will set a general target to see an increase in the regular use of Welsh. We also want to see 100% of Gwynedd children receiving the opportunity to speak Welsh and to use the language regularly.

How will we increase the number of speakers?	How will we measure on a local level, and during the period of the strategy?
Provide opportunities for children and young people who are not yet Welsh speakers (e.g., newcomers, children who do not receive mainstream education), to learn and become confident Welsh speakers.	Number of children receiving Welsh-medium education. Number of children receiving support through the immersion system of the education department.
Provide opportunities for adults to become new speakers via the Council's learner support schemes and community provision of partners.	Number of Council employees receiving Learn Welsh lessons. Provision of community Welsh learning courses.

5.2 Actions and Aims for increasing Use (Theme 2 Cymraeg 2050)

We have created 5 general action fields, and 4 of them meet the aims of theme 2 Cymraeg 2050. Under every field we have attempted to outline what the challenges are, what's already happening in those fields and what are the best possible steps to be taken during the strategy period. We have also noted possible measures for every field, which will assist us to measure the success of the strategy.

The measures noted under the field reflects the Council's obligations at the time of publishing the strategy. These measures can change over time and according to priorities that will be recognised at different times during the strategy period. The work programme that aligns with this strategy will be reviewed regularly and will include the latest measures.

Area of Work 1: Language of the early years

Evidence base

On what basis do we see the need to act? What are the challenges?

What do we seek to achieve?

Providing the best start for families and children in terms of using Welsh is essential.

There is also a need to ensure that parents transfer the language to the next generation, and that every encouragement and support is provided to enable parents and prospective parents to learn Welsh.

We are aware that the pandemic has had a substantial impact on the language use of families and young children, with the lack of opportunities to socialise outside the home meaning that a number of families have lost that crucial opportunity to receive an early introduction to the Welsh language.

The challenges we face in terms of living costs also mean that it is possible that some families have been missing out on opportunities to introduce the Welsh language early due to the cost of resources and travelling to activities.

The Welsh Government has set a target of opening 60 new Welsh-medium nursery groups across Wales by 2026 (Cymraeg 2050 Plan - 2012 to 2026) and we hope to see some of those new groups in Gwynedd.

Therefore, a special effort is now needed, not only to rebuild those community networks - increase the number of children attending Cylchoedd Meithrin and Ti a Fi groups - but also to nurture confidence among parents, Welsh speakers, learners, and those who have not yet taken the step to start learning, to use the Welsh language and to transfer Welsh to their children.

What is already being done?

- projects or schemes that are part of the Council or partners' work, that are already being implemented, and will carry on to the period of the next strategy.

Policies and strategic work that are relevant to this field:

This field is specifically addressed in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and specific measures have been put in place to monitor progress:
"It is ensured that every Early Years setting sets a strong foundation for Welsh, ensuring that every child is given a Language, Literacy and Communication skills assessment in Welsh on entry and at the end of part-time nursery education, and at the end of the Foundation Phase."

Other projects and schemes:

The Council and other partners hold several activities that have been specifically aimed towards offering informal experiences to parents and infants. The libraries service, for example, holds several story and song sessions regularly.

The language initiative also held activities for families and had held workshops in the past for activity and care providers in order to promote the advantages of bilingualism.

The work of Mudiad Meithrin and pre-school care providers was crucial here.

What else requires attention?

what will we work on or hope to address during the period of the next strategy?

There is a need to increase the awareness of parents of the Welsh-medium education system and highlight the opportunities available for them to introduce Welsh before the children reach school age.

There is also a need to ensure that every family can obtain resources - books, posters, Welsh music and information about apps and activities - to enable them to introduce the

Welsh language as soon as possible.

There is an assumption that Ti a Fi groups and Cylchoedd Meithrin in the county are not in such a healthy position as they were, and that this is possibly due to the impacts of the pandemic period. They are having trouble recruiting staff and attracting volunteers to act on their committees. The Council and Mudiad Meithrin will need to collaborate to assess the situation carefully and consider which steps are needed to take to ensure that as many children as possible in the county take advantage of these pre-school education opportunities and to ensure that Ti a Fi groups and Cylchoedd Meithrin receive the appropriate support to grow and thrive.

Consideration needs to be given to informal opportunities for parents to practise and nurture confidence in their use of the Welsh language. One idea that has been mentioned is the need to create opportunities that correspond with a family's busy life - such as chat/learning sessions while the children are in after-school lessons and clubs.

Continuing to ensure a variety of activities for young families is crucial, and this by Council services and other partners in the public and community sectors. There is also a need to examine opportunities for families to be involved in activities together (activities are too often aimed towards the children, rather than being activities that include the whole family) to encourage communication and speaking among the whole family.

We should also look at the technical role in this field, and by supporting the use of the language in the home - from apps and websites that can help families to use the Welsh language in the home before they commence formal education, to holding a campaign on social media to raise awareness of non-Welsh speaking prospective parents about the education system and simple but effective ways that they can introduce the Welsh language to their children.

What will we measure?

- The reach data of WESP in terms of the number of childcare placements and the number of children receiving Welsh-medium education.
- Number of Ti a Fi groups, Parent and Child groups that are supported/maintained.
- Number of activities specifically targeted towards young families/parents and infants by Council services.

- Number of family activities arranged by the language initiative.
- Number of campaigns to share resources and information.

Area of Work 2: Language of Learning

Evidence base

On what basis do we see the need to act? What are the challenges? What do we seek to achieve?

Several challenges have been identified in terms of Welsh-medium education in the county, including the need to ensure consistency in the implementation of the policy, the need to ensure that sufficient opportunities and encouragement are offered to pupils to follow Welsh-medium courses, and to further develop the immersion service. Ensuring opportunities for Welsh-medium study in post-16 education is a specific challenge, and there is an obvious connection with the need to ensure that the population has the proper skills to be able to provide future services.

There is also a clear need to strengthen the Welsh medium assessment and observation situation for courses that are associated with apprenticeships. These elements are already addressed by the Council and targets for development in these fields have been identified in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, that was published in 2022 (Welsh-in-Education-Strategic-Plan.pdf (gov.wales)).

Ensuring various and suitable opportunities for people of all ages to learn Welsh is key for the effort of increasing the number and the confidence of Welsh speakers. The Council has an important role to play in this when encouraging any members of the workforce to improve their skills or to learn Welsh. During 2022-23, 29 staff members received the Council's support to learn Welsh through courses that had been specifically commissioned to fit around work circumstances, and a total of 83 individuals were given access to language training during the year.

We are very aware that there is a need to increase the opportunities for people to use the Welsh language when following courses or informal training, along with more formal learning opportunities. This section also encompasses informal learning opportunities, including community training opportunities and those more informal learning opportunities

that take place as part of the Council and partners' work, such as qualifications for young people and training.

One clear challenge is the lack of Welsh offer from national qualification and accreditation providers. We can see that the youth services and other partners in Gwynedd often must adapt or campaign for a long time to receive provision in Welsh, instead of there being a wider understanding about the need and demand for these opportunities in Welsh.

We recognise that there are many community training opportunities, especially sport clubs such as football, rugby, hockey, karate etc., that are held in Welsh, and provide totally natural and immeasurable opportunities for young people to use Welsh and hear it outside the classroom and formal education. However, the robustness of the language medium in many of these clubs are getting weaker, and a number of these activities are changing to be held in English or bilingually, either due to the lack of volunteers to hold the activities or due to leaders' lack of confidence to hold activities in Welsh. We must try and take the steps to protect these natural Welsh spaces and give the leaders the support needed to feel confident to not turn to English.

Schemes such as the Council's Apprenticeships Scheme, which provide learning opportunities that are associated with work, are also relevant to this field, and is a field where there have been challenges recently. A lack of Welsh-medium, or bilingual, training provision has been identified as a barrier for the apprenticeships scheme, and particularly therefore advanced apprenticeships, and is something the Council is currently seeking to address.

What is already being done?

- projects or schemes that are part of the Council or partners' work, that are already being implemented, and will carry on to the period of the next strategy.

Policies and strategic work that are relevant to this field:

The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan is implemented by the Council's Education Department and corresponds with the priorities of the Welsh Government to develop Welsh-medium education (in accordance with Cymraeg 2050 targets). 7 priorities, or outcomes, which have been noted below, will work on increasing the number of children receiving Welsh-medium education in the county, ensuring that pupils continue to improve skills when transferring between key stages, and increasing provision and the number of

pupils who follow Welsh-medium subjects.

The Scheme's 7 outcomes:

- More nursery/3-year-old children receiving Welsh-medium education
- More reception class/5-year-old children receiving Welsh-medium education
- More children continuing to improve skills when transferring from one key stage to the next
- More learners studying Welsh as a subject and subjects through the medium of Welsh
- Increase opportunities to use the Welsh language in various contexts
- Improve Welsh-medium education provision for ALN pupils
- Increase the number of staff members who can speak Welsh

One specific project has also been noted in the Council Plan, namely Modernising the Post-16 Learning Environment Project.

Other projects and schemes:

The Learning and Development service offers a variety of opportunities to improve skills, and they arrange courses and training to learn Welsh, to ensure that all Council staff meet, or work towards, the language designation of their posts.

The Council's Youth Service offers opportunities to gain occupational qualifications.

The Council has an Apprenticeship Scheme which provides opportunities for young people to receive work experience and nurture skills alongside the opportunity to gain qualifications in their fields.

What else requires attention?
- what will we work on or hope to address during the period of the next strategy?

As a result of the identified barrier with the apprenticeship qualification provision, the Council officers have been attempting to persuade and encourage apprenticeship providers to offer as much of their provision as possible through the medium of Welsh. Work is underway to assess and understand the exact situation in terms of the language medium of the provision on offer, with the aim of collaborating with providers in the field of further education to identify opportunities to improve the provision, to identify additional resources to offer in Welsh as well as further opportunities to promote the Welsh language.

We will encourage more Council staff to learn Welsh and to improve their verbal and writing skills. We will look at how we can make the most of different methods of training and introducing information to do this, varying from holding face to face sessions to utilising different social media platforms, such as e-modules and online seminars, in order to fit around work patterns and learning approaches.

We will continue to offer informal Welsh-medium learning opportunities for young people via the youth service work, and work to ensure that more accreditations are available for them through the medium of Welsh.

We will look at opportunities to support volunteers who hold community learning and training opportunities, by collaborating with partners such as the Urdd and sharing information about resources such as the Sport Vocabulary App by the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol. We will discuss further collaboration opportunities with the Coleg Cymraeg and consider opportunities to develop community language robustness skills (how not to switch to the English language by default and how to influence the use of other languages).

In terms of supporting the work of the education department and work carried out in schools.
There is a need to consider ways to raise the awareness of young people, and their parents, of the value and demand for skills in Welsh in the world of work, in order to increase the incentive to study through the medium of Welsh and continue to develop robust skills in both languages. We must ensure that schools and teachers promote and discuss options for study through the medium of Welsh openly with young people as they make decisions about their options.

There is also a need to consider how we can provide support to non-Welsh speaking parents to nurture their confidence to support their children through Welsh-medium education and consider how we can get rid of assumptions about "more Anglicised" education and schools.

What will we measure?

- WESP monitoring statistics
- Number of Council staff receiving training to improve skills
- Number of apprenticeships being offered by the Council
- Number of training/accreditation opportunities being offered by the youth service.

Area of Work 3: Language of Work and Service

Evidence base

On what basis do we see the need to act? What are the challenges?

What do we seek to achieve?

The Welsh language standards place a requirement on the authority and other public bodies to offer services through the medium of Welsh.

However, evidence shows that the number of the population who use Welsh when dealing with the Council is much lower than the recorded number of speakers.

Despite imposing the Welsh Language Standards on more bodies in recent years, and a wider understanding for the need to provide services in Welsh, there is still a major inconsistency as well in terms of the public services that are possible for residents to use, and Cyngor Gwynedd often leads the way and stands alone when calling on others to increase and improve Welsh-medium services.

The aim of the Council in this field is to look beyond service provision and examine ways to encourage the use of Welsh-medium services by the public. By increasing the use, we can prove the need more effectively.

We also recognise that continuous work is required to maintain and develop the language skills of employees, to ensure that we have the suitable workforce to offer the necessary services.
Several services are currently facing exceptional recruitment challenges and it will be essentially important that the Welsh language is addressed fairly when developing any workforce recruitment/development plans.

Barriers continue to exist with the public and private sector beyond the Council, and the lack of Welsh use by businesses and customers is having an impact on the status of the Welsh language in the community.

What is already being done?

- projects or schemes that are part of the Council or partners' work, that are already being implemented, and will carry on to the period of the next strategy.

Policies and strategic work that are relevant to this field:

More Than Just Words – Take steps to improve Welsh language services in the field of care and social services. Coordination on a Council, regional and national level to identify good practice and implement interventions to improve the active offer to the public across the health and care services.

Other projects and schemes:

Care Plans – Projects that have been noted in the Council Plan for 2023 – 2028 that will examine improving and redesigning the Council's care services. Ensuring effective bilingual services and implementing the principle of the "proactive proposal is a key part of any work to improve this very important field.

Workforce Planning Project - his project has been noted in the Council Plan for 2023 – 2028 in response to recent recruitment challenges, and again, ensuring that the workforce and the services have the necessary linguistic skills to offer the best service to the public is an important part of the work.

The Learning and Development service offers several opportunities to staff to learn and develop their linguistic skills, verbal and writing skills. We have also been part of the Arfor research scheme by Bangor University, which examines the changing linguistic practices of work teams.

A project has also been identified by the Economy department, which aims to provide support to businesses and community enterprises to thrive and support the people of Gwynedd into work. The Arfor scheme - a regional scheme spanned out across 4 counties, Anglesey, Gwynedd, Ceredigion, and Carmarthenshire, to develop economic plans that also prioritises the use of Welsh - offers financial support for businesses to grow and develop, with an emphasis on businesses operating through the medium of Welsh, that want to develop their use of the Welsh language and work opportunities are offered to the local population.

The Council is also part of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board - collaborating with other public bodies to improve the experience of the public when using services through the medium of Welsh.

What else requires attention?

- what will we work on or hope to address during the period of the next strategy?

A number of services are currently facing exceptional recruitment challenges and it will be essentially important that the Welsh language is given priority when developing any workforce recruitment/development plans and that we promote the Welsh language as a skill and develop people of all ages' understanding of the demand in the world of work for verbal and written skills.

We will trial schemes within the Council to encourage more people to use the Welsh language when using on-line Council services. We will be looking at the ways we present information to the public through the website and self-service systems, to ensure that the language is clear and understandable and increases the chance of using Welsh instead of English.

More public bodies need to be seen following the Council's example in terms of applying the proactive offer, making effective use of translation in meetings and operating internally through the medium of Welsh.

We will continue to collaborate with partners in the public sector (via the Services Board), as well as the Commissioner and the Welsh Government to see how we can transfer some of these good practices to other organisations, and to collaborate to improve users' experiences.

Work to support learners and to develop the skills of the workforce will continue within the Council with the intention of ensuring that every staff member works towards achieving the language level of their posts, and that they have appropriate writing skills to ensure that clear, standard, and easy-to-read language is used when communicating and delivering services to the public. We will also continue to participate in the Arfor Scheme by introducing the intervention in more teams and by developing buddy schemes.

We can also see that we need to re-examine the support and encouragement provided to the private sector to use the Welsh language, to ensure as much opportunities as possible for residents to use Welsh as part of their daily lives. This is an area that has found it difficult to see results over the years; identifying the external support sources (such as the Welsh Language Commissioner and the Helo Blod scheme) will be important to take things forward.

We will use any opportunities that are available to the Council, such as awarding procurement contracts and offering financial support, to influence and impose language conditions. Specific support will be provided to businesses and community groups by means of Arfor

Scheme phase 2 grants, and conditions to develop language use will be imposed within the application process and grant conditions. The Arfor scheme focuses on businesses operating through the medium of Welsh, that want to develop their use of the Welsh language and offers work opportunities to the local population.

What will we measure?

- Number of businesses that are receiving financial support through the Arfor Scheme
- Number of staff that are receiving support to learn Welsh or develop skills
- Number of staff participating in buddy/champion schemes.

Area of Work 4: Language of the Community

Evidence base

- On what basis do we see the need to act? What are the challenges? What do we seek to achieve?

There have been several changes in our communities and way of living in recent years that have had a major impact on Gwynedd communities. We are still understanding the side-effects of the pandemic in terms of people's habits and community socialising opportunities, and there also needs to consider that people's habits in terms of socialising and community involvement have changed.

The gradual movement over the past decade or two of direct geographical community involvement (villages and towns) to socialising more in communities of interest, or based on children's activities, means that we are looking at "community" in a very broad manner.

There are also substantial challenges to the viability of geographical communities due to lack of various employment opportunities and pressures on the housing market, which mean that people must move to other communities to live and work. The housing and emigration situation are not new problems, but it feels as if they have intensified because of the pandemic.

There are concerns among the population about these matters and the increasing pressures on communities as a result of the tourism industry and the visitor accommodation economy, which means that the Council has had to take action to try to control the situation and has developed many strategic plans that address these fields.

This strategy seeks to look beyond those interventions and consider what else we can do to support the language in our communities and to encourage more people to use it in different contexts.

What is already being done?

- projects or schemes that are part of the Council or partners' work, that are already being implemented, and will carry on to the period of the next strategy.

Policies and strategic work that are relevant to this field:

- Sustainable Visitor Economy Plan
- Gwynedd Housing Action Plan 2020/21 - 2026/27 - a plan that addresses the different challenges in terms of housing in Gwynedd, with specific attention given to help Gwynedd residents to own a home in their community.
- Ardal Ni 2035 - extensive consultation and engagement work was undertaken with Gwynedd communities during 2022 and 13 local regeneration plans are currently being developed to equip and support Gwynedd communities over the next 15 years.

Between 2023 and 2025 Gwynedd's Language Initiative's priority areas will be Pen Llŷn, Bala and Penllyn and Bangor/ Ogwen/ Felinheli. Pen Llŷn was chosen as one of the priority areas in order to work on ensuring a legacy before the National Eisteddfod visited.
The language initiative will concentrate on supporting groups, organisations, clubs, societies, events, and community enterprises to continue to operate through the medium of Welsh, but at the same time, provide guidance on how to welcome newcomers and without any change of the use of Welsh language.

They will also look at interventions to increase the use of Welsh amongst children and young people and work with schools and partners to ensure enough opportunities to use the Welsh language inside and outside the school.

In addition to the activities, they will proceed to create campaigns that will have messages for all the various audiences of the county, such as people of different ages, people with different attitudes towards the Welsh language, people with various skills in using the Welsh language etc. These campaigns will concentrate on changing behaviours so that attitudes towards the Welsh language, and the habits of using Welsh, strengthen.

In terms of the Council's priorities in this field, we will collaborate with County Language Forum partners - Young Farmers, the Urdd, representatives of community enterprises, for

example - to discuss how we can increase the Welsh-medium socialising opportunities in the community and ensure that resources are targeted in any areas where there is currently a lack of opportunities.

We will also need to see more buddy schemes and chat sessions to help and nurture learners' confidence to take the step from learning in lessons to using the language in the community.

Through schemes such as Arfor, we will seek to support more community enterprises to create activities and economic plans that will benefit the communities themselves. There have been a number of very successful enterprises in Gwynedd, and the Council has a key role to play in ensuring that opportunities are dispersed equally across the county, and that other communities are also supported to develop enterprises.

What will we measure?

- Number of activities held by Council services and the language enterprise for different groups
- Number of community enterprises supported by means of Regeneration and Economy schemes

5.3 Aims and Actions for Creating Favourable Conditions (Cymraeg 2050 Theme 3) (Thema 3 Cymraeg 2050)

Area of Work 5: Technology and Research

Evidence base

- on what basis do we see the need to act? What are the challenges? What do we seek to achieve?

These two fields are intentionally placed together as any developments in the field of technology depend on research work results to understand people's habits to an extent.

Technology plays an increasingly prominent part in all our lives and is rapidly developing. It is a substantial challenge for the Welsh language, as any minority language, to catch up with the continuous developments, and to find its place in this world that has so much influence on everyone's lives.

When dealing with technology, there is room to believe that people's language practices are very different to their verbal and face-to-face language practices. This is due to several factors, including:

- because technology, the internet and apps have generally been developed in English first and that people have become used to dealing with technology through the medium of English.
- because the algorithms of search engines and social media often go against language choice and mean that people see the English option first, even if a Welsh language option is available.
- because of obstacles when developing apps, which often mean that people must take additional steps to receive the Welsh service.

According to the 2021 census, the percentage of people noting that they can speak Welsh, but unable to read or write in Welsh, is 5.4% in Gwynedd, which is higher than the proportion of 2.3% for the whole of Wales. The percentage increases up to 10% in some areas of the county, which suggests that a great difference can exist between verbal use and written use.

The different influences on people's use of language, and specifically the increase in the influence of technology, and the changes that have occurred in people's habits due to the

pandemic and the current financial downturn, mean that the picture can change in a short period of time. This will need to be borne in mind when forming any interventions, and when looking at the evidence base.

Although considerable research work is undertaken in the context of the Welsh language, there are also many obvious gaps, and specifically current research about the linguistic choices and use of speakers in different contexts, and research that help us understand the nature of our "cymunedau Cymraeg" and how factors such as economy and tourism directly or indirectly impact the linguistic viability.

What is already being done?

- projects or schemes that are part of the Council or partners' work, that are already being implemented, and will carry on to the period of the next strategy.

Policies and strategic work that are relevant to this field

Other projects and schemes:

- The Council's Digital Scheme Priority Project
- Project 15 - a project seeking to create digital content in Welsh, led by the Language Unit
- Research work in collaboration with Bangor University:
- A PhD has started to examine people's habits when dealing with services - in order to understand what affects choices and use
- Trigger research work to examine the link between language and economy/tourism

What else requires attention?

- what will we work on or hope to address during the period of the next strategy?

The projects noted above will continue to the period of the next strategy.

In the current strategy it was noted that the Council needs to examine projects that will encourage more people to use the Welsh language on-line and when using the Council's digital services and consider the best ways of introducing Welsh in those contexts in order to influence use. This work had a slow start, but schemes and research work are now in the pipeline by the Council in this field. The pandemic period has certainly increased this challenge and has led to obvious changes in people's habits and use of technology and has also led the Council to develop new digital services, such as systems to order new services.

We will continue to develop the relationship with the academic world, to identify research projects that strengthens our evidence base and helps us to plan work that will promote and

protect the Welsh language effectively in the future.

We will consider how we can coordinate to establish a central information and research pool , where it is possible to easily obtain relevant research work.

We will also continue to raise awareness of the Welsh-medium apps that are available, to encourage people to use more Welsh on-line.

What will we measure?

- Number of research projects undertaken by the Council or commissioned by the Council.

5.4 Monitoring and measuring

The activities outlined above will draw up the initial work programme for the strategy. The strategy will be reviewed regularly, and formally, at the end of the fifth year, and this will give us an opportunity to adapt and add projects when responding to circumstances and needs that may arise.

Annual data gathering arrangements have been established during the current strategy, which enable us to gather information about events and activities being held by Council services.

The Language Committee has a responsibility to monitor how Council departments implement the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards, and to contribute towards this strategy. We will also monitor the implementation of the strategy on an annual basis and submit an annual report to the Council Cabinet.

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2024