

Report To: Welsh Language Committee

Date of Meeting: 2 May

Lead Member / Officer: Huw Hilditch Roberts / Nicola Stubbins

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Title: Welsh Language Strategy 2017-2022

1. What is the report about?

This report is about the Welsh Language Strategy.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

To provide members with an update on progress being made with the Welsh Language Strategy.

3. What are the Recommendations?

To note the contents of the report.

4. Report details

A considerable amount of work has gone on in Denbighshire in the efforts to respond positively to changes in language legislation. The Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011 has enabled the Government to set standards relating to the Welsh Language and the Welsh Government expects the Council to adopt a Welsh Language Strategy, as part of its response to the Standards.

The Council has responded positively to the new legislation and has made a commitment to embracing the Welsh Language Standards and enhancing a bilingual culture and ethos within the Council.

The Strategy outlines the Council's commitment towards promoting the Welsh Language and facilitating its use within the county.

The ambition is to halt the decline in the number of Welsh speakers in Denbighshire. As a result, we are proposing to increase the number of Welsh speakers in Denbighshire by 0.5 % over the next five years, with a view to considering a longer term target to increase the number of Welsh speakers over the next 15 years.

The Council will deliver the main elements of this strategy by working strategically and in collaboration with a host of community organisations to further mainstream the Welsh Language into service delivery and ensure that it becomes an essential consideration in future projects, strategies and work plans.

There are five key areas for development highlighted in the strategy:

- Theme 1: Strategic planning of the Welsh Language in Denbighshire
- Theme 2: Children and Young People
- Theme 3: Community
- Theme 4: Business and the economy
- Theme 5: Internal administration within the Council

These five themes emerged from extensive research carried out on behalf of the authority.

Below is a summary of the actions already undertaken as part of the Strategy:

- The County Language Forum has agreed a revised Terms of Reference, remit and membership. The key focus is on collaboration and all organisations are clear what is expected of them.
- The Council and its key partners have responded positively to the Welsh Language Standards, for the wider benefit of the Welsh language in Denbighshire.
- The Council reviews the impact of policy making and decisions on the Welsh Language and communities and has a process in place to consider the positive, negative and neutral impact of decisions.
- All partners on the County Language Forum market the availability of Welsh Language courses in the community.
- The Language Forum ensures there's a presence at large events across the county to promote the Welsh Language. They include the Denbigh and Flint Show, town carnivals and the Air Show.
- All partners cross-promote events through social media and websites.
- A campaign has been launched to promote Welsh medium education in Denbighshire.
- The Council is fully implementing the More Than Words Framework in the county, to ensure people can access health and well-being advice and information in Welsh.
- The Council's mentoring and buddying scheme has been relaunched.
- The creation and implementation of the Welsh Language Committee.
- The Council's Welsh Language Champions continue to act as ambassadors for the Welsh Language in the county.

- All Welsh language courses, from local providers and the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol are promoted to staff.
- The linguistic skills levels of staff is carried out annually and is due to be repeated shortly.
- All Welsh speakers and learners now have access to Microsoft Word and Cysill/ Cysgair packages.
- Gloywi Iaith sessions have been arranged for staff.
- The Council's intranet is fully bilingual.

Mwy Na Geiriau

Regular items about the Welsh language, resources and information about various free training courses (Welsh Awareness and the 'Active Offer') are included in the SCWDP newsletter which is distributed to all Providers in Denbighshire. This has included information about the Diwrnod Shwmai and Dydd Miwsig.

- Information about the Welsh language and the Active Offer has also been incorporated into the welcome meeting for new staff joining the Department and to Social Work students at induction. In addition a presentation about the "Active Offer" was communicated to over 300 staff from Community Support Services.
- Corporate HR are currently mapping the language skills of DCC staff on I-Trent and the Welsh language community profile has been prepared for DCC (informed by the Population Assessment Report produced under section 14 off the SSWB Act).
- A buddy scheme and an informal session "Siarad siop a phaned" has been introduced to offer additional support between lessons to increase staff confidence to speak the language within the Department.

Our customer experience questionnaire monitors whether people were provided with a service in the language of their choice. The following is extracted from the Have your say survey analysis relating to the question: 'I was able to communicate in my preferred language'.

424 respondents answered this question, 99% were able to communicate in their preferred language.

Welsh in Education Strategic Plan - Update on the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

The close co-operation continues between partners to further develop the support and opportunities available.

The support and collaboration with Mudiad Meithrin continues and is successful.

We will continue to work on current projects and develop further in the coming months.

At present 73% of primary schools offer 50% or less of education through the medium of Welsh.

The Welsh Language in Education Strategic Plan has now been approved by the Welsh Government and goes to Cabinet in Denbighshire County Council in May, 2018.

The local authority has launched "Cymraeg Campus" in all category 4 and 5 schools that have ensured that the profile of Welsh has increased. The schools will apply for bronze award recognition and will be assessed on the action they have taken.

There is an application for all staff in schools to complete an audit of language skills. This data is used to target schools and staff to further develop Welsh medium education.

The authority received a huge boost last year as all Welsh Medium Schools succeeded in winning the Silver Language Charter. The schools are now all applying to achieve the gold award that is extremely challenging. Schools will be assessed in the near future assessing whether they have won the gold award.

A marketing plan promoting Welsh medium education has been launched. A marketing booklet will be published in the near future to raise awareness of the advantages of bilingualism.

A Governor session was held on developments in Welsh medium education and the expectations of reaching a Million of Speakers on March 15th, 2018.

Developing the economy

A series of initiatives have been undertaken to promote the Welsh Language to the county's businesses.

They include a pilot training programme to Denbighshire businesses on bilingualism. Those who took part in Welsh in Business have been approached by Iaith Cyf for further training as part of the further learning projects they conduct.

Sessions have taken place for businesses on how to increase their use of Welsh on social media.

Businesses have received a briefing document on the benefits of bilingualism.

Examples of best practice with regard to Welsh Language service provision in business has been promoted through the local media, on social media and in corporate publications.

Business champions are acting as ambassadors for the Welsh Language in the county

Next Steps:

- A renewed internal campaign to communicate the requirements of the Strategy.
- Introducing Gloywi Iaith sessions for staff.
- Implementing the new Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.
- Development of a Welcome Pack for new families moving into the county

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

The decision contributes to the development of the Welsh Language and culture, which underpins the Council's Corporate Plan. It also responds

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

There is no budget in place for the development of the Welsh Language Strategy and any costs incurred are being absorbed through existing service budgets. There are resource implications. The work is being co-ordinated by the Team Leader – Communications and Campaign Management, supported by the Welsh Language Officer. Other officers have work allocated to them as part of the Strategy.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

Whilst no formal Well-being Impact Assessment is needed for this report, it is worth noting some of the key benefits in relation to the Well-Being and Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language Standards.

One of the key components of the well-being and Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is having: "A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language: A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation".

The Council also has a role, through its Welsh Language Standards, to promote opportunities for local communities to get involved in Welsh Language activities.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

Consultations have taken place with the Senior Leadership Team and with Cabinet Members. The Strategy was endorsed by Cabinet in March 2017.

9. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

The main risk is to the reputation of the authority, as we have already made a commitment in our Welsh Language Strategy and through the Welsh Language