

Report to	Welsh Language Steering Committee
Date of meeting	13 July 2021
Lead Member / Officer	Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts/ Nicola Stubbins
Report author	Manon Celyn, Welsh Language Officer
Title	Welsh Language Strategy

1. What is the report about?

This report is about developing a new Welsh Language Strategy for Denbighshire.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

To update on proposed timetable for developing the new strategy.

3. What are the Recommendations?

To approve the approach and associated timetable associated with the strategy.

4. Report details

4.1 The Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011 has enabled the Government to set standards relating to the Welsh Language and the Welsh Government expected all local authorities to adopt a Welsh Language Strategy, as part of their response to the Standards.

4.2 The current strategy, adopted by Denbighshire's Cabinet in March 2017, outlines the approach towards promoting the Welsh Language and facilitating its use within the county and there is an expectancy of the Council to revise its strategy, five years on from publication date. The new strategy is due in March 2022.

4.3 The current Welsh Language Strategy includes a Vision:

- Denbighshire is a predominantly bilingual county with a rich culture and heritage. We are proud of this and want this pride to be reflected in our day to day interaction with communities, with residents and with our staff.
- We are committed to ensuring that the principles of the Welsh Language Standards underpin the way we deliver services to the public; we want people to be able to access services through the language of their choice naturally, at all stages of their lives.
- We want to enhance the bilingual culture and ethos of the organisation, providing training and social opportunities for our staff to work in Welsh and increase their confidence in using the language in the workplace.

- We want to work with partners and the wider communities to ensure that Welsh is a thriving language in Denbighshire.
- We have an ambition to be sector leaders in the development of the Welsh Language in Wales.

4.4 Current themes:

- Theme 1 looks at how Denbighshire works with its key partners involved in delivering the Welsh language across the county and how they can work more strategically and planning their activities in a more co-ordinated manner.
- Theme 2 looks at increasing the number of pupils becoming fluent in the Welsh Language during their school life and encouraging greater use of the language in future life. We are also looking at improving opportunities for children and young people in social settings through working with our Youth and Leisure services.
- Theme 3 looks at issues affecting communities in relation to the Welsh Language, with a key focus on the impact of policy decisions. A key focus is being placed on local planning issues and the 'More Than Words' Framework to enhance bilingual services in health and social care.
- Theme 4 looks at how Denbighshire and its economy development partners should recognise the importance of a thriving economy to the future of the Welsh Language and ensuring that strategies are in place to ensure opportunities for young people to stay in the local community.
- Theme 5 looks at how the Council can enhance the Welsh language through providing training to staff and enhancing the bilingual ethos of the authority through promotion of the Welsh Language.

4.5 Next steps:

- 4.5.1 An initial research phase will begin shortly where the Council looks at example of best practice, looks at the demographic information it has access to and looks at the success of the previous strategy.
- 4.5.2 There will be discussions with Members and with the Senior Leadership Team on the current priority areas and whether they need to be amended or enhanced in the new strategy.
- 4.5.3 Following a period of drafting the strategy, the Council will begin on a period of internal and external consultation and engagement before a final report is drafted, ready for discussion at Cabinet.

4.6 Proposed timetable

ACTION	BY WHEN
Initial research	March 2021
Discussions/ workshops with the Welsh Language Steering Committee and Senior Leadership Team on the key themes – are they still fit for purpose?	June 2021
Discussion with partner agencies	July 2021
Drafting of the report	September 2021
Discussion by the Welsh Language Steering Committee	November 2021
Consultation on the Welsh Language Strategy	December 2021/ January 2022
Cabinet decision on Welsh Language Strategy	March 2022
Implementation of the new Welsh Language Strategy	March 2022 onwards

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.

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

There is no funding available for this work. Any costs would be absorbed by the current partners and through the goodwill of members.

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?

Consultation has been carried out with the Cabinet Lead Member for Welsh Language and with the Lead Corporate Director.

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

The main risk is a potential decline in the number of Welsh speakers in the county (as measured by the national census). All partner organisations have also committed to contributing towards the development of the Welsh language nationally and towards the million speakers target set by the Welsh Government by 2050.