

Report to	Welsh Language Steering Committee
Date of meeting	8 March 2022
Lead Member / Officer	Councillor Mark Young – Lead Member for Planning, Public Protection and Safer Communities
Report author	Bethan Morris, Planning Officer
Title	Welsh Language Considerations for the LDP 2018 to 2033 Background Paper

1. What is the report about?

This report is about the first steps in formulating a new local policy on Welsh Language and culture for the next Local Development Plan (LDP) 2018 to 2033. It focuses on the preparation and potential content of the supporting Background Paper.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

Members of the Strategic Planning Group (SPG) discussed an initial report on the Welsh Language Background Paper on 17th January 2022, see Appendix 1. It was felt crucial to seek the view of the Welsh Language Steering Committee early in the process of formulating the forthcoming local policy for the next LDP 2018 to 2033.

3. What are the Recommendations?

That Members discuss the report and make recommendations on how the Background Paper should present evidence to support Welsh Language in the LDP 2018 to 2033.

4. Report details

4.1 The next LDP 2018 to 2033 is in the process of being prepared. The LDP guides new development throughout Denbighshire through its strategy and policies, which have to align with national policy and be supported by evidence. Background papers are used to

point to evidence and sources on a particular topic, which in turn support strategy and / or policies of that particular topic.

4.2 The Strategic Planning Group (SPG) has responsibility of guiding the next LDP 2018 to 2033. Following its meeting on 17th January 2022 the SPG asked that the Welsh Language background paper considerations report (Appendix 1), be referred for input from the Welsh Language Steering Committee. The SPG recognise the difficulty in supporting the Welsh Language in the new LDP and particularly the difficulties in linking new development to the impact on Welsh Language. SPG members did not consider it appropriate in the LDP to allocate parts of Denbighshire as sensitive in terms of Welsh Language. The SPG accept a policy requesting a formal linguistic assessment with every planning application cannot be included in the LDP 2018 to 2033. LDP policies that require financial contributions for maintaining the Welsh Language are accepted by the SPG as being difficult to evidence; as any financial contributions must be directly linked to the impact of the new development, its structure. There is no evidence available in Denbighshire that links new building construction or its impact, to residents' linguistic abilities. The SPG supports officer recommendations to broaden the linguistic background paper to include social and cultural identity of settlements. SPG members recommend noting the number of speakers when presenting linguistic data rather than just using percentage figures.

4.3 National guidance on developing Welsh Language LDP policies is provided in Technical Advice Note (TAN) 20. It states that the impact on Welsh Language and the sustainability of communities has to be considered when preparing an LDP. The impact has to be assessed within the Sustainability Appraisal. LDP policies however cannot introduce any element of discrimination between individuals on the basis of their linguistic ability.

4.4 Welsh Language is considered in Denbighshire's statutory Sustainability Appraisal, which assesses the social, environmental and economic impact and effect of policies, to ensure that the LDP 2018 to 2033 is delivering sustainable outcomes. Evidence to support LDP 2018 to 2033 Welsh Language strategies and policies will be delivered through a background paper.

4.5 TAN 20 indicates that matters to be assessed may include housing scale and location of growth, employment land, community facilities and education infrastructure as

well as planning obligations and signage. Evidence is required to support any new policies.

4.6 Since TAN 20 was introduced, in 2017, the focus of incorporating Welsh Language into LDP's has shifted. It is recognised that creating and sustaining communities, so that they have a strong social and cultural fabric, enables the Welsh Language to thrive. National policy now recommends that as part of placemaking policies consideration is given to encouraging cohesive communities with a distinct sense of place and identity, which will support the Welsh Language.

4.7 It is therefore recommended that any background paper in support of the LDP 2018 to 2033 collates information on the cultural and social fabric of settlements as well as its built local character and linguistic data. Reference to the identity and cultural aspects of the community are recommended so that they can be cross referenced to other reports detailing information on settlements (Settlement Hierarchy Report). The idea is to ensure that the character or identity of a settlement is clearly described and can then be assessed as part of policies that require assessment of community cohesion, local character and distinctiveness.

4.8 The background paper can also recommend how policies in the LDP 2018 to 2033 should be drafted. It is suggested that the background paper promote consideration of the social and cultural fabric of the community in a number of policies, primarily the Placemaking and Welsh Language policies. Such consideration is also recommended in the town centre and visitor policies, as well as housing policies. Supporting Welsh Language can also be achieved through supporting community facilities and new digital infrastructure and such policies should be included in the LDP 2018 to 2033.

4.9 SPG welcome input from Welsh Language Steering Committee as to what considerations can be included in the background paper on Welsh Language.

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.

The development of the Replacement LDP 2018 to 2033 contributes to all Corporate Priorities: Housing; Connected Communities; Resilient Communities; Environment & Young People.

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

The cost of developing the Welsh Language background paper in support of the LDP 2018 to 2033 forms part of the cost of producing a replacement LDP. There are no costs for discussing the Welsh Language background paper.

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

A Well-being Impact Assessment is not necessary for this report as no decision is being made. On-going Wellbeing Impact Assessment inform the development of the replacement LDP 2018 to 2033.

It is also 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?

The development of the LDP 2018 to 2033 is subject to extension and comprehensive engagement and consultation with the public and other stakeholders. The considerations for the Welsh Language Background paper were discussed as part of the Strategic Planning Group on 17th January 2022 when it was agreed to refer the report to this Committee.

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

There are no risks associated with discussing what considerations could and should form part of the Welsh Language background paper for the LDP 2018 to 2033. The approved Replacement LDP Delivery Agreement includes a detailed risk assessment for the development of the replacement LDP 2018 to 2033.