



# **Welsh Language Strategy**

## **2023-28**

### **Denbighshire**

# Content

Foreword.....	3
Welsh Language is a Corporate priority.....	5
Conclusion of Welsh Language Strategy Achievements 2017-22 .....	6
Executive Summary .....	9
Summary of the Challenges.....	10
The Welsh Language in Denbighshire.....	10
National Policy and Legislation .....	16
Theme 1 - Children and Young People.....	16
Theme 2 - The Community.....	23
Theme 3 - Business and Economy.....	31
Theme 4 - Council internal administration.....	33
Monitoring and Regulation .....	37

## **Foreword**

We are pleased to provide the revised version of our Welsh Language Strategy, following a strategic review. It has been five years since the current version was approved, and during this time a large number of improvements have been introduced to promote and facilitate the Welsh language internally and within the wider community. The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 enabled the Government to set standards regarding the Welsh Language, and Welsh Government expects the Council to adopt a Welsh Language Strategy, as part of its response to the Standards. Five years following the publication of the Strategy, we are now publishing a revised version. Later in the Strategy we

The Council continues to respond positively to the Welsh Language Standards and we have succeeded in appointing a Welsh Language Officer in response to the Standards and Strategy in order to ensure that we fully comply and to promote the Welsh language and culture within the workplace. It has also responded positively to the 'More Than Just Words' framework which has been established in order to improve Welsh language provision in the health and social care sector. An inclusive action plan is in place and Denbighshire is committed to implementing that plan in the county, for the benefit of the county's residents. The Council also has a Welsh Language in Education Strategic Partnership which looks at the strategic development of the Welsh language in the county's schools. An Action Plan has been approved by the Welsh Government.

## **Combining the Welsh Language in Education Strategic Plan and the Language Forum**

Denbighshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan until 2032 includes information about merging the current Welsh in Education Strategic Group with the County's Welsh Language Forum. During the last year, the Welsh Language Forum officers have focussed their efforts on combining the Forum and the Welsh Language in Education Strategic Plan following other successful models.

This means that each meeting is divided into two parts with one part specifically dedicated to Education and the other specifically dedicated to the Language Forum. There will be a minimum of 3 meetings each year and the intention is to have an independent Chairman. The main advantages of this structure are ensuring a clear strategic direction, reduced duplication of activities and increased opportunities for stakeholders to collaborate with each other.

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## Looking to the future

We have created our vision for the Welsh language in Denbighshire.

- The Corporate Plan 2022-27 makes a firm commitment to ensure that the Welsh language is a thriving and evolving language.
- Denbighshire is a predominantly bilingual county with a rich heritage and culture. We are proud of this and want that pride to be reflected in our daily work with communities, residents and our staff.
- We are committed to ensuring that the principles of the Welsh Language Standards are the basis for the method in which we provide services to the public; we want people to be able to access services through their natural language of choice, at every stage of their lives.
- We wish to build on the bilingual culture and ethos of the organisation, providing training and social opportunities for our staff to work in Welsh and to increase their confidence to use the language in the workplace.
- We wish to work with partners and the wider community 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.

Our aim is to prevent the reduction in numbers of Welsh speakers in Denbighshire with the intention of considering a longer term target to increase the number of Welsh speakers over the next 15 years. The Council will provide the main elements of this strategy by working strategically and in collaboration with a variety of community organizations in order to further mainstream the Welsh language into service provision and to ensure that it is an essential consideration in projects, strategies and future work schemes.

It is essential that the Welsh language forms a key part of the policy creation process in each of our areas of work, including planning, regeneration, education and social care. For this purpose, the Council will work with partners to ensure that linguistic planning is a more strategic outcome, to ensure that all partners work together towards the same goal: protecting and enriching the Welsh Language in Denbighshire.

**Councillor Emrys Wynne / Gary Williams / Chief Executive / Leader Jason McLelland (photos)**

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## **Welsh Language is a Corporate priority**

We are playing our part to achieve one million Welsh Speakers in Wales by 2050, by providing the Welsh Language Strategy with partners and communities. This includes:

- Ensuring that everyone can access services through the medium of Welsh naturally, and at every stage of their lives
- Supporting children and families during their early years to develop confidence in using the Welsh language
- Supporting the wider use of the Welsh language and celebrating Welsh culture in the community, including workplaces
- Developing a culture and ethos that encourages daily use of the Welsh language by elected members and council staff, and providing training and social opportunities to develop their confidence in using the Welsh language
- Developing the services available at the Welsh Language Centre in St Asaph for the benefit of the wider community

## **Conclusion of Welsh Language Strategy Achievements 2017-2022**

*IAITH: Welsh centre for language planning were commissioned by  
Denbighshire County Council to prepare this assurance report.*

This is the first assurance report (on the first language strategy) which has been prepared for Denbighshire County Council to meet the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards. Bearing this in mind, it is expected that there will be some fine tuning to the process of producing the strategy and evaluating it with successive iterations. A number of the recommendations discuss this context, drawing extensively on the Welsh Language

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Commissioner's advice documents on producing and assessing the achievements of the strategy.

It must be noted that the period of the language strategy has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The impact of the pandemic can be seen on the implementation of the strategy and in the associated activities. Whilst presenting a number of challenges (e.g. in terms of the use of Welsh internally), it also created the need to operate flexibly and creatively and there is evidence of this in this report.

It becomes apparent in the report the importance of working within the national and local policy landscape and taking advantage of the opportunities to work together in terms of the WESP, the Cymraeg 2050 Strategy, the Wellbeing Act 2015, More Than Just Words etc. It is evident that the work of some departments in Denbighshire County Council is driven by these strategies and therefore it is essential to consider this when producing the new strategy. It was seen that the strategy sits side by side within the policy landscape during this period.

Perhaps the main consideration when producing the new strategy should be the Cymraeg 2050 Strategy, with priority being placed on increasing the number of Welsh speakers and also increasing the use of Welsh. Recommendations 1, 2 and 3 offer guidance on this in terms of setting a target to increase the number of Welsh speakers and therefore meeting the requirements of Standard 145. Recommendation 7 identifies the need to ensure that the action points match the vision for the strategy, with scope to be more ambitious whilst ensuring that the actions contribute clearly to reaching the target in terms of increasing the number of Welsh speakers (recommendation 5). Recommendations 5, 8, 9, 10 and 11 all relate to the implementation and performance measuring of the strategy. A discussion on recommendation 12 is included in point 2 below.

From this report, and considering the Welsh Language Commissioner's guidelines, two specific challenges present themselves for the period of the next strategy:

1. Developing the work of partner organisations as they also take ownership of delivering the strategy.

A clear characteristic in the vast majority of the 5 year strategies is acknowledgement of the importance of internal and external partnerships to deliver the work . The Welsh Language Commissioner's advice document makes is clear that there is a need for close

collaboration with partners in order to achieve the aims and objectives of the strategy, with the support of key stakeholders meaning that everyone will share the burden and work towards the same aim. A key component in this is the Language Forum.

It is unclear which activities from the strategy have been completed by organisations apart from Denbighshire County Council. Therefore, the new strategy should follow the Welsh Language Commissioner's advice and good practice by ensuring that the Language Forum (and members of the Forum) act to regenerate the Welsh language in Denbighshire. The Language Forum should facilitate collaboration with partners and ensure that the new language strategy is implemented across the Language Forum partners. This can also offer an opportunity to create regional connections where appropriate.

2. Developing the use of methods to measure the performance and achievements of the strategy, as well as the procedures to evaluate the implementation of the strategy (see also recommendation 12).

There is guidance in the Welsh Language Commissioner's advice documents which states that it would be good to consider the wider approach for evaluating the impact of the strategy as a whole or elements of it. This is in addition to the task of evaluating the implementation of the strategy, and it includes the need to evaluate the impact of the strategy. This should be considered when producing the new strategy, partly in order to facilitate the process of determining indicators and to feed into the strategy's action plan but also to ensure that the task of seeking to measure the impact effect of the strategy is considered and planned from the very start. See the Welsh Language Commissioner's advice document on guidance on methodologies to measure the performance and achievements of the language strategies.

## **Recommendations**

**Recommendation 1:** Establish a concrete baseline to set a target to increase the number / percentage of Welsh speakers.

**Recommendation 2:** Set a long-term target to increase the number / percentage who can speak Welsh

**Recommendation 3:** Set a target to increase the number / percentage who can speak Welsh which is consistent with the objectives of the Welsh 2050 strategy.

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**Recommendation 4:** Include a statement that explains how it is intended to reach the target in terms of increasing the number / percentage who can speak Welsh.

**Recommendation 5:** Facilitate the monitoring reports in order to meet the requirements of Standard 146.

**Recommendation 6:** Consider which activities are relevant to Standard 146 in order to simplify the monitoring process.

**Recommendation 7:** Ensure that the action points are in line with the vision and the desired results.

**Recommendation 8:** Ensure that it is possible to monitor the progress of the action points.

**Recommendation 9:** Ensure that the performance indicators and the process of monitoring and reporting on the performance indicators enable performance to be measured against the objectives of the strategy.

**Recommendation 10:** Ensure that specific successes or challenges are regularly recorded throughout the period of the strategy.

**Recommendation 11:** Consider appointing a specific officer responsible for implementing the language strategy within each service.

**Recommendation 12:** Be more ambitious when measuring the impact of the strategy.

## **Executive Summary**

Denbighshire's Welsh Language Strategy has been developed around the vision of ensuring that the Welsh Language is a thriving language that evolves within Denbighshire's communities, as well as within our organisation.

In order to realize this vision, it was decided to continue with the themes of the original strategy as they are just as applicable, relevant and current to reach our goal.

**Theme 1** looks at increasing the number of pupils who become fluent in the Welsh language during their time at school and encouraging more to use the language after they have left school. We are also looking at improving opportunities for children and young people in social settings by working with our Youth and Leisure services.

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**Theme 2** looks at issues that affect communities in terms of the Welsh Language, with a specific focus on the impact of our policy decisions. There is a key focus on local planning issues and the More Than Just Words Framework in order to enrich bilingual services in health and social care.

**Theme 3** looks at how Denbighshire and its partners in terms of economic development should recognize the importance of a prosperous economy to the future of the Welsh language and ensure that strategies are in place to ensure opportunities for young people to stay in the local community.

**Theme 4** looks at how the Council can promote the Welsh language by providing training for staff and promoting the bilingual ethos of the authority by promoting the Welsh language. This reflects the Council's commitment to tackle some of the key areas of work identified in terms of developing the Welsh language. Details of the process for monitoring and regulating this strategy are included in Section 6.

## **Summary of the Challenges**

To enable us to find opportunities to increase the use of the Welsh language and the number of Welsh speakers, we also need to be able to recognize the challenges and obstacles that prevent that. We need to be able to identify the areas of the county, or the parts of life, where there is a reduction in people's use of the language in their daily life, and understand which factors can affect an individual's personal use of the language.

We know that the language continues to face historical challenges such as migration, young people moving out of rural areas to look for work, and the lack of transmission of the language from one generation to the next. In time we will see what impact Covid 19 has had on rural communities and the fact that people are taking advantage of the ability to work remotely.

The impact of the pandemic and the fact that Denbighshire has lost a total of -2.1% of its Welsh speakers during the last 10 years (2021 census), means it is more important than ever to ensure that the language is a living and thriving language within our communities.

In order to encourage that use of the Welsh language, it is necessary to consider the impact of the challenges, and how we can tackle them in order to increase the opportunities for people across the county to use and practice the language on a daily basis.

- Geographical challenges: Variations in the number and percentage of speakers across the county, and the variety of jobs/services available in some rural areas, mean that different solutions and interventions are required to protect the Welsh language.
- Language transmission within the family; Families not passing on the language to their children leading to the loss of Welsh as a home language.
- Loss of speakers after the age of 16: No solid progression of use when leaving education and young people stop using the language when entering employment and in their social life as adults.
- The status of Welsh as a business language: Lack of clear use of the Welsh language by businesses
- Individuals' confidence in their ability and skills: Lack of opportunities to use the language regularly when socializing and difficulties in using Welsh services can lead to a lack of confidence and reduced usage.

## The Welsh Language in Denbighshire

*It should be noted that the following analysis was prepared at the end of May 2023 based on the dataset for the 2021 Census released to date.*

The results of the 2021 Census show that 20,940 people in Denbighshire can speak Welsh, which corresponds to 22.5% of the population. The total number who could speak Welsh in 2011 was 22,240, which is 24.6% of the population. Over a period of ten years there was a fall of 1,300 in number and 2.1% as a percentage of Welsh speakers in the county. This is explained by the fall in the number of people who can speak Welsh (-1,300) and growth in the county's population (+2,066).

The 2021 Census was conducted during the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic. It is not yet known how the pandemic could have affected the Census data in relation to Welsh language skills. It should be noted that the period of the pandemic was characterized by periods of lockdown, children learning remotely, and a significant change in work and socializing patterns.

Despite this, it should be considered that the fall noted above was measured between the 2011 Census and the 2021 Census, which is beyond the specific period of the language strategy (2017-2022).

### **Geographical Distribution of Welsh Speakers**

The geographical distribution of Welsh speakers in Denbighshire is slightly more even than that found in Conwy. In general, the neighborhoods with the lowest percentages of Welsh speakers are in the coastal areas in the towns of Rhyl and Prestatyn (between 4.9% and 20% with one area at 26.3%).

The highest percentages of Welsh speakers are found in the South-West rural neighborhoods of the county, but the percentages have been decreasing consistently with each census. Now there are only two neighborhoods that have over 60% who can speak Welsh with a handful just over 50%. It should be noted, however, that the population of these neighborhoods is small. The table below shows the electoral divisions with the highest and lowest percentages of Welsh speakers in Denbighshire:

<b>Electoral Divisions</b>	<b>% Welsh Speakers</b>
Cynwyd	68
Peniel	64
Llandrillo (West)	55.6
Pentrecelyn	54.5
Melin y Wig	52.3
Bryn Saith Marchog	51.3
Gwyddelwern	50.7

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## **Towns of the Valley**

Three of the towns in the Valley (Denbigh, Ruthin and Corwen) have areas with high percentages and numbers of Welsh speakers living in them. These towns are therefore very significant in terms of planning for the future of the language.

What these towns have in common is the fact that Welsh speakers tend to cluster more and more in certain parts of them, meaning that some parts are more Welsh in terms of language than others.

### **Denbigh**

Welsh speakers are much more likely to live at the bottom of Denbigh, to the South and South East of the secondary school than up in Upper Denbigh with a difference in percentages that is 15 - 20% higher (e.g. 52.2%, 47.6%, 45.4%, 43.4%, 40% in the southern area compared to percentages between 15% and 27% up in the center of town).

### **Ruthin**

The same pattern can be seen here with the percentages of Welsh speakers significantly higher to the South of Mwrog Street, Well Street and Rhos Street (e.g. 42.6%, 44.4%, 46.5%, 47.4%, 50%, 52.9%, 53.7%) than to the North of this isoglos (21.2%, 21.7%, 25.2%, 28.2%, 31%, 31.6%). The outskirts to the North of the isoglos, however, are slightly higher which suggests that Welsh speakers, in general (just as seen in Denbigh) like to live out of the town center (37%, 37.1%, 38%, 38.6%).

### **Corwen**

In Corwen the percentage of Welsh speakers in the western areas of the town (51.1% and 52.7%) is significantly higher than the percentage in the east of the town (35.5%).

In these three towns there seems to be a connection between the geographical distribution of Welsh speakers and the availability of a Welsh-medium school and that children are therefore deprived of the opportunity to become fluent in Welsh based on the area in which they live.

## Percentage Change since 2011

Electoral Divisions	% Welsh Speakers 2011	% Welsh Speakers 2021
Llandrillo	59.2	51.6
Efenechtyd	54.6	44.4
Llanrhaeadr-yng-Nghinmeirch	51.2	50.3
Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd / Gwyddelwern	48.3	43.8
Corwen	47.9	42.5
Ruthin	41.7	37.9
Lower Denbigh	40.2	38.7
South West Rhyl	13.7	11.8
South West Prestatyn	13.7	14.0
Rhyl East	13.0	11.4
Rhyl West	12.7	10.7
Prestatyn North	126.	12.3

## Distribution of Welsh Speakers by Age

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The ability to speak Welsh differs greatly according to age. According to the 2021 Census 37.3% of children aged 3-15 could speak Welsh in Denbighshire down from 45.9% in 2011. The 16-19 age group was also relatively high. In 2021 it was 31.3%. Unfortunately, these two figures are likely to be invalid as they are significantly higher than the percentage of school age children who receive Welsh education in the county (27%). A similar fall was seen to occur in many other eastern counties between these age groups.

This change, however, was not a fall in the actual numbers of school children who can speak Welsh. All that happened was that the parents / guardians of the children were more accurate in 2021 than in the past when recording their children's linguistic ability. Perhaps they have now begun to realize that their children are not likely to be able to speak Welsh unless they receive a Welsh education.

In fact, the number and percentage of school-aged children recorded in the 2021 census is still too high when compared to the official data on how many children receive Welsh education. (A very small number of children who can speak Welsh attend English schools, of course, but this would not likely change the general statistics significantly).

When scrutinizing the census data for Denbighshire (and Flintshire and Wrexham as well) the same pattern is seen to be highlighted.

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>CH</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>DD</b>	<b>E</b>
	<b>Numbers of 5-15 year olds able to speak Welsh 2011</b>	<b>Numbers of 5-15 year olds able to speak Welsh 2021</b>	<b>Number difference</b>	<b>% 5-15 able to speak Welsh in 2011</b>	<b>% 5-15 able to speak Welsh in 2021</b>	<b>% Difference</b>	<b>% in Welsh education (which is the correct percentage)</b>
Denbighshire	5,340	4,530	-810	45.9	37.3	-8.6	27
Flintshire	6,950	5,410	-1,540	36.0	27.4	-8.6	6.9
Wrexham	5,270	4,930	-340	31.0	27.6	-3.4	15

The difference between column E and column D in Denbighshire is 10.3% (that is, the 10% figure is too high). In Flintshire and Wrexham, the percentages stated in the census are 20.5% and 12.6% and are too high.

It seems that the true numbers and percentage of children aged 5-15 in Denbighshire who can speak Welsh has grown slightly since the last census but that growth is being hidden by the basic invalidity of the statistics found in the census which shows a fall.

Accepting the invalidity of the data for the 5-15 and 16-19 age group it is realized that the apparent significant reduction noted in the table below between the percentage of these age groups and the 20-44 age group has not occurred. Nevertheless, this age experienced a decrease of 300 individuals between 2011 and 2021.

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>% Welsh Speakers 2011</b>	<b>% Welsh Speakers 2021</b>	<b>Number of Welsh Speakers 2011</b>	<b>Number of Welsh Speakers 2021</b>
Everyone 3+	24.6	20.6	22,240	20,940
3-4	27.6	23.1	580	470
5-15	45.9	37.3	5,340	4,530
16-19	29.9	31.3	1,440	1,260
20-44	22.3	22.4	5,800	5,500
45 - 64	18.5	18.1	4,860	4,820
65 - 74	19.4	16.5	2,050	2,090
75 +	23.7	20.6	2,160	2,270

From a critical scrutiny of the statistics it can be seen that there was no real major fall in the numbers and percentages of Welsh speakers in Denbighshire in general between 2011 and 2021 as that apparent fall has mostly occurred due to the change in the numbers and percentages and recorded within the 3-19 age groups (1,110 out of 1,290) which, as noted, is an invalid statistic.

After the 45+ age period, the numbers of Welsh speakers remain relatively constant although they are a smaller percentage of the age groups, most likely due to demographic change with non-Welsh speaking older people moving to the county.

Work on updating the statistics takes place continuously in the [Welsh Language Profile](#) by Menter Iaith Sir Ddinbych.

## **National Policy and Legislation**

The Welsh Language Act 1993 established the principle that Welsh and English are equal languages in public life in Wales. The Act placed a duty on the public sector to treat both languages equally when providing services to the public.

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 gave the Welsh Language an official status, and the role of the Welsh Language Commissioner was created. The Welsh Government is working towards ensuring one million Welsh speakers by 2050. The Council supports this and it is reflected in the action plans within this strategy.

The Commissioner has a responsibility to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language, with a key principle that Welsh and English should be treated equally. The Commissioner also has powers to investigate any public body not complying with the standards. The Standards were introduced in Denbighshire in early March 2016 and they replaced the previous Welsh Language Scheme.

## **Theme 1 - Children and Young People**

### **The vision:**

- That 40% of all seven-year-old pupils will have attended Welsh-medium education by 2032. Having a solid foundation in speaking and communicating in Welsh will increase the pupil's choice and confidence to follow a completely bilingual path in education, and on to employment and into the wider community.



- Increasing the use of the Welsh language among children and young people by giving access to Welsh-medium education and community activities and promoting opportunities for social interaction in Welsh.

### **Desired outcome:**

- Better attainment in Welsh and in other subjects through the medium of Welsh at every key stage in every school.
- 32% of year 1 pupils receiving Welsh-medium education by 2027.
- 24% of students aged 14 - 16 studying for qualifications through the medium of Welsh by 2027.
- More Welsh speakers under the age of 21 in Denbighshire in the 2031 Census
- More leisure and youth activities held through the medium of Welsh

### **Indicators:**

- More nursery children / three year olds educated through the medium of Welsh.
- More reception children / five year olds educated through the medium of Welsh.
- More children continuing to improve their Welsh Language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another.
- More learners studying for Welsh qualifications (as a subject) and subjects through the medium Welsh.
- More opportunities for learners to use the Welsh language within different contexts in school.
- An increase in the provision of Welsh-medium education for pupils with additional learning needs ("ALN") (in accordance with the duties set out by the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018)
- An increase in the number of teaching staff who can teach Welsh (as a subject) and through the medium of Welsh
- Increase in the number of bilingual youth work sessions.
- Increase in the number of youth service staff who speak/learn Welsh.

### **Welsh in Education Strategic Plan**

Denbighshire County Council's aspiration is that by September 2032, 40% of all seven-year-old pupils will have attended Welsh-medium education. Having a solid foundation in

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg hefyd

speaking and communicating in Welsh will increase the pupil's choice and confidence to follow a completely bilingual path in education, and on to employment and into the wider community.

In September 2020, 28% of Year 2 pupils in Denbighshire schools were receiving Welsh-medium education. By 2032, in full consultation with stakeholders, Denbighshire County Council aspires to surpass the lower target of 37% proposed by the Welsh Government with the aim of being closer to the higher target of 41%.

In the period between 2010 and 2020, the percentage and number of pupils receiving Welsh-medium primary education in Denbighshire increased. This has coincided with investment in the schools' estate and implementation of schools' reorganisation proposals. There are currently unoccupied places in Welsh-medium schools that could provide for 30% of all Year 1 pupils in Denbighshire, although this is not distributed evenly throughout the County. In some areas there are less than 4% unoccupied places available and therefore further growth will mean that changes will be required.

Denbighshire proposes to meet the growth target by increasing the capacity of Welsh-medium schools and changing the language designation of English-medium schools. The result of this will be a gradual increase in the availability of Welsh-medium education over the period of this plan, which is 10 years.

## **Youth Service**

Denbighshire Youth Service runs various projects and activities for young people aged between 11 and 25. This work is carried out in youth centres and schools and community halls across the county. The service provides activities that enable young people to develop and improve their skills and knowledge and increase their confidence and self-esteem. The activities, which are free, include sports, arts and crafts, games, trips and visits. The service also provides educational programmes focussed on health and well-being, independent living skills and community citizenship and money management.

In order for the Welsh language to be seen as a living community language, it is important to show young people in particular that it is possible to use the Welsh language outside the formal structures of education and that it is a language that enriches their everyday life. For that purpose, it is important that the County Council's Youth Service provides opportunities for young people to converse through the medium of Welsh by providing a rich variety of bilingual activities and programmes across the county. The youth service

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg hefyd

recruits, trains and utilises first language youth workers and promotes training and development of Welsh language skills for all staff and volunteer members. In addition, they give the Urdd an Annual Service Level Agreement to employ a member of staff who supports the Secondary Schools and runs Community clubs through the medium of Welsh.

### **Denbighshire Leisure Ltd**

The Council's Leisure services are now provided by Denbighshire Leisure Limited (DLL) – a Council owned Local Authority Trading Company (LATC). DLL aims to provide accessible, high quality leisure opportunities that attract high levels of participation and improve the wellbeing of Denbighshire's residents and visitors. DLL provides bilingual swimming and fitness sessions and work continues to improve their current offer, with the support of their recently appointed Welsh Public Relations, Communications and Media Officer. DLL will examine the Welsh language and the related standards during the year 2022/23, with the aim of building on good practice that is already in place in the company in terms of the use and availability of the Welsh language.

### **Denbighshire Welsh Language Forum**

Denbighshire County Council works closely with its partners, as part of a county forum which considers the use of Welsh in activities across the county. There are many agencies operating locally that share the same priorities as us and it would be a mistake not to coordinate our efforts and take advantage of each other's resources and expertise to achieve one goal which is to increase the use of the Welsh language in Denbighshire.

Membership of the Denbighshire Welsh Language Forum is currently as follows:

- Menter Iaith Sir Ddinbych
- Denbighshire County Council
- Denbighshire Education Department
- Yr Urdd
- Mudiad Meithrin
- Cymraeg for Kids
- Merched y Wawr
- Young Farmers Clubs
- Popeth Cymraeg Ltd
- North Wales Centre of Welsh for Adults

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg hefyd

- Coleg Cambria

Action	Responsibility	Due by
Completing new childcare facilities located on the same site as Ysgol Dewi Sant, Rhyl and Ysgol Twm o'r Nant, Denbigh, ensuring plenty of facilities.	Education Service	April 2028
Increase the number of Welsh-medium places available each year at Ysgol Gymraeg y Gwernant, Llangollen to 30 through capital investment.	Education Services	Review at the end of the Strategy period
Work with English-medium schools to change their language designation in order to ensure a 5% increase in the percentage of year 1 pupils who receive Welsh-medium education.	Education Services	Review at the end of the Strategy period
Work with partners to ensure an increase in the number of staff who can teach through the medium of Welsh and teach Welsh as a subject.	Education Services	April 2028

<p>The County Council will increase the youth work activities available for young people to take part in through the medium of Welsh by investing in staff training to increase their language skills and confidence in the Welsh language and promote the recruitment of more staff and bilingual volunteers in the future .</p>	<p>Youth Services</p>	<p>April 2028</p>
<p>The County Council will continue to develop the partnership with the Urdd and the Welsh Language Forum partners in order to expand the Welsh-medium activities available to young people in Denbighshire.</p>	<p>Youth Services / Welsh Language Forum</p>	<p>Review at the end of the Strategy period</p>
<p>The County Council will have a Welsh Language Champion within the Youth Service to support the staff to embed more casual Welsh in our sessions and to create activities to develop young people's confidence in using the Welsh language in a social setting and informal education.</p>	<p>Youth Services</p>	<p>April 2028</p>

Design and publish a booklet to promote Welsh education and bilingual living in Denbighshire	Education Services / Welsh Language Forum / Communication and Marketing Team	January 2024
Create a page on Denbighshire County Council's website to accompany the above booklet.	Education Services / Communication and Marketing Team	January 2024
Explore the demand for Welsh-medium lessons (swimming/fitness classes) and put plans in place to provide those lessons where there is demand. The Council will also work closely with the Urdd to accomplish this.	Denbighshire Leisure Ltd	April 2025
Train more bilingual coaches in a variety of sports to be able to carry out activities through the medium of Welsh.	Denbighshire Leisure Ltd	March 2028
Adopt Welsh Language Champions in all Leisure Centres to be responsible for promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language and developing a Welsh ethos.	Denbighshire Leisure Ltd	March 2024

Support administrative and frontline staff who can speak/learn Welsh within the leisure service to further develop their skills in order to aim to provide a completely bilingual service.	Denbighshire Leisure Ltd	March 2027
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## Theme 2 - The Community

### The vision:

- More use of the Welsh language in Denbighshire's communities

### Desired outcomes:

- Promote more of the council's services offered through the medium of Welsh
- More opportunities to use the Welsh language in social activities.
- A better understanding of the effects of the Council's policies and decisions on the Welsh language and the benefits of bilingualism in communities.

### Indicators:

- An increase in the number of people moving to Denbighshire who access information about bilingualism.
- The number of council policy decisions where the impact on the Welsh language was considered.

### Promoting the Welsh language in communities

The Welsh language must be a living language, where it is normal to give people the choice of which language they use; where they have opportunities to access services and activities naturally through the medium of Welsh, and that Welsh is seen as a living language through our contact with our residents.

For this purpose, the Council will ensure that all its communication with residents is bilingual; is accurate in its meaning, and services provided through the medium of Welsh will be promoted through the residents' newsletter, the Council's website and social media accounts.

We will work with adult learners to promote opportunities to learn and enrich Welsh language skills through effective collaboration.

We will also strengthen our working links with other organizations involved in developing the Welsh language in Denbighshire, ensuring that people have a solid understanding of the benefits of bilingualism, the need to enrich the county's bilingual culture and to provide opportunities for the Welsh language to flourish organically.

### **Library Services**

Denbighshire Library Services provides the statutory public library service and face-to-face services for customers on behalf of the Council from eight libraries in Rhyl, Prestatyn, Rhuddlan, St Asaph, Denbigh, Ruthin, Corwen and Llangollen. The Home Library Service provides a tailored service for people who are unable to access their local library due to frailty, disability or caring responsibilities. Libraries also provide a 24/7 digital service for downloading books, accessing information and ordering physical books; and providing facilities for people to access a range of support and advice services in their local community.

Bilingual frontline staff are available in all libraries to offer a Welsh service, and in many communities it is one location where people can go for a Welsh conversation.

A comprehensive stock of Welsh books for children and adults are available to borrow free of charge in each library. To ensure equality of access, the local library is the only place to acquire Welsh language large print books and talking books on disc. There are also books on offer to Welsh learners and Denbighshire also has an extensive collection of Welsh books and magazines. The online catalogue and Pori app are bilingual and enable customers to manage their accounts and order books online.



The provision of Welsh digital resources, be it e-books, talking e-books and e-magazines, is constantly increasing thanks to the collaborative efforts of the library sector across Wales in collaboration with the Book Council. These are available for free download to library members.

A programme of bilingual activity is provided to promote reading including the Summer Reading Challenge, reading groups, and cultural events. Flying Start provision for children aged 0-3 introduces many families to the Welsh language for the first time and encourages them to raise their children bilingually and to consider Welsh-medium care and education.

### **Policy and decision making**

There are a number of other elements of the Council's work that have a potential impact on the Welsh language.

One of the key elements of the Welsh Language Standards is the impacts that any policy or decision could have on the Welsh language, whether positive, neutral or negative. We will ensure that all services take this into account when making decisions, carry out impact assessments on the Welsh language where appropriate and identify opportunities to mitigate the negative effects of any decision.

The Council will consider the use of the Welsh language in key policy decision-making areas, and Planning will be one of those main areas of our work.

The Council published a policy on awarding grants (Standard 94) and a policy for implementing the Welsh language internally (Standard 98) during 2023. The policy on awarding grants has been developed in order to assist officers to comply with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards when issuing grants on behalf of a County Council. The aim of the policy is to assist officers to ensure that consideration of the Welsh language is an integrated part of the grants process in Denbighshire County Council, as well as to ensure that those who make decisions are aware of their duties when making decisions.

All members of the Council's staff are required to comply with the Welsh Language Standards, which derive from the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and with the internal policy for implementing the Welsh language. There are further details about them. The purpose of the Welsh Language Standards is to make it easier for people to use the Welsh language in their day to day lives. This policy sets out how the Council intends to

implement that principle when providing services to the public in Wales and also internally within the Council.

## **Planning**

Denbighshire's Local Development Plan provides a vision of how new developments and land use will deal with the challenges facing the county over the next decade. As stated by the County Council in its Local Development Plan - 'By providing a coordinated framework to determine where, when and how many new developments can be developed, the Denbighshire LDP, through principles, aims to make the county greener, fairer and more prosperous with recognition that the Welsh language and culture are maintained and protected.' Planning Policy Wales together with Future Wales, The National Plan 2040 sets out the Welsh Government's land use policies. Some documents are supported by guidance in the form of Technical Advice Notes (TANs). TAN 20 provides guidance on the Welsh language and land use planning.

### **'More than Just Words' Framework**

Language is important in health and care as the ability to respond to the needs of individuals is based on communication. Language is a key element of care, especially when discussing sensitive and emotional concerns.

'More Than Just Words' focuses on strengthening the provision of Welsh in health and social care. Here in Denbighshire, we continue to consider steps that will ensure increased opportunities for people to access social care services through the medium of Welsh. We will do this by continuing to provide and develop Welsh language services, including the recruitment of staff with Welsh language skills, ensuring that the Proactive Offer is evident from the first point of contact and ensuring that the Welsh language is mainstreamed in technology. The workforce development team will also continue to offer opportunities for staff to learn Welsh and develop awareness of the Welsh language and culture.

Action	Responsibility	Due by
Consider the impact of policy/decision making on the Welsh language and communities	All Council services	Review at the end of Strategy period
Our public libraries will provide access to Welsh leisure and educational reading material locally within communities, free of charge, including printed books, large print books, talking books, e-books, talking e-books, magazines, e-magazines and papers.	Library Services	Review at the end of Strategy period
Collaborate nationally as a sector to expand the Welsh-medium digital reading resources provision available free of charge to readers	Library Services	April 2028
Our libraries will provide Reading Well schemes that offer Welsh books to assist with mental health conditions and dementia, for adults and children, and expanding to include provision for young people	Library Services	April 2028

Collaborate nationally to develop and deliver further schemes such as Reading Friends and EmpathyLab	Library Services	April 2028
Promote the use of the bilingual app Pori (the national app of public libraries in Wales) which offers all library members access to their personal account to enable them to order and renew books, access and order print and digital books, find their nearest library, and check the availability of all Welsh books	Library Services	April 2028
Provide a programme of activities and events for children and adults that promote the Welsh language and Welsh culture (e.g. reading groups, Summer Reading Challenge, book launches and author visits) including in partnership with local and national agencies and organizations	Library Services	Review at the end of Strategy period
Introduce the Welsh language to parents of 0-3 year olds through the Flying Start Rhyme Time sessions in libraries and digitally	Library Services	Review at the end of Strategy period

<p>Our One Stop Shops will provide support and advice about the Council's Welsh-medium services in our local communities</p>	<p>Library Services</p>	<p>Review at the end of Strategy period</p>
<p>One of the objectives of the New Local Development Plan is to support and improve the Welsh Language. When developing the New Local Development Plan, the Appraisal of Sustainability and the associated site assessment processes will assess what are the effects of the plan's spatial strategy, policies and allocations on the Welsh language. Where evidence shows an adverse impact, strategy revisions or mitigation measures will be identified.</p>	<p>Planning and Public Protection</p>	<p>The assessment will continue until the Replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) is adopted by Denbighshire County Council. Once the Replacement LDP has been adopted, the policies will help to support and enhance the Welsh Language.</p>
<p>Increase the marketing of Welsh courses available in the community</p>	<p>Communication team and County Welsh Language Forum</p>	<p>Review at the end of Strategy period</p>
<p>Attendance at key county events in order to promote the Welsh language</p>	<p>County Welsh Language Forum</p>	<p>Review at the end of Strategy period</p>

Co-promote Welsh language events on partners' websites and social media	County Welsh Language Forum	Review at the end of Strategy period
Facilitate and support events of national importance which promote the Welsh Language and Culture.	All Council services and County Welsh Language Forum.	Review at the end of Strategy period
Share best practices and an enabling method across the system, including raising awareness of the proactive offer so that the offer is an integral part of the process of providing quality services.	Social Care	April 2028
Collaborating with the 'Cymraeg i Blant' Program which hosts support groups for parents to raise awareness of the benefits of Welsh education and the importance of introducing the Welsh language early on to their children.	County Welsh Language Forum	Review at the end of Strategy period

### **Theme 3 - Business and Economy**

#### **The vision:**

Recognizing the importance of a prosperous economy to the future of the Welsh language.

#### **Desired outcome:**

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- The County Council and other economic development partners should recognize the importance of the future of the Welsh language to prosperous communities and should produce strategies to ensure that young people in particular have the opportunity to live and work in their local communities and contribute to their prosperity.

**Indicators:**

- The number of businesses in Denbighshire receiving training on the benefits of bilingualism through a targeted campaign.
- The number of businesses displaying Welsh promotional signs / materials within their business through a targeted campaign.
- The number of opportunities for young people to access work locally.
- More businesses recognizing the Welsh language as a specific skill and promoting the use of the Welsh language within their business

**Economic and Social Background**

According to the 2021 Census there were 95,800 people living in Denbighshire. Denbighshire's economy is very diverse with over 3600 enterprises located in the county. In the north of the county, towns such as Rhyl and Prestatyn are key centres for retail, leisure and tourism sectors. The north is also home to St Asaph Business Park, where a number of important technological companies are located. In the south, the rural area is a network of small traditional villages which are important tourist destinations. The natural beauty of the landscape, which has been designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, attracts visitors and residents alike. Most of the workforce is employed in Health and Social Work (25%), Wholesale and Retail (15%), Education (9%) and Construction (9%). The public sector, which includes health and social care, education and administration, is the largest employer in the county, with a higher proportion of the population working in this sector than in any other local authority area in the UK.

Jobs in the business sector tend to be in areas such as retail, leisure and tourism, and these are generally low-paid, seasonal jobs.

Action	Responsibility	Due by
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Develop a Welsh in Business webpage on Denbighshire County Council's website	Economic Development and Business	April 2026
Actively promote the use of the Welsh language through a monthly Business Bulletin published for the business community	Economic Development and Business	Review at the end of Strategy period
Raise awareness of the provision of Welsh training for Adults who work in the business community.	Economic Development and Business	Review at the end of Strategy period
Commission a bilingual Welsh language training to be provided to businesses.	Economic Development and Business	Review at the end of Strategy period
Create a Welsh in Business booklet to highlight best practice in promoting the Welsh offer within the business community.	Economic Development and Business	April 2026
Raise awareness of the Welsh language as an additional skill and encourage businesses to increase their use of the language.	Economic Development and Business	Review at the end of Strategy period



## Theme 4 - Council internal administration

Denbighshire's economy relies heavily on the public sector. The county has a higher proportion of people working in the public sector than any other part of the UK, particularly within health and social care. The County Council is one of the largest public bodies in terms of employment, approximately 5,000 people are employed by the Council.

The Council therefore has a central role in providing leadership and setting an example in a variety of very diverse areas. A central part of this is that the Council can offer strong leadership in terms of developing the Welsh language and promoting the area's unique culture and identity. In this context, it is important to consider the Council's role as a service provider for a bilingual community but also as a significant employer. This is recognized in the Council's Economic and Community Ambition Strategy which states - 'The intention of the Strategy is to build on the economic strengths provided by Denbighshire's strong Welsh identity and culture, and to encourage businesses, residents and visitors to use the Welsh language.' In order to respond to the reduction in the number of Welsh speakers over recent decades, the County Council needs to be more proactive by setting higher expectations of itself as a body that can lead the way to raise the status and increase the use of the Welsh language in the county. Over a period of time, this approach could lead to the development of a workforce ethos and culture that would reflect the bilingual nature of the communities the Council serves.

In time, this would enable the Council to develop with confidence to start naturally providing bilingual administration in the future. These are the results of an audit in 2023 of the staff's language skills by following the Welsh Language Skills Framework below:-

### Level 0

No current level of Welsh language skills

### Level 1: entry

- can say place names / Welsh first names or Welsh signs correctly
- can greet and introduce others in Welsh
- can show linguistic courtesy by opening and closing a conversation
- can give and receive personal detail

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## Level 2: foundation

- can understand the essence of conversation in Welsh
- can convey basic information e.g. simple admin or routine tasks
- can give and receive instructions and directions

## Level 3: intermediate

- can converse partly in Welsh but turns to English in discussion and to give detail information
- can describe people and locations

## Level 4: advanced

- can contribute effectively in meetings with in own area of work and argue for or against a case.
- can deal with people in most situations in Welsh but turns to English when dealing with complex situations

## Level 5: proficient

- can deal effectively with complex discussion and questions in Welsh
- can adjust the style of language to suit all situations and needs

(\*excluding Schools)

Level	Listening and Speaking		Reading and Understanding		Writing	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Level 0	289	12.09	354	14.81	559	23.39

<b>Level 1</b>	759	31.76	742	31.05	596	24.94
<b>Level 2</b>	243	10.17	194	8.08	197	8.24
<b>Level 3</b>	126	5.27	121	5.06	120	5.02
<b>Level 4</b>	132	5.52	147	6.15	87	3.64
<b>Level 5</b>	135	5.65	125	5.23	107	4.48
<b>No information</b>	706	29.54	707	29.58	724	30.29
<b>Cyfanswm</b>	<b>2390</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2390</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2390</b>	<b>100%</b>

In order to build on these foundations, it is important that the County Council recognizes the Welsh language as a skill within the workforce, and helps staff gain confidence to use the Welsh language by supporting them to further develop their skills to enable them to naturally work bilingually and to encourage and support staff with no Welsh language skills to learn the language over a period of time.

### **Welsh Language Champions**

Within each Council Service there is a Welsh Language Champion and meetings are held regularly to monitor progress against the Standards as well as to share good practice and to act as a critical friend. The members have detailed understanding of the Standards' requirements and the associated strategy as well as conducting secret shopper exercises. We will work closely with the Champions in order to promote and facilitate Welsh language events and activities within the Council.

As well as supporting the Council's current staff, we continue to give the Council's recruitment and workforce policies detailed consideration in order to support the aim of developing as a bilingual body. This includes categorizing posts and promoting the need to set language requirements in job descriptions. In response to the Standards, the Council has put procedures in place to develop and outline how it plans to develop a bilingual workforce, develop staff language skills and adopt a recruitment policy that will

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg hefyd

enable the Council to normalize the use of the Welsh language in its day-to-day administration and in the services it provides.

Action	Responsibility	Due by
Continue to develop the role of the Welsh Language Champions service	Welsh Language Champions	Review at the end of Strategy period
Promoting and marketing Welsh language courses	Welsh Language Officer / Human Resources	Review at the end of Strategy period
Ensure that all staff complete an e-learning module on Welsh Language Awareness	All Council staff	Review at the end of Strategy period
Organizing national annual days that celebrate the Welsh Language - e.g. <i>Shwmae Su'mae</i> Day, Owain Glyndŵr, Dewi Sant	Welsh Language Officer and Welsh Language Champions	Review at the end of Strategy period
Organise internal campaigns to double the levels of the day-to-day use of the Welsh language.	Welsh Language Officer and Welsh Language Champions	Review at the end of Strategy period
Categorize all Council posts in terms of Welsh language skills and promote vacant posts using these levels.	Human Resources and Welsh Language Officer	April 2027

Organise events and activities to encourage staff to take part and keep momentum in learning Welsh e.g. <i>Paned a Sgwrs</i> sessions, Staff Eisteddfod etc.	Welsh Language Officer and Welsh Language Champions	Review at the end of Strategy period
Include Microsoft package (word, outlook, excel, powerpoint, publisher) in Welsh by default on all staff's computer who have level 4 and 5 Welsh language skills.	ICT Services	April 2024
Provide training to staff on the understanding of how the Welsh language can be used in the workplace.	Welsh Language Officer	April 2026
Strengthen the induction process by placing more emphasis on the importance of the Welsh Language Standards and culture so that staff take ownership of the language.	Human Resources / Comms Department	April 2026

## Monitoring and Regulation

The Welsh Language Strategy is a corporate strategy and the associated Action Plan is a combination of all the approaches related to promoting the use of the Welsh language in

Denbighshire. As a result, a number of different Council departments will implement the action plan, as well as some partner organisations.

All actions within the action plan will be included in the relevant service business plan and will be monitored by the lead member and head of service. The general leader on the Welsh Language Strategy is the lead member with responsibility for the Welsh language.

The Council's audit committees will have an important role in monitoring the Strategy, as will the Welsh Language Steering Committee within Denbighshire. We will review our objectives and actions annually and we accept that it may not be possible to accomplish all we hope to do as circumstances change. We will always be transparent about any changes we make, and report any changes and the rationale behind them.

The Council has strong performance management arrangements in place which will be relevant in monitoring and reporting on progress against the Corporate Plan. This will include a robust performance framework that displays indicators, performance measures and activities with clear targets and expectations that will match our ambition for our communities.