



Complete Agenda

Democratic Service
Swyddfa'r Cyngor
CAERNARFON
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH

Meeting

LANGUAGE COMMITTEE

Date and Time

10.00 am, MONDAY, 24TH APRIL, 2023

Location

Virtual Meeting

Contact Point

Rhodri Jones

01286 679256

rhodrijones1@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

LANGUAGE COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP (15)

Plaid Cymru (10)

Councillors

Menna Baines
Alan Jones Evans
Olaf Cai Larsen
Llio Elenid Owen
Elfed Williams

Elfed Wyn ap Elwyn
Jina Gwyrfai
Gwynfor Owen
Meryl Roberts
Sasha Williams

Independent (5)

Councillors

Richard Glyn Roberts
Eirwyn Williams
Vacant Seat - Independent

Peter Thomas
Gruffydd Williams

Aelodau Ex-officio / Ex-officio Members

Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council

Other Invited Member

Councillor Menna Jones, Cabinet Member Corporate Support - The Welsh Language

A G E N D A

1. APOLOGIES

To receive apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

To receive any declaration of personal interest

3. URGENT BUSINESS

To note any items that are a matter of urgency in the view of the Chairman for consideration

4. MINUTES

4 - 11

The Chairman shall propose that the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 30.04.2023 be signed as a true record (attached)

5. WELSH LANGUAGE PROMOTION PLAN - CORPORATE LEADERSHIP AND LEGAL SERVICES TEAM

12 - 17

To present information on the contribution of the Corporate Leadership and Legal Service Teams in encouraging and promoting the Welsh language.

6. WELSH LANGUAGE PROMOTION PLAN - ECONOMY AND COMMUNITY DEPARTMENT

18 - 23

To present information about the Department's contribution to the Language Policy.

7. UPDATE ON THE WORK OF HUNANIAITH - GWYNEDD'S LANGUAGE INITIATIVE

24 - 30

This report is submitted in order to provide a background to Committee members about the existing work and priorities of the initiative.

8. PRAISE AND COMPLAINTS REPORT

31 - 36

To present the latest information to the Committee on complaints and examples of the Unit's successes when promoting the use of the Welsh language in the Council's services.

Agenda Item 4

LANGUAGE COMMITTEE: MONDAY 30 JANUARY 2023

PRESENT:

Councillors: Elfed Wyn ap Elwyn (Chair)
Llio Elenid Owen (Vice-chair)

Menna Baines, Jina Gwyrfai, Gwynfor Owen, Llio Elenid Owen, Richard Glyn Roberts, Meryl Roberts, Peter Thomas, Elfed Wyn Williams, Gruffydd Williams and Sasha Williams

Officers: Vera Jones (Democracy and Language Services Manager), Llywela Haf Owain (Senior Language and Scrutiny Adviser), Gwenllian Mair Williams (Language Adviser), Llio Mai Dafydd (Welsh Language Learning and Development Officer) and Rhodri Jones (Democracy Services Officer).

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor Menna Jones (Cabinet Member for Corporate Support).

- Item 5: Councillor Beca Brown (Cabinet Member for Education), Garem Prytherch Jackson (Head of Education Department), Gwyn Tudur (Assistant Head of Department: Secondary), Rhys Glyn (Head of Gwynedd's Immersion Education System) and Debbie Anne Jones (Assistant Head of Department: Corporate Services).
- Item 6: Ian Jones (Head of Corporate Support Department).
- Item 7: Carys Fôn Williams (Head of Housing and Property Department).
- Item 8: Emyr Edwards (Research and Information Manager) and Nia Wyn Vaughan (Senior Research and Analytics Officer).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Eirwyn Williams and Olaf Cai Larsen.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received.

3. URGENT ITEMS

No urgent items were received.

4. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 10 October 2022 as a true record.

5. WELSH LANGUAGE PROMOTION PLAN: EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

The report was presented by the Cabinet Member for Education, and briefly drew attention to the following main points:

- It was ensured that Cyngor Gwynedd's Language Policy was embedded through all the work done by the Education Department and the county's schools.
- It was explained that a full consultation had been held on the draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). The WESP had been operational since September 2022. It was explained that it would be monitored regularly by the Welsh Government's Minister for the Welsh Language and Education, and that the department would use the plan as a live document in order to ensure that it reflected Gwynedd's unique situation.
- Specific attention was drawn to 'Aberwla' virtual world, the Immersion Education System's innovative provision. Welsh Government officers recently visited the new immersion centre site in Bangor to see learners who were newcomers, who were using the virtual-reality equipment to acquire the Welsh language by visiting Aberwla's virtual supermarket. The modern and innovative method of increasing children's confidence in using Welsh in different situations was praised, as this would enable them to use their skills in the community in due course. The immersion centre staff were praised for their work on this new project.
- In the context of recruitment, it was noted that recruitment challenges remained in some of the Department's services such as catering and cleaning, and that there were problems in recruiting teachers for specific subjects in secondary schools in Gwynedd, although it was emphasised that the challenge of recruiting teachers was a national challenge.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and offer observations. During the discussion, the following matters were raised:

Did parents have the right to insist that their children's education was provided through the medium of English and exclude Welsh-medium teaching. It was noted that this could be detrimental to the ability of those pupils to gain employment in their local area due to their lack of Welsh language skills.

- In response to the enquiry, the Cabinet Member confirmed that she shared this concern but accepted that there were various reasons why parents requested that their children were educated through the medium of English.
- In response to the enquiry, the Head of Education noted that pupils could receive some of their education through the medium of English under the new curriculum and in accordance with our language policy here in Gwynedd. This was to ensure that pupils were confident and competent in their use of Welsh and English.
- It was further noted that this issue was occasionally raised by parents, and that the department's officers and all the County's teachers held discussions with parents regarding the advantages of receiving a Welsh-medium education, in the hope that they would be willing to follow this guidance. It was noted that the Department had witnessed an increase in the number of parents who were eager to learn Welsh as adults, having seen their children's progress in learning Welsh.
- The Head of Education confirmed that Welsh Government had established a baseline on the amount of education provided through the medium of Welsh. This was currently set at around 60%, although Gwynedd school staff were aware that there was an expectation that the rate in Gwynedd would be far higher, and that schools succeeded in maintaining a very high percentage of children's education through the medium of Welsh.

Concern was expressed that only 40.73% of Gwynedd's schools had completed language assessments. It was believed that it was important to ascertain the linguistic skills of all school staff. A question was asked about what measures were used by the department to ensure that school staff had opportunities to develop their language skills.

- The Head of Education explained that language skills assessments were held continuously within schools. However, it was explained that recruitment difficulties meant that not all staff members had robust Welsh skills. There was ongoing work with those staff members to ensure that they improved their Welsh language skills, supported by training.
- It was accepted that the percentage of staff that had completed the self-assessment (40.73%) was low, and the department would endeavour to ensure that more school staff completed the self-assessment in future.

It was asked how many children in Gwynedd received their education through the medium of English.

- In response to the question, the Head of Education noted that the situation regarding the Welsh language varied from area to area. This had led to a plan to increase the use of Welsh in two secondary schools within the county. It was further explained that the department was investing in schools in order to provide Welsh resources in areas where the percentage of Welsh language speakers was lower than the average for the County.
- The Head of Education noted that this was a difficult question to answer as the new curriculum had been introduced, which led to a bilingual education provision in accordance with the language policy, as previously discussed.
- In response to the enquiry, the Assistant Head explained that the information about the education provision over recent years was currently being collected although it was not yet available. It was hoped to establish definitions of Welsh education, English education and bilingual education to ensure that the figures presented were accurate. There would be a further discussion on the matter once the data had been collected.

A discussion was held on the importance of the Welsh language as the spoken language in the classroom. It was acknowledged that many subjects used English books, resources and websites in order to present the education, but it was felt that the use of Welsh within the classroom was crucial.

Officers were asked for their ideas for ensuring that providers that used school grounds for sports etc. held the activities through the medium of Welsh. It was felt that this was a method of ensuring that pupils heard the language being used naturally beyond the classroom, and also during the evenings and at weekends.

- In response to the question, the Head of Education assured the committee that every effort was made to ensure that coaches used Welsh whenever possible.
- In response to the enquiry, the Deputy Head of Corporate Services noted that conversations had been held to raise the awareness of Headteachers of the expectations when a third party used school facilities. It was hoped to reinforce these arrangements with headteachers in the context of the Language Charter in the future to ensure that children benefitted from these events through the medium of Welsh.

It was noted that the number of pupils completing five subjects through the medium of Welsh had decreased by 5% since the 2016 WESP. It was therefore asked how the department would measure their attainment against the current WESP targets. A question was asked whether the department had developed a Language Forum.

- In response to the question, the Head of Education confirmed that the Education Language Forum had been established to ensure that the Department successfully reached the WESP targets. It was admitted that the Department had difficulties in ensuring this during the Covid-19 lockdown periods, as the pupils were unable to attend school to receive their education. However, all the county's schools were working hard to ensure that these levels increased once again. There were representatives from the Language Committee and the Education and Economy

Scrutiny Committee on the Education Language Forum, and they would be able to report back informally on the Forum's work, providing assurance of the Department's implementation of the WESP.

- In response to the question, the Deputy Head of Corporate Services noted that the first meeting of the Education Language Forum had been held, and that ensuring that the county succeeded in attaining the WESP targets was one of its work streams.

Members gave thanks for the report.

RESOLVED

To accept the report and note the observations received.

6. WELSH LANGUAGE PROMOTION PLAN: CORPORATE SUPPORT DEPARTMENT

The report was presented by the Head of Corporate Support Department, and briefly drew attention to the following main points:

- It was confirmed that the department was central to the promotion of the Welsh language within the Council.
- It was stated that 98.3% of the Department's workforce had achieved the language designation of their post. It was reported that 95.1% of all the department's staff had completed the language self-assessment. This was considered to be extremely positive as 66 new members of staff had been appointed within the past two years.
- It was reported that the department was leading on three of the Council's priority projects.
- It was acknowledged that the department had faced some recent challenges.
- It was explained that the department worked to ensure that the Welsh language was used in procurement contracts, influenced the workforce planning systems, and liaised with external organisations in Gwynedd and Wales within the field of registering and administering criminal record checks in order to provide a bilingual service.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and offer observations. During the discussion, the following matters were raised:

It was asked whether the legal unit was part of the department.

- In response to the query, the Head of Corporate Support confirmed that the legal service was not part of the Department.

The Department was praised for its work in relation to Welsh place names, and it was enquired whether it was possible to collaborate with Google Maps so that they could use the Welsh names for the areas of the County.

- In response to the enquiry, the Language Adviser noted that the department had not succeeded in encouraging Google to use Welsh place names yet as such companies obtained their information from a number of different sources. However, it was confirmed that the Department was collaborating with Ordnance Survey so that they could use Welsh names on maps. This work had been positive to date, and it was likely to be an ongoing project in order to ensure consistency within their maps.

Members gave thanks for the report.

RESOLVED

To accept the report and note the observations received.

7. WELSH LANGUAGE PROMOTION PLAN: HOUSING AND PROPERTY DEPARTMENT

The report was presented by the Head of Housing and Property Department, and briefly drew attention to the following main points:

- It was explained that the department dealt with a number of front-line services such as homelessness, refugees and housing supply. It was explained that the department also dealt with corporate matters such as office cleaning and security. This meant that the department dealt with a vast number of people and it was pleasing to report that all these services were offered in Welsh / bilingually.
- It was confirmed that service users came from various backgrounds and often had specific needs or were suffering from stress. The department felt that communicating with users in their language of choice was crucial, and was proud of succeeding in this respect.
- It was reported that the department had invested time and effort to assist people through the current situation in Ukraine. The Department had succeeded to resettle hundreds of people in the county on a temporary basis in order to provide them with refuge.
- It was expressed that 94% had reached the language designation level of their job. with the vast majority of the workforce having completed the self-assessment. It was a source of pride that this had increased from 67% since January 2022. It was confirmed that 6 members of staff had attended language training.
- The department considered that the Common Housing Policy, which gave priority for social housing to individuals with a connection to Gwynedd, ensured that local people could live and remain in their communities. It was considered that this reduced migration and mobility that had been identified as a threat to the Welsh language within the Welsh Language Promotion Plan. It was further explained that 96% of social housing allocations had gone to people with a local connection between September 2021-22.
- It was noted that there was currently a housing crisis in the area and the aim of the Housing Action Plan was to ensure that people were able to remain in their communities through a number of schemes such as the Plans to Develop Our Own Housing and first-time buyer schemes.
- Another source of pride was the department's computer systems for the Housing Options Scheme.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and offer observations. During the discussion, the following matters were raised:

Due to a clause in the report noting statutory requirements to advertise in English (in addition to Welsh), some committee members noted that this could lead to placing Welsh contractors at a disadvantage.

- In response to the enquiry, the Head of Housing and Property Department confirmed that advertising in English was a statutory requirement placed upon the department. However, it was emphasised that the department often advertised bilingually.
- It was explained that within the Council's Framework, Cyngor Gwynedd's Language Policy was shared with the companies following the receipt of bids for work. The department tied the companies to Welsh language requirements within the service that they provided.
- Following a request, the Head of Housing and Property agreed to share the department's statutory requirement and contractors' language profiles with members.

It was asked whether the department could provide information about the number of people waiting for social housing who had Welsh language skills and whether the department could

provide specific information about Dwyfor, Arfon and Meirionnydd in order to examine whether people stayed in their local communities or moved to different parts of the County.

- In response to the enquiry, the Head of Housing and Property Department noted that the department would confirm the latest housing waiting list figures with members of the Committee as soon as possible.
- In response to the enquiry about language, the Head of Housing and Property Department confirmed that the department did not ask individuals applying for housing whether they were able to speak Welsh. It was emphasised that the department would require legal guidance before adding a language requirement when applying for housing, to ensure that no regulations or statutes were breached.

A request was made for an explanation of the meaning of 'local connection' in the context of allocating social housing, and whether it would be possible to include a language clause, or that they had been educated in Gwynedd, when people applied for social housing.

- In response to the enquiry, the Head of Housing and Property Department confirmed that the Council had defined the meaning of the word 'local' when creating this policy, in conjunction with Welsh Government. More restrictive definitions proposed by the Council had been rejected by the Government.
- It was further explained that at the time it was not possible to include a language clause within the policy. She did not believe that the situation had changed since the inception of the policy but noted that she would make further enquiries.

Further information was requested regarding the Housing Action Plan Project.

- In response to the enquiry, the Head of Housing and Property Department confirmed that this project had been developed since she started in her post in order to ensure that the work was being managed robustly. It was confirmed that the department was examining social housing that had been sold with conditions that any future occupiers of the houses were local residents. It was explained that the department gathered data at this point, and ensured that any future purchases were also made by local residents.

At the end of the discussion, Councillor Gwynfor Owen stated that he did not agree with the suggestion of setting a language condition on applications for social housing. He also believed that it was unfair to include a condition that applicants for social housing had to have been partially educated in Gwynedd.

RESOLVED

To accept the report and note the observations received.

8. CENSUS RESULTS 2021 – THE WELSH LANGUAGE

The report was presented by the Research and Information Manager and the Senior Research and Analytics Officer. Attention was drawn briefly to the following principal points:

- It was explained that the latest Census had been held on 21 March 2021, with the detailed results on the Welsh language published on 6 December 2022.
- It was explained that the following question had been asked as part of the census, and was used as the basis for the data:
 - “Can you understand, speak, read or write Welsh?”
 - Understand spoken Welsh
 - Speak Welsh
 - Read Welsh
 - Write Welsh
 - OR none of the above”
- It was confirmed that the percentage of Welsh-speakers (3 years old and above) in Gwynedd had fallen from 65.4% in 2011 to 64.4% in 2021. It was noted that this was

lower than the overall reduction in the percentage of Welsh-speakers in Wales, which was 1.2%.

- It was reported that the percentage of Welsh-speakers in Gwynedd had reduced each decade since 1981, and during that time, the percentage had reduced by 12.2%.
- It was stated that the age group with the greatest number of Welsh-speakers was the 3-15 year-old group. However, it was confirmed that there had been a decrease of 2.9% in the number of Welsh-speakers in this age group.
- It was explained that the rates of Welsh-speakers in Gwynedd was very similar to the general patterns seen throughout Wales. It was noted that the only age group that was different to the national pattern was an increase of 0.6% in Welsh-speakers between 50 and 64 years old in Gwynedd, where there had been a general decrease of 0.7% throughout Wales.
- Details were provided on the 13 areas within Gwynedd, confirming that Caernarfon Catchment had the greatest percentage of Welsh-speakers (85.3%) and the lowest numbers were to be found in Bro Dysynni (38.6%). It was explained that a decrease in the number of Welsh-speakers was found in 10 areas, with an increase in the number of speakers only in the areas of Pen Llŷn, Bangor Catchment and Bro Dysynni.
- It was confirmed that the five neighbourhoods with the highest number of Welsh-speakers were located in the Arfon area, and the five neighbourhoods with the fewest speakers were in the Bangor area.
- It was reported that Llanbedrog and Abersoch was the neighbourhood with the largest increase of Welsh-speakers, with the greatest decrease to be found in Hendre area, Bangor.
- It was noted that 7.1% of the population had confirmed that they understood spoken Welsh but could not speak it. This was higher than the Wales percentage of 5.2%. It was confirmed that the neighbourhood with the greatest number of people able to understand spoken Welsh but unable to speak it was Marchog.
- Peblig neighbourhood in Caernarfon was identified as the neighbourhood with the greatest number of people able to speak Welsh but who were unable to read and write it.
- It was explained that the results of the Census showed that 2.3% of the population of Wales could speak Welsh, but were unable to read or write it. This percentage for Gwynedd was 5.4%.
- It was emphasised that more detailed information was released at a ward level, and that work would be undertaken to analyse the results.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and offer observations. During the discussion, the following matters were raised:

Disappointment was expressed that the percentage of Welsh-speakers was lower than 70% in 37 out of the 71 neighbourhoods.

It was asked how the neighbourhoods in the Census results were determined, as they were not necessarily villages/communities adjacent to each other.

- In response to the query, the Research and Information Manager confirmed that the Office for National Statistics determined the areas. It was considered that some areas were grouped in a specific way to correspond to Council ward boundaries, but the boundaries had been subsequently amended.

A member praised the ability of Cyngor Gwynedd's Language Policy to ensure that Welsh had a place within our communities and the world of business. Although the number of speakers had decreased overall, the policy succeeded in normalising the use of the language.

Consideration was given to the confidence of individuals to speak the language. It was believed that the figures could be higher if people felt confident in their language skills, as some people felt under pressure to understand and speak correct Welsh in relation to the ability associated with this question.

A question was asked about whether the service used demography in order to examine how many people moved to different areas, and combined this with the census results in order to get clear statistics about the County's communities.

- In response to the query, the Research and Information Manager noted that details about demography were included in the Census results. However, it was not possible to compare the statistics of two areas. It was hoped that information would be shared by the Office for National Statistics over coming months and that various fields could be examined as it was released.

Concern was expressed by some members that Cyngor Gwynedd's Language Policy was not sufficiently robust to ensure that Welsh was used in all situations. It was considered that amendments were needed to ensure that the figures of Welsh language users increased in the future.

RESOLVED

To accept the report and note the observations received.

9. WELSH LANGUAGE COMMISSIONER: ASSURANCE REPORT 2021-22

The Language Adviser presented the report and noted the following points:

- It was reported that this was an annual report that was submitted by the Language Commissioner and its purpose was to provide a view on how the various public bodies conformed to language standards.
- It was emphasised that the report was not specifically formulated for Cyngor Gwynedd; rather it provided a general national picture.
- It was explained that the report suggested which fields would be given attention by the Commissioner over the coming months.

Members were invited to contact the Language Adviser if they had any questions arising from the report.

10. WELSH GOVERNMENT: LETTER FROM THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND WELSH LANGUAGE

This correspondence was presented as part of the committee's agenda for information only. The matter was not discussed during the meeting.

The meeting commenced at 10.00am and concluded at 12.05pm.

CHAIR

Agenda Item 5

<u>MEETING</u>	Language Committee
<u>DATE</u>	24 April 2023
<u>TITLE</u>	Welsh Language Promotion Plan – Corporate Leadership and Legal Services Teams.
<u>PURPOSE</u>	To present information on the contribution of the Corporate Leadership and Legal Service Teams in encouraging and promoting the Welsh language.
<u>AUTHOR</u>	Geraint Owen – Corporate Director Iwan Evans – Head of Legal Services

1. BACKGROUND

1.1. This report has been prepared to share information with the Language Committee on how the Leadership Team and Legal Services are encouraging and promoting the Welsh language.

1.2. The Leadership Team employs 16 staff including the Chief Executive, the two Corporate Directors, their executive team and, since the 1st November, 2022, officers from the Council Business Support Service (which was transferred from the Corporate Support Department). In addition, the Legal Service employs 23 members of staff.

In his role the Chief Executive, supported by the Corporate Directors, leads and manages the overall workforce of the Council.

The Legal Service provides legal support across the full range of the Council's work; supports the Standards Committee and Monitoring Officer in the exercise of their propriety responsibilities; supports the Returning Officer and Electoral Officer and also the Coroner's Service in North West Wales.

1.3. Within the Leadership Team and Legal Service, it can be confirmed that all staff meet the language requirements of the post.

A matter that the members wish to discuss:	<i>Question</i>
<u>Boosting and promoting</u> How do we go beyond the bilingual	<p><i>1. Can you highlight any projects within your department that contribute to one of the Council's language strategy priorities, namely the Welsh Language Promotion Plan for Gwynedd?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the support of the Corporate Support Department, the Department has led on the drive for an additional staff

<p>provision to increase the opportunities for people to use the Welsh language in the community, to contribute to the national target of creating a Million speakers, and to the Well-being goal of ensuring that the people of Gwynedd are "Able to live in a natural Welsh community"?</p>	<p>holiday on St David's Day, in order to promote and celebrate our Welshness. We were delighted to have been able to offer staff an extra day's holiday on March 1st,2022 whilst further work is currently being undertaken with trade union colleagues in an attempt to ensure the same arrangement on a permanent basis from 2024 onwards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Leadership Team has also been driving an attempt for all staff to opt to install the Welsh version of Microsoft on their devices. A significant increase in the number of individuals who are using the Welsh software has been realised over the past year whilst efforts continue in order to increase numbers beyond the current 63%. • The Corporate Director, together with the Council Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Welsh Language, sit on the new county Language Forum which has been established by the Language Unit. The Forum will formally meet for the first time at the beginning of June. This development, together with establishing the Language Enterprise in its new guise later in the year will certainly provide further impetus in promoting the Welsh language in Gwynedd. • The Corporate Director is also a member of the Project Group which is promoting "Prosiect 15" - an effort to increase material which is available in Welsh on social media. Finance has been earmarked to support this work which is being led by officers in the Language Unit. • The Council, at its meeting on the 6 October, 2022 adopted the revised Language Policy. One of the developments within that Policy was the commitment to use the Council name in Welsh only at every possible opportunity. Steps have already been taken to act on this decision e.g. letter headings, reports, virtual meetings background whilst further work has been planned to extend this practice to public signage in future. • The nature of the Chief Executive and Corporate Directors' roles mean that they regularly participate in multi-agency meetings at regional and national level. It is unfortunate that some organisations, including the Welsh Government, continue to hold such meetings through the medium of English all too often. Therefore, as representatives of Cyngor Gwynedd, it is vitally important that we insist on the right to contribute through the medium of Welsh at every opportunity.
---	--

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chief Executive is a member of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board and has had the opportunity to promote and support a scheme which looks at promoting the use of Welsh at other public organisations at Gwynedd’s “front doors”. This is one of the Board's main projects at present and there is an opportunity to ensure that other organisations benefit from Gwynedd's experience and success in this field. • The Chief Executive has responsibility for ensuring that our ambitions for promoting the use of the Welsh language are carried out in all Council Departments. The role requires the Chief Executive and the Corporate Directors to support departments at times whilst it also requires constructive challenging in some instances. • The Statutory Director for Social Services has specific responsibilities in terms of promoting the use of the Welsh language. All Local Authorities and Health Boards in Wales are required to appoint a senior leader as a Welsh Language Champion as part of the More than Just Words work programme. The Statutory Director undertakes that role in Gwynedd. • As part of that work, it is required, in accordance with the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014, that the champion ensures the use at all times of the “Proactive Offer”, which is to provide the service in Welsh without someone having to ask for it. In Gwynedd, in order to achieve that aim, the Director chairs the More than Just Words group. The Director is also represented on the North Wales Forum for More than Just Words. • Gwynedd provides the lead role in several regional partnerships. The Legal Service has been centrally involved in establishing the governance arrangements for these partnerships, for example the Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) for the North Wales region. There are several dynamics at work regarding ensuring that the arrangements of these bodies operate bilingually. However, our role and input means that the arrangements including the governance documentation for example, are prepared and provided in Welsh and English on an equal basis. Gwynedd’s ability to deliver technical and specialist issues in both English and Welsh means that we can provide assurance and confidence in achieving these objectives. This is now a principle that is clearly embedded in our partnership working and is becoming the norm.
--	---

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although fulfilling the Coroner service is a matter for the individuals appointed to the roles, there are several aspects to the function relevant to the Legal Service. • As Gwynedd appoints the Coroner and Assistant Coroners we have a significant influence on the requirements for the post. This has meant that we have been able to ensure that those appointed to the roles locally possess the ability to carry out their duties through the medium of Welsh and English. This has been recognised by the Ministry of Justice and the Chief Coroner who has an overview of the arrangements. • Following the retirement of the Senior Coroner there was a presumption that the North West Wales area would be merged with the Central and North East Wales area to form one area. This will no longer go ahead as planned and it can be stated that the Welsh language requirement was central to that decision. Both Chief Coroner and Assistant Coroner were appointed during the past year, namely Kate Sutherland and Sarah Riley respectively. Both are Welsh speakers.
<p><u>Externalisation of work and awarding third party contracts</u></p> <p>How do we ensure that the quality of the bilingual service is maintained when externalising work and awarding contracts?</p>	<p>2. If the department awards work externally on contract, can you refer to any good practice, either when imposing conditions or when monitoring in order to ensure compliance with the linguistic conditions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. When we contract out work, we do our best to employ Welsh speakers. Where this is not possible, we ensure that simultaneous translation is available for any meetings held with external contractors so that everyone has the opportunity to speak the language of their choice when discussing the work in question. Any work published by external contractors will also be available bilingually. ii. The Legal Service currently commissions the use of locums and external lawyers to meet higher capacity and specialist requirements. It must be acknowledged that it is challenging to secure such provision that is available through the medium of Welsh. However, on every possible occasion we will prioritise the use of individuals who can work through the medium of Welsh. iii. Another aspect is the need to employ high-level specialist lawyers who have the ability to provide a service through the

	<p>medium of Welsh. Where possible we instruct solicitors and barristers who have the language skills. On some occasions it is possible to secure a service at the highest level to provide advice or opinion through the medium of Welsh. However, on issues that require either a wider team, specific expertise or project size it is difficult, and not always practical, to secure the provision entirely through the medium of Welsh. The ability to deliver through the medium of Welsh is specified on national framework agreements but, this is not universal provision across companies. This reflects heavily even within companies based here in Wales.</p>
<p><u>Operating bilingually</u></p> <p>How do we manage to act on the requirements of the Language Policy and Welsh Language Standards?</p>	<p>3. Are there any obstructions that prevent you as a department to offer a full service in Welsh?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chief Executive and Directors are required to work closely with external organisations. • The Statutory Director for Social Services, for example, works closely with the Health Board, and makes every effort to ensure that meetings between the Council and the Health Board are conducted in Welsh. The Health Board has a tendency to revert to English if anyone at the meeting is unable to understand Welsh, rather than arranging a simultaneous translator in advance. The Statutory Director's predecessor, through working with the Health Board's Area Director, has been able to ensure that the vast majority of meetings are conducted in Welsh. • The Statutory Director takes advantage of his influence as a Welsh speaker to encourage use of Welsh in meetings and workshops, by contributing in Welsh on all occasions and ensuring that Welsh provision is always available. • The Council refuses to respond to national questionnaires and requests unless they are presented in Welsh and in this respect we have recently challenged the Government in national meetings on their lack of bilingual provision. The Head of Children's Services, the Statutory Director and the Chief Executive recently refused to welcome Youth Justice inspectors since they were unable to communicate in Welsh. Following some deliberations, the Inspectorate (Home Office) agreed to delay their inspection in Gwynedd and Anglesey. As a consequence, a number of other authorities across West and Mid-Wales responded similarly and the Inspectorate is now actively recruiting Welsh speakers.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Legal Service has endeavoured to reduce the outsourcing of its work. Overall, it has been very successful in doing this. However, recruitment problems over the last 12 months have meant that we have relied on employing more locum lawyers than would normally have been the case. It must be acknowledged that although we aim to find Welsh language provision every time, this is the exception as opposed to the norm. However, it is encouraging to be able to state that we have been successful in recruiting lawyers to the team over the past few months with the subsequent outlook that we will be able to reduce the requirement for locum lawyers. • It is important to recognise that Gwynedd’s Legal Service is almost unique among the 22 Authorities, having a team where all staff who can and do provide a full service through the medium of Welsh. This is ongoing and the issues identified have not changed the culture or nature of the Service.
<p><u>Developing new opportunities</u></p>	<p>4. Do you have ideas about new ways we can promote the Welsh Language in the county’s communities – either in your own services or by collaborating with others?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is room to reflect on the service and linguistic resources within the Legal Service such as technical documents we have produced. These resources could be shared externally under appropriate circumstances should resources allow. • As a Leadership Team, we will continue to promote and take advantage of all opportunities to ensure that the Welsh language is given its rightful place, not only in terms of the Council’s own work but also on a community level within the County as well as regionally and nationally.

Agenda Item 6

MEETING	Language Committee
DATE	24 April 2023
TITLE	Economy and Community Department Report
PURPOSE	To present information about the Department's contribution to the Language Policy
AUTHOR	Sioned E. Williams, Head of Economy and Community Department

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report was prepared in response to the Language Committee's request for information on the Economy and Community Department's contribution to Gwynedd Council's Language Policy. The report focuses on the progress made over the last year and a copy of the 2022 report is attached for information - [Language Committee Report 7 April 2022](#)
- 1.2 The following table was created in response to the Committee's specific questions and examples we wish to highlight of the Departments services have been included.

2. RESPONSE TO THE COMMITTEE'S QUESTIONS

Question 1. Promoting and advancing

How does your department go beyond offering bilingual services and contributes to the objectives of the county's language strategy (what activities and projects have been carried out during the past year which raise the status of the Welsh language and ensures opportunities for people to use Welsh in the community)?

The Council's language strategy sets priorities for promoting the Welsh language in five fields:

1. Language of the family,
2. The Language of Learning,
3. The Language of Work and Services
4. The Language of the Community
5. Research and Technology

The current strategy can be viewed here:

<https://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/cy/Cyngor/Dogfennau-Cyngor/Strategaethau-a-pholisiau/Cynllun-iaith/Cynllun-Hybu'r-Gymraeg-yng-Ngwynedd-2018-2023.pdf>

Answer:

The Department has collaborated with partners to submit a bid to the Welsh Government to fund the Arfor programme over a period of 3 years. £11m has been earmarked for expenditure between January 2023 and March 2025 on a package of projects to promote the Welsh language.

The purpose of the Arfor programme is to support communities which are Welsh language strongholds to thrive by means of economic interventions that will also contribute to increasing opportunities to see and use the Welsh language on a daily basis. There are 4 main objectives:

1. Create opportunities for children and young families (≤ 35 years old) to remain or return to their native communities
2. Create enterprising communities within Welsh-speaking areas
3. Maximise the benefits of activity by collaborating
4. Strengthen the identity of communities with a high density of Welsh-speakers

We have reached agreement on the 5 projects to be funded and the Department will manage and implement these projects over the next 2 years:

1. Llwyddo'n Lleol
2. Cymunedau Mentrus (Enterprising Communities)
3. ARFOR Challenge Fund
4. Strengthen the identity of ARFOR communities
5. Learning from the ARFOR Programme

Economy Development (Business Support) - when preparing to open a series of new grant funds, we refer applicants to undertake the Welsh Language Commissioner's language assessment. We have also included questions to ensure that we collect data about the linguistic profile of every company that applies for a grant.

Tourism, Marketing and Events Service: The Service has been collaborating with the Council Departments and the National Park Authority to establish the Gwynedd and Eryri Sustainable Visitor Economy Plan 2035. One of the agreed principles for the future is: Celebrate, respect and protect our communities, language, culture and heritage and a priority will be given to promoting local ownership and to developing opportunities to highlight the Welsh Language, in our culture and heritage. Work is progressing on developing new comprehensive measures for the visitor economy and discussions are continuing with Bangor University to identify sensible methods of researching the impact (positive and negative) of the visiting economy on our language in our communities.

Pilot research will be undertaken with Bangor University in the Dyffryn Ogwen area, one of the components of the Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales World Heritage Site.

Museums and Arts

The Service has reviewed the arrangements for running the café space at Storiell, taking into account Storiell's broader role as a community hub. By collaborating with Menter Iaith Bangor, baby café sessions are held in the space as well as sessions to encourage chats over a cuppa informally between Welsh-speakers and new Welsh-speakers.

Gwynedd Community Arts continues to provide bilingual sessions across Gwynedd to encourage creativity and well-being in the communities of Gwynedd through the arts. Through the Strategic Grants to the Arts, support is given to arts organisations and companies in Gwynedd to reach every part of the county and offer a Welsh and bilingual provision. Specific support has been given to Theatr y Ddraig, Barmouth recently to expand the Welsh language offer available there.

In art activities that are led by a non-Welsh-speaking Artist, the Service uses a Welsh-speaking assistant who supports the Artist to learn, and to provide a Welsh language service to attendees and the parents.

In the Craft for Well-being project, there was a mix of Welsh- and English-speakers at the activities - and the feedback was very positive about this opportunity for people to learn Welsh in a relaxed and supportive environment. According to the artist who was holding the activity:

'Welsh-learners discovered that being in a group of mainly Welsh-speakers was a great help for them to learn more Welsh. They said that the language used was easier to follow and more relevant (about crafting) to them than what they had learnt before in Welsh classes.'

The Service offers therapeutic arts activities through the medium of Welsh, e.g. the 'Llannerch Lleu' project (creative intervention with year 6 girls mainly, with sessions for year 6 boys and school staff). This was an opportunity for attendees to gain access to art therapy that is normally available through the medium of English

Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales

The Welsh language is a cross-cutting theme within the Management Plan and is addressed at each Partnership Board meeting. Discussions have been held to identify opportunities to monitor any impacts that could derive from projects developing from the designation on the Welsh language. By acknowledging the development of the National Heritage Lottery Fund application, we are discussing with communities across the slate areas to identify opportunities and activities to promote the Welsh language, and an understanding of our heritage and culture. Collaboration with Bangor University on initial research in Dyffryn Ogwen is an important step forward so we can have a baseline to monitor any impacts on the Welsh language and the confidence of our communities following the UNESCO World Heritage designation.

Archives Service

The Archives and Museums Education Service provides materials and activities for schools across Gwynedd in order for them to understand their communities, the importance of the Welsh language and local identity.

Libraries Service

The majority of workshops for children and families, and adults held in Gwynedd Libraries are either Welsh-medium only or with Welsh as a central part of them. We believe that by giving people an opportunity to hear and chat, and participate through the medium of Welsh, that the Welsh language will be seen as a community, living language.

This is a quote from an attendee - "The story sessions are the only exposure I have to Welsh nursery rhymes and Welsh stories."

On one occasion in Pwllheli recently, two Welsh-learners, who happened to be in the building without children whilst a session was being held, asked to join the session in order to improve their Welsh skills. They were welcomed to listen to the story, join in with the singing and movements and participate in the craft activity that followed. They had learnt about body parts that week at their Welsh lesson, and they genuinely appreciated being able to take part and have the opportunity to practise their Welsh.

Stories like this show that there is added value in holding the sessions in the main Library so that the public can hear the language being used in a fun way which gives children and babies an opportunity to have new experiences and a valuable opportunity for parents and others to socialise and support each other.

As a consequence of this, we have started to collaborate with the Canolfan Dysgu Cymraeg and offer a space in the Libraries for tutors to hold Welsh learning courses. On the tail of these courses, it is possible to refer people to the Paned a Sgwrs sessions (an opportunity for people to discuss Welsh books/poems/resources led by Library staff), and successful groups are currently being held at the Libraries in Cricieth and Barmouth, with further sessions to follow at other libraries.

By means of our collaboration plans with the North Wales Society for the Blind and Y Lolfa, we are able to produce audio book resources and audio e-books, and bold print books, in Welsh, with these resources available at Gwynedd Libraries and Libraries across Wales. Without our intervention, these resources would not be available.

We are collaborating with Cymraeg i Blant to hold sessions for children and families at specific Libraries.

The interface of the majority of systems is available in Welsh including our on-line catalogue, the self-service system and Borrowbox.

Regeneration Programmes Service

The Service is drawing up an Equality Assessment Plan as part of implementing a programme that succeeded in a funding application through the Llewyrch o'r Llechi, Levelling Up Fund. An assessment will be carried out of the programme and of all individual plans. The individual plans will be implemented by a range of partners, and they will be required to complete the assessment. Linguistic matters are an important part of the assessment.

Question 2. Policy and Standards Matters

- i. Staff language skills - number of Welsh-speakers and learners within the department (latest Language Designations data).
- ii. Barriers - are there any barriers to your ability as a department to offer a full service in Welsh (i.e. act on the requirements of the Language Policy and Welsh Language Standards)?
- iii. Compliments and Complaints - provide information on any compliments or complaints that the department has received during the year about Welsh/bilingual services.

Answer:

80.5% of the Department's staff had completed a language self-assessment in September 2022. 39 members of staff had not submitted a language self-assessment, but because collecting information from casual and front-line staff can be challenging, we have been focusing recently on collecting assessments from line managers in order to note whether the individuals meet the language designations of their jobs or not.

This means that only 3 members of the Department's staff had no language assessment at all, and those individuals have been targeted.

The assessments show that 94.5% of the Department's staff have met the language designations of the job.

Of the 9 members of staff who do not meet the language designation of their job, none is following language training at present and this matter is being addressed.

The ability of the Museums and Arts Service to attract Welsh language or new speakers as volunteers continues to be challenging and we are considering the best methods of attracting and managing volunteers for the service.

Barriers:

In terms of the Museums and Arts Service, it is not always possible to work with Welsh-speaking artists - if this is the case, we support them to conduct the activities with Assistants who speak Welsh and give the artists who are new speakers an opportunity to use Welsh if they are confident to do so. Support is available through the Arts Council for Wales for artists to learn Welsh, but it may be an idea to offer more support through Cyngor Gwynedd.

It is challenging at times to share information on social media, which is relevant to the arts in Gwynedd, unless they are available bilingually.

Complaints:

The Department has received observations from Howard Huws from Cylch yr Iaith about the Council's work on the development of the Visitor Economy Plan and on the development of the Llewyrch o'r Llechi programme. More information about these complaints will be shared with Members in the Committee.

Some complaints have been received about staff at Neuadd Dwyfor and Storiell speaking English amongst themselves. A discussion has been held with staff in order to encourage them to speak Welsh together and to assess any needs or support they require to communicate naturally together in Welsh.

Question 3. Development Opportunities

Do you have ideas about new ways we can promote the Welsh language in the county's communities - either in your own services or by collaborating with others?

Answer:

The Museums and the Arts Service could offer broader activities within our communities to support well-being, creativity, cultural understanding and linguistic skills - but there is a continuous challenge of securing additional funding in order to fulfil this work and there is no core budget available in the Service to deliver more than what is already done.

Through the projects of the Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales World Heritage Site, there are opportunities to promote the Welsh language as the community language across the slate areas. The projects in the pipeline offer opportunities for us to build on these opportunities as we attract additional funding to fulfil the Action Plan and develop the National Heritage Lottery Fund project.

By using the conclusions of the Service, the Archives Service could offer activities in our communities and in our records offices to promote the Welsh language. Depending on the activity, this could either be achieved with the Service's staff or in collaboration with others.

Agenda Item 7

MEETING:	LANGUAGE COMMITTEE
DATE:	24 April 2023
TITLE:	Update on the work of Hunaniaith - Gwynedd's Language Initiative
AUTHOR:	Iwan Hywel, Hunaniaith Chief Officer- Gwynedd's Language Initiative
PURPOSE OF THE REPORT	This report is submitted in order to provide a background to Committee members about the existing work and priorities of the initiative.

1. Background

1.1 The primary purpose of Hunaniaith, Gwynedd's Language Initiative, is to increase opportunities for people to use the Welsh language in all aspects of their lives and in all communities in Gwynedd. This report takes a retrospective look at the past year and presents examples of the officers' work in order to improve Members' understanding of the type of interventions that are planned across the various fields.

1.1.1 Hunaniaith's new Chief Officer started in post in May 2022, following the Cabinet's decision in 2021 to fund a Chief Officer post for the language initiative "to focus on attracting new grants and generating an income, improving community contact, attracting more community members to the Strategic Group, and working towards being an independent entity." The post is funded for 4 years from 2021.

2. Overview of 2022-2023 work

2.1 Following the different period of Covid 19, 2022-2023 saw us returning to a more normal programme of face-to-face events and activities, but due to popularity amongst our service users, some digital/virtual aspects continue.

2.2. Most of our work focuses on Theme 2 of the Cymraeg 2050 strategy, namely 'Increasing the Use of the Welsh language'. Our work with the public is split into three specific fields, namely Children and Young People, Families and Community. In part 3 of this report, a taste of some of the main schemes which occurred in 2022-23 within the three fields is given.

2.3 We need to attract more volunteers to take action for the Welsh language in our communities across the county, therefore we are not simply aiming to 'hold' or 'arrange' events, rather plan events and interventions which will inspire people, so that we are able to empower and support communities and individuals to take action themselves as well.

- 2.4 A 'Lead Group' of new volunteers was appointed in summer 2022 to lead on moving the Language Initiative to become an entity independent of the local authority; more information and a proposed timeframe is provided in part 4 of this report.
- 2.5 We succeeded to attract additional funding during the year, £22,000 from various funds which increased our capacity to offer more activities and generate income which will support us as Hunaniaith evolves over the next year.

3. Specific projects

3.1 Families

3.1.2 Libraries- We worked with the county's libraries department to arrange a 'Sesiwn Teulu - Amser Stori a Cherdd' tour, led by the Cyswllt Sain company, in four libraries across the county (Bala, Bethesda, Porthmadog, Blaenau Ffestiniog)

3.1.3 Llanbedrog- By working jointly with a local group 'Llanbedrog Playing Fields Committee', a carols service was arranged at Oriel Plas Glyn y Weddw which included learners singing Welsh carols, the local school taking part and all contributions in Welsh. Also in Llanbedrog and by working with the local committee, a 'Disgo Dwynwen' was held with nearly 50 children and 25 parents attending.

3.1.4 Immersion Centres- By developing our partnership with the education department, we have started to reach out to new families who send their children to the immersion centres in order to create a system of support for the entire family, not just the pupil, with the aim of this resulting in those families coming closer to the Welsh language and using it. This support started during 2022-23 through digital presentations every term to parents, presentations about the history of the language, the current situation, where to go for support and where to use it locally.

3.1.5 Ffestiniog- 'Wenglish' Sessions - in the Ffestiniog area, doing things that don't have a focus on the Welsh language, but through the medium of Welsh. 'Wenglish' rather than Welsh, to attract and promote families to use what Welsh they have without any expectations for anyone to be perfect or fluent etc., is the aim of these sessions. We had sessions of laughter and telling jokes, play sessions in the park and keep fit sessions, meeting in different places such as a local farm, local café etc.

3.1.6 Bangor- We worked with MSparc 'Ar y lôn' in Bangor to offer arts workshops to families leading up to the Christmas and Saint David's Day celebrations in the city.

3.2 Children and Young People

3.2.1 Digital- Digitally, we take advantage of the opportunities that come about from bringing the county's schools, immersion centres and families together - when the children are at home, to do activities in Welsh, and the following was offered:

- Cwis Dim Clem 2023 (Language Initiatives' national quiz)- for the county's schools - 15 schools and 226 pupils from Gwynedd took part, with Ysgol Cefn Coch, Penrhyndeudraeth coming third in Wales!
- Science sessions with 'Sbarduno' company during the school holidays, four sessions in total with two of these arranged specifically for pupils of the immersion centres - 36 children took part
- Kahoot quizzes shared with the schools, and families to do at home, to coincide with events such as Santes Dwynwen, Dydd Miwsig Cymru and Saint David's Day.
- The north Wales Language Initiatives' monthly video games club

3.2.2 **World Cup**- use the tournament to create a buzz about the Welsh language, examples of the work are as follows:

- The Language Initiatives' national competition to design a Bucket Hat through the schools and for families to do at home- 51 schools and 1,358 applications from Gwynedd
- Mural of Ethan Ampadu, Wales player, and a gig by Elidir Glyn at Ysgol Dyffryn Nantlle with children from Ysgol Bro Lleu also attending

3.2.3 **Summer of Fun**- we were a part of a national application by the Language Initiatives to Welsh Governments' Summer of Fun fund, and we succeeded to attract £12,500 which was spent on activities for children and young people during the summer, 23 events were arranged with 341 children attending the events. Events were arranged in Bangor, Bethesda, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Bala, Penygroes, Penrhyndeudraeth, Llanbedrog, Dinas Dinlle and Nefyn. Some of the events arranged were:

Climbing	Paddle-boarding	Bushcraft
Discos	Performance	Mountaineering

A day of fun for refugees from Ukraine at Gwersyll yr Urdd Glan Llyn

3.2.4 **Community Schemes for children and young people:** With face-to-face activities, we aim to fill gaps and trial and develop community schemes which have the possibility of continuing in the long-term without our support. During this period:

- Llwyfan Llŷn continued (theatre club in Sarn, Pen Llŷn). We have given less financial support to this activity by gradually withdrawing and asking parents to contribute more to the sessions for children and young people, we aim for this activity to stand on its own two feet by the second half of 23-24.
- Forest School, Llangywer - responding to local demand for outdoor activities through the medium of Welsh, again trialling in the first place by offering it free of charge, aiming to develop with parents paying during 23-24. Sessions such as identifying plants, building a den, starting fires etc.
- Theatr Derek Williams, Bala - arts sessions in Penllyn to trial the demand for such activities more regularly

3.2.5 **Influencing:** Through our work, we try to influence events and organisations which have not done much in Welsh in the past. This is in order to try to influence their use of the language and for them to offer activities in Welsh to children in the future, and in so doing increasing the use and 'normalise the Welsh language' especially in our areas which have lower percentages of Welsh-speakers. In this period, we did the following:

- Snowdonia Donkeys Charity, Dyffryn Ogwen - develop and support them to offer activities in Welsh for children with disabilities

- Academi Westend Academy, Bangor- support the theatre school to take part in the Bangor Saint David's Day activities with the academy singing songs in Welsh for the first time ever

3.2.6 Schools and the Education Department- We work with schools and the education department and during this period the following was undertaken:

- "Consultation" event with 16 pupils from year 8 of four secondary schools from Meirionnydd in Glan Llyn, and opportunity for us to learn what is important to them, what their language customs are and what these children would like to see in Welsh, in and out of school. The information gathered will be a basis for our planning and funding applications in the next year
- Outdoor activities, facilitated by the Urdd, for year 8 pupils of Tryfan and Friars secondary schools in Bangor- bringing confident and less confident speakers together in the open air to try and influence language use

3.3 Community

Through our community work we seek to empower individuals and communities to take the lead and organise local things in Welsh, as well as organise events that draw communities together, raise prestige and awareness and show what is possible, in this period the following happened:

- 3.3.1 St David's Day celebration events, Bangor city-** Menter Iaith Bangor started these celebrations some years ago, now led by a group comprising the city council with a number of partners, with the language initiative playing a key role. Events include a parade and arts presentations that bring everyone together and introduce the Welsh language to a new audience.
- 3.3.2 Regular Sessions for Learners-** Paned a Moidyr (Bangor), Clwb Sgwrsio (Trawsfynydd), Clwb Siarad (Groeslon)- regular sessions for learners- events that are supported by us, but are also dependent on volunteers and can take place without staff members attending, which is the ideal we aim for with learner sessions, and other activities, across the county.
- 3.3.3 Running Club, Bangor-** a light jogging exercise club every two weeks with the emphasis on enjoying and talking rather than running fast
- 3.3.4 Walks for Learners-** Our walks for learners remain hugely popular, and while there is a feeling that this is heavy in terms of staff time, there is clear feedback from learners that these are thoroughly enjoyed and vital to add to their classroom learning experience and to get to understand and feel part of their local communities. We aim to develop these with more volunteer leaders in the future. In this period there were 8 tours in various areas including: Porthmadog, Llanystumdwy, Bangor, Bethesda and Nefyn.

- 3.3.5 **Support for golf clubs-** Through our support, and together, Nefyn and Abersoch golf clubs now organise Welsh language entertainment evenings, in this period there were evenings with John ac Alun, Dylan Morris and Annette Bryn Parry. The clubs are now seeing the benefits of Welsh language events and are keen to do more, this of course following our initial support and intervention. Abersoch Golf Club, due to Hunaniaith's intervention, has registered as a performance venue with the Night Out scheme.
- 3.3.6 **Advice-** Initial advice and guidance was given to a new group who have come together in Llanuwchllyn to try and buy the local pub to establish it as a Welsh Community Enterprise, from this leadership the group was successful in a grant application to the Cwmpas fund.

4. The future

Hunaniaith has developed and evolved over the past year, and this will accelerate during 2023-24.

4.1 Transferring to being an independent entity-

4.1.2 **Registering the Company and Opening a bank account-** Led by our group of 11 volunteers we aim to register a not-for-profit company and open a bank account in spring 2023, the new entity will be called Menter Iaith Gwynedd. This will be done sooner rather than later to attract more volunteers and be able to pursue additional funding.

4.1.3 **Launch-** We will have a 'soft launch' at the Eisteddfod, declaring to the world that 'Menter Iaith Gwynedd' is on the way and we will be running a campaign for people to join us to make a difference in their communities.

4.1.4 **Employed Officers-** Staff will remain employed by Cyngor Gwynedd during 23-24, officially changing to be employed by the new independent entity on 1 April 2024

4.1.5 **Funding Strategy and Business Plan-** we are currently developing these. Additional funding was attracted from Welsh Government, Cyngor Gwynedd's Economy department and Cyngor Gwynedd's Youth department during 2022-23. We will be aiming for lottery and Arfor2 funds during 23-24, as well as identifying commercial gaps the revamped Language Initiative can consider filling by offering commercial services.

4.2 Priorities for 23-24

4.2.1 **Priority Areas-** We will support communities across the county, but we will focus some of our work in the Penllyn, Pen Llŷn, Bangor, Dyffryn Ogwen and Felinheli areas, this following the results of the 2021 census and due to the visit of the National Eisteddfod.

4.2.2 **Priority Audiences-** Children and young people, and getting Welsh-speaking children to use the language, is a priority.

4.2.3 **Partnerships**- strengthening our involvement with community organisations, agencies and groups is essential. We will continue to be part of the new 'Gwynedd Community Initiatives' network, strengthen our involvement with voluntary groups and make the most of the National Eisteddfod visit by working in partnership with them on several schemes, including leading on creating a linguistic legacy for the Eisteddfod visit beyond August.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that the committee accept and note the report.

MEETING:	LANGUAGE COMMITTEE
DATE:	7 April 2022
TITLE:	Praise and Complaints Report
AUTHOR:	Gwenllian Mair Williams Language Advisor
PURPOSE OF THE REPORT	To present the latest information to the Committee on complaints and examples of the Unit's successes when promoting the use of the Welsh language in the Council's services.

1. Successes to promote the Welsh language and ensure Welsh language services for residents.

An overview is given here of the work undertaken during last year to strengthen the commitment of the Council and its services to proactively offering services through the medium of Welsh to the public, and in full compliance with the requirements of the Language Policy and the Welsh Language Standards.

1.1 Ensuring Compliance with the Standards

Several steps have been taken during the year to strengthen the compliance of services with the Welsh Language Standards. These include:

- Reviewing and updating the Council's Language Policy to strengthen guidance and publish a grants awarding procedure (*further information below*)
- creating templates and reminding staff of the statements that need to be included on documents and correspondence, inviting correspondence in Welsh from the public
- adapting staff complaints procedures and policies to ensure that they reflect the requirements of the Standards
- strengthening the arrangements to include questions regarding the linguistic impact in public consultations on policy decisions.

1.2 Welsh Language Policy 2022

The work of reviewing the Council's Welsh Language Policy was completed during the year, with the revised policy adopted during Autumn 2022. A programme to raise awareness has been implemented since then, with messages regularly shared with staff to draw attention to any amendments or to remind them of the expectations in specific contexts.

As part of the work revising the Policy and reviewing our compliance with the requirements of the Standards, a sub-policy on awarding grants was also drafted and published internally, to give guidance to staff regarding the linguistic requirements and matters to be considered when

processing grants and financial assistance on the Council's behalf. As part of this work, the language advisers have been working with officers from the Economy department to review standard clauses and conditions for business grants.

1.3 Research:

Over the last year the Language and Scrutiny Unit has been developing the working relationship with Bangor University, with two pieces of important research now being undertaken by the University on behalf of the Council. The Council is jointly funding PhD research, to look at people's attitudes and use of language when using the Council's services. The work will look at the reasons, for example, why some people tend to use English with on-line services and look at the changes in use and attitudes of residents over a period of time. The hope is that we will be able to implement specific interventions to encourage people to use Welsh medium on-line services, and that the research will be able to contribute evidence of the success or failure of any interventions.

The second piece of research, which has received seed funding to do an initial study, is exploring the link between the language and the tourism industry.

A project has also been commissioned by the Service Board's Welsh Language Sub-group to look at ways of influencing the public's use of language in front-line services. Several Council reception areas and in public service partner organisations were selected to be part of the research. As a result, a staff training resource was developed and suggestions for staff on how to encourage the public to use more of the Welsh language.

1.4 Forums

A number of forums have been established during the last few months that will help move discussions about the Welsh language forward.

The internal Mwy na Geiriau/More than Just Words Forum was established during the previous year, to discuss how the Council implements the principles and priorities of Mwy na Geiriau/More than Just Words, the Strategic Framework for the use of the Welsh language in health and social care services. There have been changes during the last few months, with the forum now being led by the Statutory Director for Social Services, and a work programme is in place to assess and monitor how the Adults, Children and Care services manage to respond to the residents' requirements in terms of services through the medium of Welsh and the proactive offer.

We have also established a new Language Forum for the county, which brings together representatives from key organisations, partners, and community groups, to discuss how we can work together to promote the use of the Welsh language in the county and to consider what needs to happen in several key areas over the next few years to safeguard and promote the Welsh language.

1.5 Intranet

A new page was created on the Council's intranet to share information with staff about matters regarding the Language Policy and Standards. Resources such as a copy of the Council's new Welsh

only logo, and templates for the statements that we are required to include in documents and correspondence, have been placed on the intranet for staff to easily access when required.

Information was also added to the new members intranet.

1.6 Language Awareness

The Language Advisors and the Welsh Language Learning and Development Officer continue to hold language awareness sessions, visiting teams or specific services as required. The language awareness e-module is part of the Council's mandatory modules, and currently 1138 staff members have completed it. This number is slightly disappointing, but there is work being done on a corporate level to improve the take up of the mandatory modules.

2. COMPLAINTS AND ENQUIRIES FROM THE WELSH LANGUAGE COMMISSIONER - RELATING TO COMPLIANCE WITH THE LANGUAGE STANDARDS

2.1 CS1038 "Aber Dwyrhyd", Maentwrog Sign (September 2022):

The Commissioner received a complaint about the use of the incorrect name on a sign near the bus stop in Maentwrog. It was confirmed that the Council was not responsible for installing the image and the name "Aber y Ddwyrhyd" on the sign. The Council had provided new images to Traws Cymru to install on the digital sign. The response was accepted, and the Commissioner did not proceed to investigate this matter.

2.2 CS1026 Correspondence from the Libraries service (June 2022):

The Commissioner received a complaint that a member of the public had received correspondence in English only from the libraries service. The service confirmed that this had occurred, and it was an error in the automatic response system that was responsible for this. The response was accepted, and the Commissioner did not proceed to investigate this matter.

2.3 CS1002 Correspondence from the Finance service (April 2022) - final decision not yet received

The Commissioner received a complaint that a member of the public had received correspondence from the Pensions service in English only, and also correspondence in Welsh where the Welsh language was treated less favourably than English. There was a full investigation into this case. The Council has accepted responsibility for this situation from the start and has explained that this arose as a result of a single error, and because the specific circumstances in question (correspondence sent to a family as a result of the death of an individual in receipt of a teacher's pension) meant the officer had to act in a different way to the usual procedure.

A draft decision was received in March 2023, noting the Commissioner's view that the Council had failed to comply with Standards 5, 6 and 7. This was on the basis

- that the original letter was sent in English, and the Council did not know if the person wished to have correspondence in Welsh,
- the second correspondence sent in Welsh had errors, that meant that the Welsh language was treated less favourably than English, and
- the letters sent did not include the standard statements inviting the receiver to respond in Welsh and noting that the Council would reply in Welsh.

Several actions have been recommended in the draft decision to ensure that the Council complies fully. We will consider how to respond to the decision and the actions over the next few weeks.

2.4 CS102 Ysgol Abersoch Consultation (December 2021) – final decision not yet received

The Commissioner received a complaint that the Council had not followed the appropriate consultation processes and had not sufficiently consulted with residents and had not sufficiently considered the impact of the decision to close Ysgol Abersoch on the Welsh language and the community. There was a full and thorough investigation into this complaint. We have received the draft decision of the investigation, this notes the Commissioner's opinion that the Council had failed to comply with Standards 91, 92 and 93, namely the standards that place a duty on the Council to ask a specific question regarding the impact of the decision on the Welsh language when consulting. However, the draft decision states that the Council did not fail to comply with Standards 88, 89 and 90, namely the Standards that place a duty on the Council to assess and consider the impact of decisions on the Welsh language. The Council provided a significant sum of evidence that included minutes of meetings and reports because of the consultation period and these indicated that the Council had carefully considered the possible impact, and the Commissioner's report acknowledges that the Council gave 'conscientious consideration' to the impacts.

The decision for failing to comply with Standards 91, 92 and 93 was because the correct questions were not asked during the consultation. The Education Department had followed the directions in the Schools Organisation Code for the consultation process, and those guidelines did not give guidance on how to follow the requirements of the Code and the Standards at the same time.

The Council was of the view that not asking the specific questions about the linguistic impact had not affected the ability of individuals to express a view about the impact of the decision on the Welsh language, and a great number of observations had been submitted by local residents as part of the consultation process and had been considered when assessing the impact of the decision, however we accept that there was a failure in terms of compliance with the exact requirements of these Standards.

The actions proposed to strengthen our arrangements when undertaking consultations are those that are already afoot or have already been delivered by the Council.

3. COMPLAINTS and ENQUIRIES REGARDING A SERVICE OR RELATING TO THE COUNCIL'S LANGUAGE POLICY

Department	No. of complaints	The matter relating to the complaint	Explanation and actions taken
Corporate Support (January 2023)	1	Complaint that it was not possible to note that they were Welsh learners on the equality questionnaire used with public consultations.	The standard question used is in line with the question about linguistic ability that appears in the census. This enables the Council to compare data that indicates if responders to consultations are representative of the Gwynedd population. Having discussed the question with relevant officers from the research, communication and equality team, it was resolved to trial a new question,

			<p>that asks about the level of ability and skills in a different manner and includes an option to note if anyone is a Welsh language learner. We will look at the results of both consultations that trial the question to see if this form gives us more useful information.</p> <p>A response was sent to the complainant, and they were thanked for bringing the matter to our attention and to explain the change we are trialling.</p>
Corporate Support / Highways and Municipal	1	<p>Complaint that the Council's recruitment policy was unfair in demanding that there was a need to be fluent in Welsh for every post. The individual had a hearing impairment that meant that the person could not understand or learn Welsh well. As he was under the impression that the language requirements for posts meant that there was a need to be fluent, he felt that he could not apply for a post with the Council. He had been turned away from the Council's recycling centre when he tried to submit a CV as he could not speak Welsh. He therefore felt that the policy discriminated against him.</p>	<p>An apology was sent to the complainant because of the response he received at the recycling centre, and the policy was explained in terms of setting language requirements for posts.</p> <p>One of the posts in question by the complainant (LGV driver post) was looked at and it was confirmed that the language requirements were Basic/Access level for that post.</p> <p>The Equality Advisor was also part of the response to this complaint as the complainant claimed there was discrimination based on disability.</p> <p>The possible action to this complaint is to look at the wording shown in job descriptions to ensure that the requirements are clear and understandable to residents who apply for jobs.</p>
Byw'n Iach	1	<p>A complaint was received about the use of English in swimming lessons.</p>	<p>Discussions have been held between the management team and the swimming development officer and a work plan drafted by them to get to grips with this matter. The situation had arisen recently as a result of</p>

			<p>staffing problems that led to the need to appoint swimming officers with the correct qualifications but did not reach the language designation of the post.</p> <p>Explanation sent to the complainant.</p>
Finance	1	<p>Complaint about the lack of a Welsh language service from the Excel company, who provide a debt collection service on behalf of the Council.</p>	<p>The circumstances of the company (staff sickness and recruitment issues) meant that the fluent Welsh-speaker was not available on the day the complainant phoned to deal with the call and fully reply to the enquiry in Welsh. It is part of the agreement with the company that the service is offered in Welsh, and they have worked hard to ensure this service by recruiting and training local workers rather than recruiting from over the border. Although the service usually provided answers the requirements of the agreement, the Finance service is considering whether the work in question can be in-house by the Council in the future.</p>

4. Recommendation

The Committee is asked to accept the report for their information.