

MEETING	Language Committee
DATE	29 April 2021
TITLE	Economy and Community Department Report
PURPOSE	To present information about the Department's contribution to the Language Policy
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1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report was prepared in response to the Language Committee's request for information about the contribution of the Economy and Community Department to Gwynedd Council's Language Policy.
- 1.2 The objectives of Gwynedd Council's Language Policy are embedded in the Department's Services; it is a natural means of communication internally and externally with communities, partners and customers and it is also an important resource that is being promoted at all possible opportunities in an attempt to increase the use of the Welsh language within Gwynedd and beyond.
- 1.3 97% of the Economy and Community Department's staff have met the language designation of their post. This means that there are firm foundations in place to enable services to think about new ideas to boost and promote the language. Only a small number of staff do not meet the designation and assistance is available to support them to develop their skills.
- 1.4 New staff appreciate the encouragement and opportunity to learn and improve their linguistic skills. A good example of this was seen in 2020 where a new member of staff took advantage of the support to improve his linguistic skills and he reported that he had gained personal benefit from the experience as well as advantages in his post.
- 1.5 The Department's Business Plan for 2021/22 is attached <https://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/en/Council/Documents---Council/Councils-Departments/2021/Economy-and-Community-Departmental-Plan-2021-22-FINAL.pdf> to remind the Committee of the range of services within the Department. The following table has been prepared in response to the Committee's specific questions and examples of the Department's services that I wish to highlight have been included.

2. RESPONSE TO THE COMMITTEE'S QUESTIONS

A matter that the members wish to discuss:	Question 1:
Boosting and promoting - How do we go beyond the bilingual 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"?	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?
<p>I consider that the following are good examples in the Department of projects and services that have contributed over the past year towards the Welsh Language Promotion Plan in Gwynedd:</p> <p>Economic Development Service - Arfor Programme</p> <p>Over the past 2 years, the Department has led on the Arfor Programme in Gwynedd and across the West Wales Region, also including Anglesey, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire. Arfor's aim is to develop economic interventions that, in turn, will have a positive impact on the numbers of speakers and the viability of the Welsh language. The logic is based on an understanding of a 'problem' that is familiar enough for those who take an interest in language policy and the history of the Welsh language, namely that the future of the language, its use and sustainability in the traditional strongholds are under threat. The explanation for this is familiar enough. The argument is that young people leave the Welsh language strongholds in search of better jobs and employment in the cities of South Wales, England and beyond. Therefore, the intention of the Arfor Programme is to create more and better jobs in the Welsh strongholds and thus support the continuation and growth of the Welsh language. A budget of £2m was earmarked for the 2019-2021 period and a package of projects had been trialled over a period of 2 years. The projects in Gwynedd have included Llwyddo'n Lleol, Cymorth i Fentro Pack, Her Cymunedau Mentrus and Gofod Ffiws, which together, was an investment of almost £465,000 over the period. In addition, the Bwrlwm Busnes Arfor project was implemented across the four counties in order to promote the pride of businesses and their workers in the Welsh language with a further commitment of £40,000. https://bwrlwmarfor.cymru</p>	

Expenditure on these projects has now ended and the impact of the investment is in the process of being evaluated. It is expected that the reports will be prepared by May and it may be beneficial to share the conclusions of this evaluation and the analysis of the relationship of the Welsh language and the economy with the Committee in due course.

Tourism, Marketing and Events Service

This field is often linked with tensions and threats to the Welsh language, but the service is very aware of the challenges and the need to respond proactively. The team has created and is leading on a 'Cenedl mewn Cân' regional project, which has promoted the Welsh language as a positive resource for visitors and for the tourism economy. The intention of the project was to create a list of 10 songs to represent the Welsh language and culture at its best. Ultimately, it will be used as marketing material to raise awareness of the Welsh tourism product internationally. Following a public vote to select the 10 songs, the musician Osian Williams collaborated with the artists Cleif Harpwood, Bryn Fôn, Eädyth and Mared Williams and young people from Wales, Dubai, Patagonia and England to record a new version of the song, Ysbryd y Nos. The video was launched on 21 February 2021 to celebrate the UNESCO International Mother Language Day and raise international awareness of the Welsh language. Further information is attached here :

www.cenedlmewncan.cymru <<http://www.cenedlmewncan.cymru>>

Library Service

Data clearly shows that the customers of the Libraries Service appreciate the service, which is now, of course, more than just a service that provides books. Customers very often develop a relationship with the staff who can play an important role as Council ambassadors, the community and its culture. The staff of the Libraries Service have a prominent role in promoting the Welsh language. Although this has been happening naturally over a period of years, acknowledging this contribution and formalising the opportunity for staff to encourage their customers to venture and learn the language is an excellent opportunity for the Council to promote the language and enrich the lives of the people of Gwynedd. The Service has learning resources in libraries and a programme of activities is held throughout the year. There are many examples of customers appreciating the opportunity to be introduced to the language informally and to practice their linguistic skills in a welcoming and supportive environment. I attach a copy of correspondence recently received, referring to this exact point:

My Experience of Gwynedd Library system.

Dear Madam,

I am writing to tell you personally of my experience of the library system in Gwynedd.

I moved to Bala last year prior to lockdown. I joined the library in Bala and found the librarian very welcoming, knowledgeable and keen to help a 'newcomer' to the area explaining how the system worked etc. - it made me instantly feel part of the community and was much appreciated.

Lockdown came in and I used the Borrow Box system which is very user friendly and kept me supplied with all my favourite authors. I like the way you can reserve any book and know exactly when you would be able to access it.....

All of these experiences were not only made possible by the library system and staff involved but were greatly enhanced by their approach, professionalism and great interpersonal skills.

Finally I am trying to learn Welsh as I intend to fully partake in and of the local community and on 'trying' out some Welsh phrases and sentences, was greatly encouraged to continue my learning journey by both ladies - which has made my determination even greater.

Very often people write to complain, but I feel a balance is required - hence my letter to compliment Gwynedd on their great library service and all the people involved in providing this service to the public. I sincerely hope you pass my thoughts and thanks onto the relevant members of your organisation who embody your vision to provide the best of services to the people of Gwynedd.'

As well as staff giving people encouragement to learn, the Libraries Service also promotes the language by distributing books and packs to children and their families so that they are introduced to the language and so that they enjoy using the Welsh language in the home. Bookstart (Dechrau Da) is a national scheme that gives books to babies, Story Sacks is a book / toy / game borrowing scheme for children and Story and Song is a scheme for children under 5 yrs and their parents during the school term. More information is available here:

<https://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/cy/Trigolion/Llyfrgelloedd-ac-archifau/Gwasanaeth-i-blant-a-phobl-ifanc.aspx>

Museums and the Arts Service and Archives Service

The activities of the Museums and the Arts Service and the Archives Service promotes the use of Welsh naturally within our communities. During the lockdown, Gwynedd Community Arts provided a number of Welsh activities to promote the well-being of the people of Gwynedd through the Arts. A Scrapbook of all the activities is available [here](#).

Identity and the Welsh language and telling its story also lies at the core of Storiell's vision to convey the importance of the language and identity of Gwynedd and the Lloyd George Museum offers a snapshot of the interesting history of the UK's only Welsh-speaking Prime Minister and seeks to convey the success of a Welsh-speaking Welshman from Gwynedd. The Archives and Museums Education Service provides materials and activities for schools across Gwynedd so they can understand their localities and the importance of the Welsh language and local identity.

A matter that the members wish to discuss:

Question 2:

Externalisation of work and awarding third party contracts -
How do we ensure that the quality of the bilingual service is maintained when externalising work and awarding contracts?

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?

I specifically wish to draw the Committee's attention to the following contracts:

Byw'n Iach contract

Considerable attention was given to the Language in the contract between Gwynedd Council and Byw'n Iach when the Council's leisure assets were transferred to the Company in 2019. Clauses were set in the legal contract to ensure that Gwynedd Council's language standards continued in the future. The leisure service was a field that has, historically, experienced difficulties in recruiting Welsh speakers in some areas. However, Byw'n Iach was fully supportive to build on the work programme in place to improve training and recruitment arrangements so that an increase could be seen in the number of staff meeting the designations of their posts, and more importantly, using the language with the service users. Here is what has been included in the legal contract:

COUNCIL POLICIES THE CONTRACTOR MUST COMPLY WITH THEM OR HAVE EQUIVALENT POLICIES

Welsh Language Policy

14.2 The Contractor will:-

14.2.1 comply with the Council's policy as listed in Part 1 Schedule 12 (as updated from time to time) or it will have its own policies that are equivalent in terms of their substance as those policies except to the extent where changes are needed to consider differences between the

corporate and managerial structures of the Contractor and those of the Council and that they are approved, in writing, in advance by the Council

Arrangements are in place to monitor the performance of Byw'n lach each quarter and the language designations of staff and training are matters that are being addressed. Unfortunately, the performance over the past year does not set a comparative basis with previous years as the Centres have been closed for extensive periods as a result of COVID. However, monitoring sessions will continue and Gwynedd Council will scrutinise the Company's performance in this field.

Arfor

Considerable time was spent planning clauses to impose in the grant proposals to third parties within the Arfor programme to ensure that Gwynedd Council could monitor the impact of the investment on the economy and on the Welsh language over a period of time. The clauses were developed jointly with the Language unit and it is intended for these to be used as a basis to offer grants to third parties in different funds in the future. A copy of the terms and conditions can be seen here:

Language Commitments

Gwynedd Council's Language Policy notes that any grant awarded by the Council will be used as a way of promoting the use of the Welsh language within the county.

Therefore, it is expected for any individual, group or business who receives financial sponsorship in the form of a grant or loan - to make every effort to use the Welsh language in their work and activities to ensure that bilingual services are available to the public.

In implementing the contract / receiving the grant, you will be expected to act in a way that is in line with the above principle and the Council's commitments under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. Practically, this will include the following:-

- a) Ensuring that any written material produced is bilingual.
- b) Ensuring that any signs on display are bilingual.
- c) Ensuring that any training or public events are held bilingually.

The Council may ask for an explanation of how the individual, group or business intends to proceed to offer bilingual services, and to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than English and we will monitor compliance with the specific elements noted above.

To this end, in accordance with the Council's commitment to promote the Welsh language, we will welcome the company's wish to produce any materials, signage or holding events in Welsh only, if the nature of the activity or target audience suggests that this is appropriate. The

Council may also refer individuals, groups or businesses to partners or other sources of information and advice in order to offer support to increase the use made of the Welsh language.

The Grantee is expected to work with Cymraeg Byd Busnes (<https://llyw.cymru/y-gymraeg>), which is a Welsh Government Programme that encourages businesses to use the Welsh language.

A matter that the members wish to discuss:	Question 3:
<p><u>Operating bilingually -</u> How do we manage to act on the requirements of the Language Policy and Welsh Language Standards?</p>	<p>Are there any obstructions that prevent you as a department to offer a full service in Welsh? This could be across the department or in specific services.</p>
<p>Here are some obstructions that have been identified within the Department:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment - Recruitment problems were seen in some specific fields such as leisure and maritime in the past. The situation in some areas, such as south Meirionnydd, continues to be a challenge. However, with quite some encouragement and expectation to attend training to develop skills from the outset, the percentage of new staff meeting the language designations has improved substantially. • Meetings - Collaborating with partners can also prove challenging at times. Not in respect of the formal public meetings, but rather at the smaller ones with officers on a regional or national level. This appears to be a common experience across the Department's services and it is not restricted to the business and tourism field alone, where the issue was highlighted originally. Zoom has been a means of improving the offer and the situation, but there are a number of 'work' meetings where a different culture makes it difficult for officers to manage to develop a working relationship and influence decisions on behalf of Gwynedd at the same time. • British Government Communications - As Gwynedd Council, in future, will apply for funding from the British Government directly, rather than from Welsh Government, a comment has already been made that it will be expected for the communication to happen through the medium of Welsh, with opportunities to submit applications through the medium of Welsh. 	

A matter that the members wish to discuss:	Question 4:
<u>Developing new opportunities</u>	Do you have ideas about new ways we can use to promote the Welsh language in the county's communities - either in your own services or by collaborating with others?
<p>Below, I highlight some fields where I envisage opportunities for the Department to make a greater contribution in promoting the Welsh language in Gwynedd:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>The continuation of Arfor - The Arfor programme has placed the future of the Welsh language at the centre of its efforts to strengthen communities and the economy. The experience of collaborating with partners was very beneficial and interesting; to learn where different interventions have been able to make a difference to the response and behaviour of businesses and communities. This is the first time that the four Local Authorities have collaborated with Welsh Government's Welsh Language Department and Economy Department to focus on the relationship between language and work. Although the partnership took time at the beginning to understand the work field and the potential opportunities, by the end of the period it was seen that this relationship was important and created a shift in the promotion of the language in the future.</p> <p>The Language Initiatives - The Department has not had a very close relationship with Hunaniaith, but rather has had contact with a few projects or activities. Working on the Arfor programme has highlighted that there are opportunities to make use of resources across the regeneration and economy development field to add value to the activities of the language initiatives. A number of funding programmes and community resources would welcome the opportunity to contribute to their objectives. By main-streaming the objectives of Hunaniaith in services and programmes such as Leader, town centre initiatives, food initiatives, the arts service and the libraries service, they could all be innovative and contribute to the development of the language.</p> <p>Welsh language introduction packs - through the experience of Arfor, it was seen again that some areas were much more proactive in introducing incomers; not only residents but also new businesses, to the Welsh language and local culture. Obviously, this would lead to cost implications, but in some areas, Language Initiative money was used to target initiatives and offer immersion experiences in Welsh, with a contribution towards resources to promote the Welsh language to businesses. These steps would also</p> 	

attempt to influence owners before they make key investment decisions to ensure that the language is prominent, before any planning application is submitted.

- **Tourism principles** - Gwynedd Council is in the process of reviewing its tourism principles, with the intention of consulting over the next months and adopting a new vision by the autumn. The new principles put the people of Gwynedd at the centre of our new way of thinking about tourism and as part of that, celebrating, respecting and protecting our communities, our language and our culture, is one of the core principles. It is an opportunity to do more and collaborate with businesses and enterprises across Gwynedd to be ambassadors to promote the language as a live medium that is a part of our culture. By promoting the language, there is also an opportunity to introduce information about opportunities to learn Welsh locally or internationally, highlighting social media platforms that would carry on giving encouragement after visitors leave the area. The huge growth seen in the use of Duolingo to learn Welsh in 2020 clearly shows that there is potential to take advantage of the interest shown.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cymrufyw/55346962>