

<u>MEETING</u>	Language Committee
<u>DATE</u>	7 April 2022
<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 Services Teams in encouraging and promoting the Welsh language.
<u>AUTHOR</u>	Dafydd Gibbard – Chief Executive Morwena Edwards – 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 6 staff including the Chief Executive, the Corporate Director and their executive team, and the Legal Service has 23 staff.

In his role the Chief Executive, supported by the Corporate Director 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 support for the Coroner service for North West Wales.

1.3. Within the Leadership Team and Legal Services, 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 provision to	<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> <p>i) With the support of the Corporate Support Department, the Department has led on the drive for an additional staff holiday on St David's Day, in order to promote and celebrate our</p>

<p>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>Welshness. We are delighted to have been able to offer staff an extra day's holiday on March 1st this year, and there will be further work to be done over the next year to assess options for the future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii) The Leadership Team has also been driving an attempt for all staff to opt to install the Welsh version of Microsoft on their devices, and we now have commissioned the IT Department to introduce Microsoft in Welsh on all devices from now on. iii) The Corporate Director has a national and regional lead role for More than Just Words, a strategy for strengthening Welsh language services in the care and health sector. This involves chairing the North Wales More than Just Words Forum, which is a cross-sector Forum. The Forum is accountable to the Regional Health and Care Partnership Board and The Director, as chair of the Forum, reports to the Partnership Board at least annually, presenting an annual report on the work of the Forum to Board members. iv) In terms of national responsibility, the Director represents all Directors of Social Services in Wales on the Welsh Language Partnership Board, which is chaired by the Welsh Government. More recently she has become a member of the More than Just Words National Task and Finish Group for Wales, set up by Minister for Health and Care, Eluned Morgan, led by Marian Wyn Jones. v) In December 2021 a More than Just Words Group for Gwynedd was established, led and chaired by the Director's Senior Executive Officer, which means detailed work is being undertaken to look at how we are implementing the More than Just Words strategy in the county. Through the group, work is underway to establish a Work Program and Record of Good Practice. vi) Gwynedd has a 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. The Council's Chief Executive has been appointed as the acting CJC Chief Executive and this reinforces our ability to ensure that the Welsh language is central to the ethos of this organisation. There are several dynamics at work regarding ensuring that the arrangements of these bodies operate bilingually. However, this 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
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	<p>objectives. This is now a principle that is clearly embedded in our partnership working and is becoming the norm.</p> <p>vii) 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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 by the Council have 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 East North Wales area to form one area. This will no longer go ahead which means that it is possible to secure the place of Welsh in the system on a long-term stable basis. The ability to maintain age-old bilingual provision was already a key consideration in keeping the area as it is. <p>viii) 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 in 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.</p> <p>ix) The nature of the Chief Executive and Corporate Director's roles mean that they participate in multi-agency meetings, often at a 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 Gwynedd Council, it is vitally important that we insist on the right to contribute through the medium of Welsh at every opportunity.</p> <p>x) 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 supporting departments at times, and also requires constructive challenging in some instances.</p>
<p><u>Externalisation of work and</u></p>	<p>2. If the department awards work externally on contract, can you refer to any good practice, either when imposing conditions or</p>

<p><u>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><i>when monitoring in order to ensure compliance with the linguistic conditions?</i></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 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><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"> i. The Chief Executive and Director are required to work closely with external organisations. ii. The Director, 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 tends to switch to English if anyone at the meeting is unable to understand Welsh, rather than arranging a simultaneous translator in advance. The Director, through working with the Health Board's Area Director, has

	<p>been able to ensure that the vast majority of meetings are conducted in Welsh.</p> <p>iii. The Director is also an Associate Member of Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board - a role which involves the Director in the formal arrangements of the Board. Although the Health Board is at the forefront of language issues compared to other Health Boards in Wales, the Health Board is a fairly English organisation compared to the Council. The Director takes advantage of her influence as a Welsh speaker to encourage the use of Welsh in meetings and workshops, contributing Welsh at all times and ensuring that Welsh language provision is always available. The Health Board has recently decided to make reports submitted to the formal Board meeting available in Welsh and English, and this is a major step forward in ensuring bilingual arrangements.</p> <p>iv. ADSS Cymru, a professional body representing Directors of Social Services throughout Wales, is developing a Welsh Language Action Plan within the organisation for national implementation, as a result of the influence of Morwena Edwards and Anglesey Council's Director. This will be a positive step forward in implementing the More than Just Words strategy as well as ensuring that the Welsh language takes a natural place in the day-to-day work of the organisation and beyond. As part of the lead role with the Welsh Language, Morwena, in conjunction with Marian Parry Hughes, influenced the branding of Foster Wales, to ensure that the design and content of the marketing work met the linguistic requirements in full.</p> <p>v. As a Legal Service we have worked to reduce the outsourcing of the work. Overall, we have 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 though that although we aim to find Welsh language provision each time, achieving this is uncommon. We are taking significant steps to try to recruit staff with the necessary language skills and this will be the vehicle to address this situation.</p> <p>vi. However, it is also 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>

Developing new opportunities

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?

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.

The Chief Executive has recently begun a piece of work to assess whether 'Cyngor Gwynedd' can be used as the Council's official name by omitting the use of the statutory English version ('Cyngor Gwynedd Council'). Further details will be shared as the work progresses.

The work underway to change the Council's name is an opportunity to remind other local organisations that Cyngor Gwynedd takes its linguistic responsibility seriously and that we embrace every small step to promote the status and use of the Welsh language in our county. The Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board scheme will be another opportunity for us to influence others in order to contribute further to the daily use of Welsh in the public sector in Gwynedd.