Consultation draft of the

Gwynedd Language Strategy 2023 – 2033

1. Introduction

This draft strategy has been created as a continuation of the work of the current strategy (***Welsh Language Promotion Plan for Gwynedd 2018-23***) in order to reflect the Council's commitment to promoting the language across the county and to meet the statutory requirements set within the Welsh Language Standards. It demonstrates some of the projects and work that are currently being undertaken by the Council, and some of the matters we wish to address over the next few years.

We have had initial discussions with the Council's Cabinet Members, the Language Committee and members of the Gwynedd Language Forum, in order to gather ideas about the challenges and opportunities that exist in terms of promoting the Welsh language in Gwynedd.

One of the outcomes of those discussions was that we consider creating a strategy for a 10 year period. This will mean that the strategy's period will correspond with the publication of census results, and provide us with a more efficient measuring method.

This draft strategy therefore sets a vision to increase the **use** of Welsh across the whole county, and the schemes or projects that are proposed focus on areas where the Council has the power and influence to take action.

2. Vision Statement

> **We intend to create an inclusive strategy with the primary aim of increasing opportunities for all Gwynedd residents to see and use the Welsh language in various contexts.**
>
> **By working on raising the status and increasing people's use of the language in every part of their life, we will also hopefully increase the motivation for others to learn the language.**
>
> **We intend to put a specific focus on young people's use of language over the next few years, which includes their use of the Welsh Language with technology, showing them the value of the language as a skill for the workplace, and trying to increase the informal opportunities for them to use the Welsh language in their daily lives.**

3. The broader context

It is important to note that the Council have strategic plans in a number of national policy and statutory fields, and that they implement schemes on a local level that affect the community and the Welsh language, or are involved in some way with efforts to maintain and promote the Welsh language.

These include:

- Welsh in Education Strategic Plan
- Gwynedd Housing Action Plan

- Local Development Plan
- Sustainable Visitor Economy Plan
- Our Area Regeneration Schemes

A number of these schemes go beyond national guidance in those fields and seek to address the specific challenges facing Gwynedd communities and population and, as a result, affect the prosperity of the Welsh language.

Although delivering on these schemes will be key to realise the general aims of the strategy, the main emphasis of this consultation document looks beyond these policies and strategies, and the work that is currently afoot, and looks at identifying the **new** opportunities that are available to go beyond service provision requirements, and to promote the use of the Welsh language.

It must also be recognised that we are operating in a very challenging period on a financial level, and that the financial constraints will not allow us to do everything we wish to do, or to do everything at once. We will need to be careful and realistic about what can be delivered within the resources that are available to us, to make the most of collaboration opportunities in order to share resources, and to review the work programme and projects when the financial situation changes.

Cymraeg 2050

This is the long-term strategy of the Welsh Government, which outlines how they intend to promote the Welsh language and work towards reaching the aim of a million Welsh speakers by 2050. A five-year Action Plan was published for 2021 to 2026, which places a strong emphasis on increasing the number of Welsh speakers through the education system, but the strategy also includes aims and targets to increase the use of the language in every part of life.   There are three main themes or aims for the Government's work, namely:

- **Increase the number of Welsh speakers**
- **Increase the use of the Welsh language and**
- **Create favourable conditions**

Although the work of Gwynedd's strategy has been divided into five main areas of action, we have also noted how all the work outlined contributes to the three areas of action in the Cymraeg 2050 strategy.

4. Current situation - summary of the statistical position and challenges

4.1 Statistical position

The 2021 census results noted a small reduction in the number and percentage of Welsh speakers in the county.

On the day of the 2021 Census, **73,560** people (aged 3 and over) were able to speak Welsh in Gwynedd, which equates to **64.4%.**

In 2011, the number of speakers in Gwynedd was 77,000 and the corresponding percentage was **65.4%,** therefore, the proportion has reduced by 1%.

The other evidence base we have is the national Language Use Survey, which is undertaken by the Welsh Government. The latest survey was carried out during 2012-22 and it notes Gwynedd's general situation as follows:

The percentage of people from Gwynedd who participated in the survey, who said they were able to speak Welsh, was 64% for 2019-20 and it increased to 69% for 2021-22.

The proportion who noted they were able to speak Welsh daily, and more than a few words, was 61% in 2019-20 and 60% for 2021-22.

It must be noted that the Language Use Survey is a survey with a specific sample of people, and that the Census, in comparison, is a survey that includes the whole population. Therefore, we need to be cautious when making any comparison between the different figures. It is interesting, however, to note that the percentage appears higher in the use survey, and it suggests that the statistical picture is very dependent on the question that is asked in both surveys.

StatsCymru Language Use Survey

Use of the Welsh Language in Wales. July 2019 to March 2020 LLYW.CYMRU

Although time is needed to accurately analyse the figures (*at the time of writing this consultation version, it was not yet possible to compare the different data sets from the census in order to obtain detailed interpretations and investigate the reasons why there has been a change*) these statistics provide us with an evidence base to work on.

4.2   Challenges

In order for us to be able to find opportunities to increase the use of the Welsh language and to increase the number of speakers, we also need to be able to identify the challenges and obstacles that prevent it. We need to be able to identify the socio-economic factors that affect our communities and understand how these have a direct and indirect impact on the status and use of the language, and on attitudes towards the Welsh language. We must also examine the situations and circumstances where people use less of the language in their daily lives, and understand what factors can affect an individual's personal use of the language.

Certainly, getting people to use the skills and ability they have to speak Welsh, and doing this in as many contexts as possible, is the most important factor for the success of the language in Gwynedd.

In terms of linguistic planning, there are several key factors to consider when discussing what affects the language use of individuals. These have been described as follows by the Welsh Language Commissioner: *(Point 3.36 Best practice guide WLC Promotion Standards)*

- ***continuity*** *- the continuation of experiences and opportunities from primary to secondary education; from secondary education to further or higher education; from education to the workplace, leisure, raising families, as well as social and community experiences, together with continuity between learning Welsh and becoming fluent.*

- *opportunity* – *the quality and convenience of opportunities can greatly affect the use of the language and supporting future use of the language.*
- *attitudes* - *it's important to consider how Welsh speakers feel about their ability and language use and the way in which they act on this, and how non-Welsh speakers feel about the language and how this is articulated and perceived.*
- *confidence* – *the confidence of Welsh speakers can vary according to the situation (e.g. formal and informal) and therefore consideration must be given as to how and where to target support effectively.*

In terms of the challenges identified in Gwynedd, these are some of the main challenges at present:

- **Transferring the language within the family:**
  Families not transferring the language to their children, leading to the loss of the Welsh language as the language of the home.

- **Young people's use of language**:
  Language use does not seem to reflect the number of speakers among the younger generation, and there is concern that we are "losing" a number of regular speakers as they leave formal education. There is a need for young people to view the language as an asset and a relevant skill in order to continue to use it as they move on to the workplace and to their social lives as adults.

- **The status of the Welsh language in the community**:
  The status of the Welsh language is affected by the lack of visibility and use in the private and public sectors. There is a need to increase the status of the language as a working language, and find ways to convince more businesses to use Welsh when dealing with the public.

- **Opportunities for people to use the Welsh language in the community**:
  The nature of society and communities has been changing constantly over the past few decades, with the balance between the use of the Welsh and English languages gradually changing. More social activities are held bilingually or in English. Although these changes have not happened rapidly, the changes seen as a result of the pandemic lockdowns, which saw a number of opportunities to socialise and communicate on a face-to-face level disappear overnight, have certainly left their mark. There is a need to ensure that a number of varied activities are held across the county, and that community groups are supported to extend opportunities and ensure that people from all linguistic and social backgrounds are included in community activities.

- **Creating new speakers**:
  There are many residents and newcomers within the county who are eager and enthusiastic to learn Welsh, but there is a need to ensure that varied, timely and convenient opportunities are available for them, not only to learn but to practise their Welsh in order to become confident speakers.

- **The influence of technology**:
  Technology plays an increasingly prominent role in people's lives, socially and in their working lives, and this influence has intensified since the lockdown. The lack of Welsh-medium resources and developments mean that the influence of the English language on day-to-day lives is increasing. Changes in people's habits, once again intensified by changes

in how services have been provided in recent years, present specific challenges in terms of people's use of Welsh-medium services.

- **Evidence base**:
  It becomes increasingly important that we can assess the impact of schemes on the Welsh language, but that we can also measure impact, and measure the success of our schemes and interventions. Although much research has been undertaken on the Welsh language, there is also a number of gaps in the current evidence we have to prove the link and impact of specific factors, such as the economy and tourism, on the language.

- **Demographic and geographical challenges**:
  A number of other, more complex challenges, affect the prosperity of the language and our communities, and in areas where the Council's influence alone is more limited or is prevented by other factors. These include the challenges posed by outwards and inwards migration, along with changes in the age of the population and the major differences in the nature of communities from one area to another, which makes planning interventions based on county level difficult.

5. Next steps

The work that is outlined below looks beyond the areas of policy and statutory responsibilities, and seeks to identify the opportunities available to facilitate and promote the use of the Welsh language on a broader level.

The main focus will be on **increasing the use** of the Welsh language, and on ensuring that everyone who is able to speak the language can do so in as many situations and as often as possible. As a result, the main activities of the strategy come under Theme 2 of the Cymraeg 2050 Strategy, namely Increasing the Use of the Welsh Language. But we also note what is the intention in terms of increasing numbers of Welsh speakers - Theme 1 Cymraeg 2050 - and what we intend to do in terms of laying firm and correct foundations to develop the use of the Welsh language in the county - Theme 3 Cymraeg 2050, Creating favourable conditions.

5.1 Target:

We will set a general target to see an increase in the regular use of Welsh. We also want to see 100% of Gwynedd children receiving the opportunity to speak Welsh and to use the language regularly.

5.2 Taking Action:

Theme 1: Increase the number of speakers

How will we increase the number of speakers?	How will we measure on a local level, and during the period of the strategy?
Provide opportunities for children and young people who are not yet Welsh speakers, to learn and become confident Welsh speakers.	Number of children receiving Welsh-medium education. Number of children receiving support through the immersion system of the education department.
Provide opportunities for adults to become new speakers via the Council's learner support schemes and community provision of partners.	Number of Council employees receiving lessons to learn Welsh.

Theme 2: Increase the Use of the Welsh language

Area of action 1: Language of the early years

Evidence base
- On what basis do we see the need to take action? What are the challenges? What are we trying to achieve?
Providing the best start for families and children in terms of using Welsh is essential. There is also a need to ensure that parents transfer the language to the next generation, and that every encouragement and support is provided to enable parents and prospective parents to learn Welsh.

We are aware that the pandemic has had a substantial impact on the language use of families and young children, with the lack of opportunities to socialise outside the home meaning that a number of families have lost that crucial opportunity for an early introduction to the Welsh language.

The challenges we are facing in terms of living costs also mean that it is possible that some families have been missing out on opportunities to introduce the Welsh language early due to the cost of resources and travelling to activities.

The Welsh Government has set a target of opening 60 new Welsh-medium nursery groups across Wales by 2026 (*Cymraeg 2050 Plan - 2012 to 2026*) and we hope to see some of those new groups in Gwynedd.

Therefore, a special effort is now needed, not only to rebuild those community networks - increase the number of children attending *Cylchoedd Meithrin* and *Ti a Fi* groups - but also to nurture confidence among parents, Welsh speakers, learners, and those who have not yet taken the step to start learning, to use the Welsh language and to transfer Welsh to their children.

What is already being done?
- projects or plans that are part of the Council or partners' work, that are already being implemented, and will carry on to the period of the next strategy.

Policies and strategic work that are relevant to this field:
This subject has a specific place in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP):
"It is ensured that every Early Years setting sets a strong foundation for Welsh, ensuring that every child is given a Language, Literacy and Communication skills assessment in Welsh on entry and at the end of part-time nursery education, and at the end of the Foundation Phase."

Other projects and schemes:
The Council and other partners organises a number of activities that have been specifically aimed towards offering informal experiences to parents and infants. The libraries service, for example, hold a number of regular story and song sessions.

The local language initiative (menter iaith) also organise activities for families, and have held workshops in the past for activity and care providers in order to promote the advantages of bilingualism.

The work of *Mudiad Meithrin* and pre-school care providers is crucial here.

What else needs to addressed?
- what will we work on or hope to address during the period of the next strategy?

There is a need to increase the awareness of parents of the Welsh-medium education system and highlight the opportunities available for them to get an introduction to the Welsh language before the children reach school age.

There is also a need to ensure that every family can obtain resources - books, posters, Welsh music and information about apps and activities – so that they can introduce the Welsh language as soon as possible.

There is reason to believe that the position of *Ti a Fi* groups and *cylchoedd meithrin* are not as healthy as they used to be, and that this could be due in part to the impact of the pandemic period. The

Council and *Mudiad Meithrin* will need to work together to assess the situation carefully and consider which steps need to be taken to ensure that as many children as possible in the county take advantage of these pre-school education opportunities, and to ensure that *Ti a Fi* groups and *Cylchoedd Meithrin* receive the appropriate support to grow and thrive.

We need to consider the informal opportunities that are available to parents to practise and gain confidence in their use of the Welsh language. One idea that has been mentioned is to create opportunities that correspond with a family's busy life - such as providing chat/learning sessions while the children are in after-school lessons and clubs.

Continuing to ensure a variety of activities for young families will be crucial, by Council services and other partners in the public and community sectors. There is also a need to look at opportunities for families to be involved in activities together (activities are too often aimed towards the children, rather than being activities that include the whole family) to encourage communication and speaking amongst the whole family.

What will we measure?

1. The attainment data of WESP in terms of the number of childcare placements and the number of children receiving Welsh-medium education.

2. Number of *Ti a Fi* groups, Parent and Child groups that are supported/maintained.

3. Number of activities specifically targeted towards young families/parents and infants by Council services.

4. Number of family activities arranged by the local language initiative.

5. Number of campaigns to share resources and information.

Area of action 2: Language of Learning

Evidence base
- On what basis do we see the need to take action? What are the challenges? What do we seek to achieve?

A number of challenges have been identified in terms of Welsh-medium education in the county, including the need to ensure consistency in the implementation of the policy, the need to ensure that sufficient opportunities and encouragement are offered to pupils to follow Welsh-medium courses, and to further develop the immersion service. Ensuring study opportunities through the medium of Welsh in Post-16 education is also a specific challenge, including the need to improve the situation regarding assessment and observation through the medium of Welsh. These elements are already addressed by the Council and targets for development in these fields have been identified in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, that was published in 2022 (Welsh-in-Education-Strategic-Plan.pdf (llyw.cymru)).

Ensuring various and suitable opportunities for people of all ages to learn Welsh is key, and the Council has an important role to play in this by encouraging any members of the workforce who do not meet the language designation of their posts to improve their skills or to learn Welsh. During

2022-23, 29 staff members received the Council's support to learn Welsh through courses that had been specifically commissioned to fit around work circumstances, and a total of 83 individuals were given access to language training during the year.

We are also very aware that there is a need to develop the informal learning opportunities, alongside the formal education. Therefore, this section also encompasses **informal** learning opportunities, including community training opportunities and those more informal learning opportunities that take place as part of the Council and partners' work, such as qualifications and training for young people.

One clear challenge is the lack of Welsh language provision from national qualification and accreditation providers. We can see that the youth services and partners often have to adapt or campaign for a long time to receive provision in Welsh, instead of there being a wider understanding about the need and demand for these opportunities in Welsh.

We recognise that there is a large number of community training opportunities, especially sport clubs such as football, rugby, hockey, karate etc., that are held in Welsh, and provide completely natural and immeasurable opportunities for young people to use the Welsh language and hear it outside the classroom and formal education, but a number of these opportunities are also under threat, and a number of activities are not held through the medium of Welsh, or bilingually, due to the lack of volunteers to conduct the activities or due to leaders' lack of confidence to conduct activities in Welsh.

Schemes such as the Council's Apprenticeships Scheme, which provide learning opportunities that are associated with work, are also relevant to this field, and is an area where there have been recent challenges. A lack of Welsh-medium, or bilingual, training provision has been identified as a barrier for the apprenticeships scheme, and particularly therefore advanced apprenticeships, and is something the Council is currently seeking to address.

What is already being done?
- projects or schemes that are part of the Council or partners' work, that are already being implemented, and will carry on to the period of the next strategy.

Policies and strategic work that are relevant to this field:
The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan is implemented by the Council's Education Department, and corresponds with the priorities of the Welsh Government to develop Welsh-medium education (in accordance with Cymraeg 2050 targets). Seven priorities, or outcomes, which have been noted below, will work on increasing the number of children receiving Welsh-medium education in the county, ensuring that pupils continue to improve skills when transferring between key stages, and increasing provision and the number of pupils who follow Welsh-medium subjects.
The Scheme's 7 outcomes:
1. More nursery/3 year-old children receiving Welsh-medium education
2. More reception class/5 year-old children receiving Welsh-medium education
3. More children continuing to improve skills when transferring from one key stage to the next.
4. More learners studying Welsh as a subject and subjects through the medium of Welsh.
6. Increase opportunities to use the Welsh language in various contexts.
7. Improve Welsh-medium education provision for ALN pupils.
8. Increase the number of staff members who can speak Welsh.

One specific project has also been noted in the Council Plan, namely Modernising the Post-16 Learning Environment Project.

Other projects and schemes:
The **Learning and Development** service offers a variety of opportunities to improve skills, and they arrange courses and training to learn Welsh, to ensure that all Council staff meet, or work towards, the language designation of their posts.

The Council's **Youth Service** offers opportunities to gain occupational qualifications.

The Council's **Apprenticeships Scheme**, which provide opportunities for young people to receive work experience and nurture skills alongside the opportunity to gain qualifications in their fields.

What else requires attention?
- what will we work on or hope to address during the period of the next strategy?

As a result of the barrier identified regarding the provision of qualifications, Council officers have been attempting to persuade and encourage apprenticeship providers to offer as much of their provision as possible through the medium of Welsh. Work is under way to assess and understand the exact situation in terms of the language medium of the provision on offer, with the aim of working with providers to identify opportunities to improve the provision, to identify additional resources to offer in Welsh as well as further opportunities to promote the Welsh language.

We will encourage more Council staff to learn Welsh and to improve their verbal and writing skills.

We will continue to offer informal Welsh-medium learning opportunities for young people via the youth service work, and work to ensure that more accreditations are available for them through the medium of Welsh.

We will look at opportunities to support volunteers who are responsible for community learning and training opportunities, by working with partners such as the *Urdd* and sharing information about resources such as the Sport Vocabulary App by the *Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol*. We will discuss further collaboration opportunities with the *Coleg Cymraeg* and consider opportunities to develop language robustness skills (how not to switch to the English language by default and how to influence the use of other languages).

In terms of supporting the work of the education department and work carried out in schools:
There is a need to consider how to raise the awareness of young people, and their parents, of the value and demand for skills in Welsh in the world of work, in order to increase the incentive to study through the medium of Welsh and continue to develop robust skills in both languages.

There is also a need to consider how we can support non-Welsh speaking parents to improve their confidence in supporting their children through Welsh-medium education, and how we get rid of assumptions about "more Anglicised" education and schools.

What will we measure?
1. WESP monitoring statistics
2. Number of Council staff receiving training to improve skills
3. Number of apprenticeships being offered by the Council
4. Number of training/accreditation opportunities being offered by the youth service.

Area of action 3: The Language of Work and Services

Evidence base
- On what basis do we see the need to take action? What are the challenges? What do we seek to achieve?

The Welsh language standards place a requirement on the authority and other public bodies to offer services through the medium of Welsh.

However, evidence shows that the number of the population who use Welsh when dealing with the Council is much lower than the recorded number of speakers.

Despite imposing the Welsh Language Standards on more public bodies in recent years, as well as a wider understanding for the need to provide services in Welsh, there is still a big inconsistency in terms of the public services that are available to residents, and Cyngor Gwynedd often leads the way and stands alone when calling on others to increase and improve their Welsh language services.

The aim of the Council in this area is to look beyond service provision and examine ways to encourage the use of Welsh-medium services by the public.

We also recognise that continuous work is needed to maintain and develop the language skills of the workforce, so we can ensure that we have the suitable workforce to offer the necessary services.
A number of services are currently facing exceptional recruitment challenges and it will be essentially important that the Welsh language is addressed fairly when developing any recruitment/ workforce development plans.

Beyond the Council, obstacles still remain with the public and private sectors. A lack of use of the Welsh language by businesses and customers is having an impact on the status of the Welsh language in the community.

What is already being done?
- projects or schemes that are part of the Council or partners' work, that are already being implemented, and will carry on to the period of the next strategy.

Policies and strategic work that are relevant to this field:
More Than Just Words - improving Welsh language services in care and social services.

Other projects and schemes:
Care Plans - projects that have been identifies in the Council Plan for 2023 – 2028 that will look at improving and redesigning the Council's care services. Ensuring effective bilingual services and implementing the principle of the "proactive offer" is a key part of any work to improve this very important field.

Workforce Planning Project - this project has been included in the Council Plan for 2023 – 2028 in response to recent recruitment challenges, and again, ensuring that the workforce and the services have the necessary linguistic skills to offer the best service to the public will be a key part of the work.

The Learning and Development service offers a number of opportunities for staff to learn and develop their linguistic skills, verbally and writing skills. We have also been part of the Arfer research scheme by Bangor University, which looks at trying to change the linguistic practices of teams.

A project has also been identified by the Economy department, which aims to provide support to businesses and community enterprises to thrive and support the people of Gwynedd into work. The Arfor scheme also offers financial support for businesses to grow and develop, with an emphasis on businesses operating through the medium of Welsh, that want to develop their use of the Welsh language and that offer work opportunities to the local population.

The Council is also part of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board - working with other public bodies to improve the experience of the public when using services through the medium of Welsh.

What else requires attention?
- what will we work on or hope to address during the period of the next strategy?

We need to look at the Welsh language as a skill, and develop the understanding of people of all ages about the demand in the world of work for Welsh language skills, both oral and written.

We need to see more public bodies following the Council's example in terms of applying the proactive offer, making effective use of translation facilities in meetings and operating internally through the medium of Welsh.

We will continue to work with partners in the public sector (via the Services Board), as well as the Commissioner and the Welsh Government to see how some of these good practices can be transfered to other organisations, and also to work together to improve users' experiences.

We will trial schemes within the Council to encourage more people to use the Welsh language when using the Council's on-line services.

A number of services are currently facing exceptional recruitment challenges and it will be crucial that the Welsh language is addressed fairly when developing any recruitment/ workforce development plans.

Work to support learners and to develop the skills of the workforce will continue within the Council, with the intention of ensuring that every staff member works towards achieving the language level of their posts, and that they have appropriate writing skills to ensure that clear, standard and easy-to-read language is used when communicating and delivering services to the publis. We will also continue to participate in the Arfer scheme, by introducing the intervention in more teams and will also developing buddy schemes.

We also see that we need to re-examine the support and encouragement given to businesses to use the Welsh language, in order to ensure as much opportunities as possible for residents to use Welsh as part of their daily lives. This is an area that has prved difficult to see results over the years; and identifying the most current external support sources (such as the Welsh Language Commissioner and the Helo Blod scheme) will be important to move things forward.

We will use any opportunities that are available to the Council, such as awarding procurement contracts and offering financial support, to influence and impose linguistic conditions. Specific support will be provided to businesses and community groups through the grants of the second phase of the Arfor scheme, and conditions on developing language use will be imposed within the application process and grant conditions.   The Arfor scheme will focus on businesses operating

through the medium of Welsh, that want to develop their use of the Welsh language and that offer work opportunities to the local population.

What will we measure?
1. Number of businesses that received financial support through the Arfor scheme 2. Number of staff that receive support to learn Welsh or develop skills 3. Number of staff participating in buddy schemes

Area of action 4: The Language of the Community

Evidence base *- On what basis do we see the need to take action? What are the challenges? What do we seek to achieve?*
There have been a number of changes in recent years that have had a major impact on Gwynedd communities. We are still trying to understand the effects of the pandemic for one thing, and we also need to consider that people's habits in terms of socialising and involvement in their communities have changed. The gradual movement over the past decade or two of direct involvement in geographical communities (villages and towns) to socialising more in communities of interest, or based on children's activities, means that we are looking at "community" in a very broad manner. There are also substantial challenges to the viability of geographical communities due to lack of varied employment opportunities and pressures on the housing market, which mean that people have to move to other communities to live and work. The housing situation and outward migration are not new problems but there is a feeling that they have intensified as a result of the pandemic. There are concerns among the population about these matters and the increasing pressures on communities as a result of the tourism industry and the visitor accommodation economy, which means that the Council has had to take action to try to control the situation and has developed strategic plans to address these issues. This strategy seeks to look beyond those interventions and consider what else we can do to support the language in our communities and to encourage more people to use the language in different contexts.

What is already being done? *- projects or schemes that are part of the Council or partners' work, that are already being implemented, and will carry on to the period of the next strategy.*
Policies and strategic work that are relevant to this field: • Sustainable Visitor Economy Plan • Gwynedd Housing Action Plan 2020/21 - 2026/27 - a plan that addresses the different challenges in terms of housing in Gwynedd, with specific attention given to help Gwynedd residents to own a home in their community. • Ardal Ni 2035 - extensive consultation and engagement work was undertaken with Gwynedd communities during 2022 and 13 local regeneration plans are currently being developed to equip and support Gwynedd communities over the next 15 years.

Other projects and schemes:
- Primary Schools Welsh Language Charter
- Secondary Schools Welsh Language Strategy

These two projects deal in particular with trying to increase pupils' use of the language within the school community and look beyond the formal education.

The local language initiative, Hunaniaith, is a part of the Council's Languag Unit at present, and implements a number of projects that aims to increase the use of the Welsh language on a community level. They also organise a number of activities aimed specifically at supporting Welsh learners.

Some of the other projects by the Council that contribute to this area are:
- Arfor - a project that works specifically to develop economic opportunities in the four counties that are deemed the "strongholds" of the Welsh language.
- Place Names Project - a project that examines opportunities to promote the use of Welsh names within our communities and seeks to ensure that those names are protected.
- Gwynedd Activities Map - an interactive map that has been developed to easily and conveniently share information about Welsh-medium activities in the county.
- Various activities of services - Libraries, Youth service, LleCHI,
- The Welcome to Gwynedd Pack – which gives an introduction to the Welsh language to people moving into the area.

What else requires attention?
- what will we work on or hope to address during the period of the next strategy?

As the work on analysing the census data continues, we will also need to look at the information that we can collect from different consultations, and from the county's well-being assessment work, in order to develop an understanding of what is meant by "community" in the modern Gwynedd. Understanding our communities is key in order for us to be able to plan inclusive projects.

We will look at ways of measuring language use on a community level in order to be able to prioritise and plan interventions.

Developing opportunities for young people to use the Welsh language in various contexts will be crucial, and especially as part of the digital communities.

We will work with our partners in the Gwynedd Language Forum - Young Farmers, the *Urdd*, and representatives of community enterprises, for example - to identify opportunities to increase the number of opportunities to socialise through the medium of Welsh, and to ensure that resources are targeted in any areas where there is currently a lack of opportunities.

We will also need to see more buddy schemes and chat sessions to help and develop learners' confidence, so that they can take the step from learning in lessons to using the language in the community.

Through schemes such as Arfor, we will seek to support more community enterprises to create activities and economic plans that will benefit the communities themselves. There are a number of very successful community enterprises in Gwynedd and the Council has a key role to play in ensuring that opportunities are dispersed equally across the county, and that other communities are also supported to develop enterprises.

What will we measure?
1. Number of activities held by Council services and the language enterprise for different groups
2. Number of community enterprises supported by means of Regeneration and Economy schemes

Theme 3: Creating favourable conditions

Area of action 5: Technology and Research

Evidence base
- On what basis do we see the need to take action? What are the challenges? What do we seek to achieve??

These two fields are intentionally placed together as any developments in the field of technology depend to some extent on results of research work to understand people's language use habits.

Technology plays an increasingly prominent part in all our lives and develops rapidly.
It represents a substantial challenge for the Welsh language, as any minority language, to keep up with the continuous developments, and to find its place in this world that has so much influence on everyone's lives.

There is room to believe that people's language practices are very different when using technology as opposed to their verbal and face-to-face language use. This is due to a number of factors, including:
- technology, the internet and apps have generally been developed in English first and that people have got used to dealing with technology through the medium of English.
- the algorithms of search engines and social media often go against language choice and mean that people see the English option first, even if a Welsh language option is available.
- obstacles when developing apps often mean that people have to take additional steps to receive the Welsh service.

According to the 2021 census, the percentage of people noting that they are able to speak Welsh, but unable to read or write in Welsh, is 5.4% in Gwynedd, which is higher than the proportion of 2.3% for the whole of Wales. The percentage increases up to 10% in some areas of the county, which suggests that a great difference can exist between verbal use and written use.

Different influences on people's use of language, and specifically the increase in the influence of technology on people's lives, as well as additional factor such as the changes in people's habits due to the pandemic and the current financial downturn, mean that the picture can change in a short period of time. We need to bear this in mind when planning any interventions and when looking at the evidence base.

Although considerable research work has been undertaken in the context of the Welsh language in recent years, there are also numerous gaps, and specifically so current research into language use in different contexts and research that helps us understand the nature of the "Welsh communities", and how factors such as the economy and tourism have a direct and indirect effect on language viability.

What is already being done?

- projects or schemes that are part of the Council or partners' work, that are already being implemented, and will carry on to the period of the next strategy.

Policies and strategic work that are relevant to this field:
Other projects and schemes:
- The Council's Digital Scheme Priority Project
- Project 15 - a project seeking to create digital content in Welsh, led by the Language Unit.
- Research work in collaboration with Bangor University:
  - *A PhD has started to examine people's habits when dealing with services - in order to understand what affects choices and use*
  - *Seed funding has been secured in order to undertake a piece of work to examine the link between language and economy/tourism*
-

What else requires attention?
- what will we work on or hope to address during the period of the next strategy?

The projects noted above will continue to the period of the next strategy.

In the current strategy it was noted that the Council needs to examine projects that will encourage more people to use the Welsh language on-line and when using the Council's digital services, and consider the best ways of introducing Welsh in those contexts in order to influence use. This work had a slow start but schemes and research work are now in the pipeline by the Council in this field. The pandemic has certainly increased this challenge and has led to changes in people's habits and use of technology, and has led the Council to develop new digital services, such as systems to order services.

We will continue to develop the relationship with the academic world in order to identify research projects that will strengthen our evidence base and help us plan work that will promote and protect the Welsh language in the future.

We will consider how we can work with others to establish a central information and research fund to be, where it is possible to easily obtain relevant research work.

We will also continue to raise awareness of the Welsh-medium apps that are available, to encourage people to use more Welsh on-line.

What will we measure?
1. Number of research projects undertaken by the Council, or commissioned by the Council**.**

5.3 Monitoring and measuring

The activities outlined above will draw up the **initial** work programme for the strategy. The strategy will be reviewed regularly, and formally, at the end of the fifth year, and this will give us an opportunity to adapt and add projects when responding to circumstances and needs that may arise.

Annual data gathering arrangements have been established during the current strategy, which enable us to gather information about events and activities being held by Council services.

The Language Committee has a responsibility to monitor how Council departments implement the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards, and to contribute towards this strategy. We will also monitor the implementation of the strategy on an annual basis and submit an annual report to the Council Cabinet.