

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>LANGUAGE COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>27 June 2023</b>
<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>Gwynedd Language Strategy Consultation Results 2023</b>
<b>AUTHOR:</b>	Gwenllian Mair Williams, Language Advisor and Nia Wyn Vaughan, Senior Research and Analytics Officer
<b>PURPOSE OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>Present the initial results of the consultation from the Research and Analytics service, and invite comments from members about the potential response of the Language and Scrutiny Unit in formulating the final strategy.</b>

## **1 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Council is required, under the Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011) to produce a 5-year language strategy setting out how they propose to go about promoting and facilitating the use of Welsh within the county, and how they intend to contribute to the national objectives of the Cymraeg 2050 strategy to increase the number of Welsh speakers.
- 1.2 As the term of the current language promotion strategy period comes to an end in the autumn, we began a revision process early in 2023. Discussions were held during January with Cabinet members, Language Committee members and Gwynedd Language Forum members to gather ideas and get their input on the potential priorities and content of the strategy.
- 1.3 A consultation draft of the new strategy was produced based on those discussions and a consultation period was held on the draft strategy between **17 April and 21 from May 2023**.
- 1.4 The draft strategy was created as a follow-up to the work of the current strategy (the *Gwynedd Welsh Language Promotion Plan 2018-23*) to reflect the Council's commitment to promoting and promoting the language across the county and to meet the statutory requirements set within the Welsh Language Standards. The vision is to create an inclusive strategy that increases the use of Welsh in different contexts.

## **2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

- 2.1 A questionnaire was formulated, including a number of questions designed to gain public opinion on the content of the draft strategy, the objectives set out, and the areas of action being suggested. A copy of the consultation questions can be found in **Appendix 2**.
- 2.2 There were **159 responses** to the online consultation, and the analysis report that is being presented to the Committee in Appendix 1 reflects those responses. 1 email response was

received (which did not follow the consultation questions template) and the Language Consultants will consider the content of that response alongside the full results of the online submissions.

- 2.3 There was a good cross-section of responses from across the county. Most respondents were aged between 35 and 74. There were only 3 responses from people under 34, which is a little concerning, and we will need to consider carefully how we gather the views of this cohort of the community in future.
- 2.4 Overall, the responses to the content of the draft strategy was positive. The rate of agreement with the work streams proposed for each of the operational areas was high. 72.3% of respondents agreed with the intention to focus on increasing opportunities for people to use the Welsh language.
- 2.5 In terms of the common themes that rise from the responses, ensuring adequate and suitable opportunities for people to learn Welsh and to gain confidence to speak Welsh was a theme that appeared regularly, and in response to several questions. Less positive comments such as those that noted the Council should not use the Welsh language as a means of discrimination, and that scarce resources should not be wasted on the language were also ones that came up more than once.

### **3 NEXT STEPS**

- 3.1 The Language Consultants will now need to consider what changes or revisions should be made to the final strategy in response to some of the comments in the consultation. For example, while we identified the influence of technology as one of the main challenges facing the prosperity of the Welsh language in Gwynedd, a number of respondents also identified the influence of social media as a challenge. We will therefore need to consider how the influence of social media is highlighted and addressed under the theme of technology, and also whether there are any steps we can take to try to increase the presence of the language on social media under the different operational areas.
- 3.2 We will review the draft strategy on the basis of the consultation, and share the resulting draft with internal departments once again in order to identify the exact work streams that will meet the objectives set out, and start putting together a programme of work.
- 3.3 The final draft of the strategy is due to be submitted to the Council's Cabinet in October 2023

### **4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 Members are asked to:

- accept the summary analysis presented in Appendix 1 by the Research and Analytics Service
- offer any comments on the content and responses and offer any possible modifications to the final strategy in response to the consultation.