

# CYNGOR GWYNEDD CABINET



## Report to a meeting of the Cabinet

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| <b>Date of meeting:</b> | <b>10 October, 2023</b>  |
| <b>Cabinet Member:</b>  | <b>Councillor Menna Trenholme</b>                                      |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b> | <b>Gwenllian Williams and Llywela Haf Owain</b>                        |
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| <b>Title of Item:</b>   | <b>Gwynedd Language Strategy 2023 - 2033</b>                           |

### 1. THE DECISION SOUGHT

To support the adaptations made to the Language Strategy as a result of the public consultation and recommend to the full Council that they adopt the strategy.

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### 2. REASONS FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

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The next language strategy for Gwynedd is expected to be published by the end of 2023.

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### 3. INTRODUCTION

3.1 There is a statutory requirement on the Council, as a part of the Welsh Language Standards, (Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011), to draw-up a 5-year strategy outlining the Council's vision for promoting the use of the language in the county, and how it proposes to contribute to the national Cymraeg 2050 aims to increase the number of Welsh speakers.

3.2 Since the current promotion strategy ends in October, the review process was commenced early in 2023. During January, discussion sessions were held with Cabinet members, Language Committee members and members of the Gwynedd

Language Forum, in order to collect ideas and gain their input regarding the possible content of the strategy.

3.3 A consultation draft of the new strategy was drawn up based on the discussions held during the consultation period on the draft strategy between **17 April and 21 May 2023**.

3.4 This draft strategy has therefore been created as a follow-up to the work of the current strategy (*Welsh Language Promotion Plan for Gwynedd 2018-23*) in order to reflect the Council's commitment to promote 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 seeks to increase the use of the Welsh language in various contexts.

#### **4. SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS OF THE CONSULTATION**

4.1 A questionnaire was drawn up that asked several questions in order to gather the opinions of the public on the draft strategy's content, the aims noted, and the action areas that were implied.

4.2 **159 responses** were received to the on-line consultation, and the analysis report that has been presented in **Appendix 1** reflects those responses. 1 response was received via e-mail (that did not follow the consultation question's template).

4.3 There was a good cross-section of responses from every part of the county. Most of the responders were between 35-74 years of age. There were only 3 responses from people under 34 years of age, which is a little concerning, and we will need to carefully consider how we gather opinions from this age group in the future.

4.4 Generally, the response to the draft strategy's content was good. The rate of agreement for the work streams to be implemented for every field is high. 72.3% of responders agreed with the proposal to increase opportunities for people to use the Welsh language.

4.5 In terms of the common themes raised in the responses, ensuring sufficient and appropriate opportunities for people to learn Welsh and to foster confidence when speaking Welsh was a theme that arose regularly, and in response to many questions. There were fewer positive comments such as that the Council should not use Welsh as a means of discrimination, and that we shouldn't waste scarce resources on the Welsh language were themes that arose more than once.

4.6 A concise analysis of the consultation was presented to the Language Committee on 27 June and members were given an opportunity to offer any comments on the content and responses and for any possible adaptations to the final strategy in response to the consultation.

## **5. ADJUSTMENTS**

5.1 Although numerous comments were received in the questionnaires, the recommendations or practical ideas offered to be added to the final strategy were scarce. Adra proposed a specific offer to collaborate on their Community Strategy, and a further discussion will be held before a target is added to the work programme. Therefore, only minor adjustments have been made to the strategy.

5.2 Changes have been made to section 4.2 (that has been renamed from the draft from Challenges to Influence on language use) to respond to the importance put on some matters in the consultation. We felt that there was a need to give specific attention to people's attitudes, and to the economic challenges impacting the use of the Welsh language. It was decided that including these was more important than the pieces about demographic challenges and the Evidence Basis in terms of the comments in the consultation.

5.3 The main adaptation made as a result of the consultation was to give more attention to technology under every action area since numerous people noted it as a challenge in every area. Although we had intended for technology to refer to the entire span of ways that technology is a part of our lives, from self-service,

apps to internet and social media usage, it appears that this was not totally clear in the consultation draft and many responders had noted the influence of social media as a challenge and so there will be a need to consider if there are any specific steps we can take to try and increase the presence of Welsh on social media whilst developing the work programme.

## **6. IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING THE STRATEGY**

- 6.1 An initial work programme has been drawn up for the strategy which reflects some of the plans that are currently being implemented to address the objectives. This will be a live work programme, with projects and targets being added as and when they are identified, and as further discussions are held with services and partners. It will be necessary to ensure that there is sufficient budget to implement the work programme's projects and to submit bids for funding when it is appropriate to do so through the corporate bidding system. The work programme will be reviewed regularly. We expect that departments will report on their contributions as a part of their annual reports to the Language Committee and will share data with the Language and Scrutiny Unit at the end of the financial year. The Language and Scrutiny Unit will update the Cabinet on the work programme's progress and implementation of the Strategy as a part of their annual reports regarding the language field.

## **7. THE RATIONALE AND JUSTIFICATION FOR RECOMMENDING THE DECISION**

- 7.1 Before presenting the strategy to the full Council we are eager to obtain the Cabinet's comments on the adaptations that have been made to the language strategy thus far.

### **7.2 Impact Assessment**

An impact assessment has been written for the strategy which identifies a positive effect on the people of Gwynedd. The assessment acknowledges the possibility that some resident might feel that they are proving a negative effect, particularly relating to race and disability characteristics, and it also notes how the strategy tries to ensure an equal opportunity for all residents of Gwynedd to see, learn and use the Welsh language. The assessment notes that there are some gaps in the evidence base, mainly as a result of no impact assessments

being available on some of the projects included in the Council Plan, and because the 2021 Census data has not yet been fully analysed. It also notes that there is a gap in the evidence base due to a lack of response from young people to the consultation.

### 7.3 Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act places a 'well-being duty' on public bodies aimed at achieving 7 national well-being goals for Wales - a Wales that is prosperous, resilient, healthier, more equal, has cohesive communities, a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language and is globally responsible. The recommendations have been prepared having regard to these requirements and in accordance with the 5 ways of working.

### 7.4 Equalities Act 2010

The Council is subject to public sector duties under the Equalities Act 2010 (including specific Welsh public sector duties). Pursuant to these legal duties Councils must in making decisions have due regard to the need to (1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) foster good relations on the basis of protected characteristics and having due regard to the socio economic duty under Section 1 of the Act. An equalities impact assessment has been prepared and is appended at Appendix 1. The Cabinet will need to have regard to its findings when coming to a decision. The assessment does not identify any particular negative impacts stemming from the decision.

## **8. NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE**

8.1 If the Cabinet gives its approval to the amended strategy, we will share the final draft with internal departments in order to identify the exact work streams that will answer the objectives and create an initial work programme.

It is hoped that the final strategy will be submitted to a meeting of the full Council on 7 December.

## **9. VIEWS OF STATUTORY OFFICERS:**

### **i. The Monitoring Officer:**

I am satisfied with the propriety of the decision sought.

**ii. Head of Finance Department:**

I have no comment on the content of the Strategy from the perspective of financial propriety.

Paragraph 6.1 of the report refers to the resources available in the future to support the Strategy; specific arrangements are in place at the Council to submit bids for additional resources and I expect that any requests for resources to support the Language Strategy will be submitted in accordance with those arrangements.

**Appendices attached to this report:**

Appendix 1: Analysis of the Language Strategy Consultation

Appendix 2: Language Strategy 2023 - 2033

Appendix 3: Language Strategy Impact Assessment

Appendix 4: Initial Strategy Implementation Programme