



GWYNEDD COUNCIL WELSH LANGUAGE POLICY 2016

INTRODUCTION

This Policy is published in accordance with Gwynedd Council's priorities and the requirements placed upon the Council under the Welsh Language Standards, Section 4 Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011.

The purpose of the Policy is to note how the Council and its staff will plan and provide to ensure that all of its services meet the need of the local population from a linguistic perspective. It will also serve as a means to ensure the Council's compliance with the Welsh Language Standards.

DECLARATION OF BASIC PRINCIPLES

- Promoting the use of the Welsh language is one of the Council's improvement objectives. The Council Strategic Plan notes that the aim is to see:

"The people of Gwynedd [are] taking advantage of opportunities to use the Welsh language in the community, the workplace and in accessing public services.

The Council's services promote the Welsh language amongst residents and residents take advantage of those opportunities to use the Welsh language."

In addition, this Policy seeks to ensure that:

- The Council will operate according to the basic principle set out in the Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011, of treating the Welsh and English languages as equal, giving both languages equal status and validity.
- All residents of Gwynedd are able to use the services of the Council through the medium of Welsh and English, and that steps are taken to ensure that the language choice of the user is noted and respected at all times.
- A responsibility is placed upon **all** Council officials and Members to promote the Welsh language in all parts of their work.
- The Council has made a commitment to the Gwynedd Welsh Language Strategy, along with hunaniaith, Gwynedd's language initiative (Menter Iaith), to promote the language and increase opportunities for the residents of Gwynedd to use the Welsh language. The long term aim is to increase the number of Welsh-speakers in the county.

- All external bodies are encouraged to communicate with the Council through the medium of Welsh, or bilingually.
- Any external bodies or businesses that provide services on behalf of the Council are expected to do so in accordance with the Welsh Language Standards that are placed on the Council. Expectations will be clearly expressed in service level agreements and proper monitoring procedures will be put in place.
- The Welsh language is an element within the Equality Improvement Framework for Wales, a tool developed by the Welsh Local Government Association to facilitate the link between equality and the Welsh language and the structures of the Wales Programme for Improvement. Gwynedd Council has committed to the Framework and to the goal of mainstreaming the Welsh language throughout all its work and procedures

WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS IN THE WEORK OF THE COUNCIL

SERVICE PROVISION

This section deals with the way the Council intends to comply with some of the Service Provision Standards and ensure that there is efficient bilingual communication with the public at all times.

1. Written correspondence

- 1.1 Any member of the public is free to correspond with the Council in Welsh or English; and all personal correspondence shall be answered in the language in which it was sent, be that by letter or email.
- 1.2 Letters, in whatever language, shall receive a reply in accordance with the corporate targets for replying to letters - an acknowledgement at least within 7 working days and a full reply within 15 working days.
- 1.3 After speaking face to face or over the phone in Welsh, any resulting correspondence will be in the language of the original conversation, or in the language chosen by the member of the public.
- 1.4 When a Council officer starts corresponding with any individual, association or company in the form of a formal letter or email, they will write that correspondence bilingually. Writing in Welsh only is permitted if the officer knows that the recipient can read and respond in Welsh as well.
- 1.5 Correspondence with any public bodies and any devolved bodies in Wales must be in Welsh only. If another public body, which is also subject to the Welsh Language Standards (in particular other local authorities and the Welsh Government) sends English only correspondence, officers should ask for a

Welsh or bilingual copy before responding in Welsh only. If Welsh-language correspondence is not received after requesting it, the response to the correspondence should be in Welsh and the Language Unit should be informed.

- 1.6 The accuracy of any correspondence sent should be ensured. Staff are encouraged to use the Welsh version of Windows and CySill and follow the *Cymraeg Clir* guidelines.

2. Communicating by phone

- 2.1 Any member of the public will be able to access Welsh medium or English medium services when they contact the Council over the phone.
- 2.2 Each member of frontline staff and every automated answering system – in the Headquarters, regional offices, and other public offices – will answer phone calls bilingually (in Welsh first and then in English) and in a courteous and welcoming manner.
- 2.3 The vast majority of Council staff who receive direct phone calls from the public will be able to deal with those calls in Welsh. If the member of public starts the conversation in Welsh, but the officer who answers cannot speak Welsh fluently enough to deal with the matter fully in Welsh, then they should explain that to the member of public and offer to transfer the call to an officer who will be able to deal with the call in the language choice of the caller. If the officer who answers the call is learning Welsh, they are encouraged to practise their skills to the best of their ability.
- 2.4 Automated messages on Council answering machines will be fully bilingual, with the message heard in Welsh first, and then in English.

3. Meetings

- 3.1 The Council will ensure that every meeting arranged by the Council is held through the medium of Welsh. Simultaneous translation will be provided where appropriate to facilitate this.
- 3.2 It should be ensured that any individual invited to a meeting in the Council offices are made aware that all internal meetings in the Council are conducted in Welsh. An opportunity should be given for them to specify if they wish to contribute through the medium of Welsh or English, and it shall be the responsibility of the Council officers to arrange for simultaneous translation if it is needed to ensure that the meeting can be held through the medium of Welsh.
- 3.3 If an individual attends a meeting relating to welfare, and that they wish to discuss matters through the medium of Welsh, that meeting **must** be held in the language of their choice. It is the responsibility of the Council to ensure that all staff attending the meeting can speak Welsh, and if they cannot, that

simultaneous translation is provided to ensure that the presence of non-Welsh speakers does not impede the ability of individuals (and officers) who wish to contribute through the medium of Welsh to do so. The language of the meeting SHOULD NOT be changed for the convenience of the officers present.

- 3.4 In accordance with the aim of the Council, every effort will be made to ensure that bilingual staff are available at all times that can complete the task in hand through the medium of Welsh or English. As the vast majority of Council staff are already Welsh-speakers, a situation should not arise where the language of a meeting with a member of the public is changed to English.

4. Public Meetings

- 4.1 Any individual can contribute to public meetings arranged by the Council in Welsh or English, and simultaneous translation will be provided to facilitate that.
- 4.2 When a public meeting, hearing or inquiry is organised by the Council, officers will conduct and lead the meetings through the medium of Welsh. Simultaneous translation will be provided into English.
- 4.3 It is expected that the leading officer or Chair of any meetings will draw attention to translation services at the beginning of any meeting, and encourage attendees to use the equipment to facilitate language choice.
- 4.4 The person responsible for arranging the meeting will also be responsible for ensuring that it is made clear in any agenda, invitation or advertisement in connection with the meeting, that the meeting will be held through the medium of Welsh, and that translation services will be available.
- 4.5 All documentation related to public meetings should be bilingual.
- 4.6 Council officers are expected to contribute in Welsh in any externally-arranged public meetings, committees and conferences organised by other authorities or bodies, and they are encouraged to ask for simultaneous translation services if needed.

5. Publications and Written Materials

(Note: This part of the Policy deals with any material written and published by the Council and made available to members of the public. This includes any forms and explanatory materials, press releases, public notices, and any materials relating to exhibitions, publicity campaigns and consultations, be they published on paper or electronically.)

- 5.1 All documents shared with the public in the name of the Council, be that produced internally or by an external body or establishment will give the same

status to the Welsh and the English language. At the same time, the Council will always try to reflect the fact that the Welsh language is the operational language of the Council and the natural language of most of the population.

- 5.2 Any written material intended for public use, and written by the Council itself will be provided bilingually. This includes written printed material and materials published electronically.
- 5.3 Any leaflets or letters sent to the citizens bilingually will be placed in the envelopes in a way which seeks to ensure that the Welsh language is seen first when opening the envelopes.
- 5.4 If officers share written materials by other bodies (either as printed documents or by referencing other sources of information, such as websites) it is expected that the officers make every effort to ensure that the material in question is available bilingually. If the documents are shared as part of consultation work, and that the external establishment cannot provide bilingual copies, arrangements must be made to translate them internally before making those documents public.
- 5.5 The Council will ensure that any written materials are consistent in their format and style, in both Welsh and English, and that both languages will be equal in size, form, quality and clarity. This includes ensuring that any materials are comprehensible and easy for the public to read, and that they follow the principles of Cymraeg Clir / Plain English.
- 5.6 All materials will be published bilingually whenever possible, on the same page or in the same document (as appropriate).
- 5.7 If it is necessary for any reason (e.g. size of the document) for the Council to publish Welsh and English versions separately, they will be published at the same time and be available together wherever they will be available to view.
- 5.8 The Welsh language will be given priority in any written material, forms, posters or public notices. The Welsh version will be above the English version or the Welsh on the left and the English on the right.
- 5.9 All signs erected by the Council in any public spaces which are under Council responsibility will be bilingual, with the Welsh version appearing first and then the English following underneath.
- 5.10 This policy shall also include literature of other bodies and companies which is from time to time displayed in the Council's buildings. The only exception will be materials from bodies whose main aim is to promote Welsh language and culture.
- 5.11 All Council press releases or statements to the media shall be fully bilingual.
- 5.12 All replies to enquiries from the press or the media shall be in Welsh or

English, dependent on the language of the reporter concerned.

- 5.13 All resources used for raising awareness and marketing in order to promote and attract investment into the area will note and recognise the importance of the language.
- 5.14 Any marketing campaigns carried out by or on behalf of the Council shall be completely bilingual. This includes exhibitions, information stalls and conferences. This means that any publicity, advertising and research work will be conducted bilingually.

The only exception to the above will be:

- a) activities which are aimed at ventures that primarily support the Welsh language, e.g. the Urdd Eisteddfod and the National Eisteddfod.
 - b) in the case of radio or television programmes, the language of the advertisements or information bulletin shall depend on the channel or station in question. In the case of channels or stations received in Wales (whether the medium is Welsh or English), they shall be bilingual. On the other hand, in the case of channels or stations received mainly in England, broadcasts shall be in English only.
 - c) leaflets mainly aimed at the market beyond Wales. They will be Welsh in tone and make use of the Welsh language. Any department of the Council can get advice from the Language Unit about the need to provide bilingual materials or not in this context.
 - ch) All public advertisements published in the Welsh media will appear in Welsh only.
- 5.15 All advertisements and publicity on behalf of another party which appear on the Council's property, land or buildings will be expected to follow the above guidelines. Where there is an agreement between another party and the Council for use of the Council's property, land or buildings, there will be a condition to this effect in the agreement, including associated publicity (e.g. posters, advertisements).

The Council's Online Presence

- 5.16 Any material published electronically will follow the guidelines noted for written material in this policy, and will be published bilingually.
- 5.17 Any websites and apps developed by the Council will give priority to the Welsh language, and will navigate the user to the Welsh page first where possible, and will allow ease of movement between the corresponding pages in Welsh and English.
- 5.18 Any social media accounts (such as Facebook and Twitter) will follow the guidelines provided by the Communication Unit and will present information

bilingually, with the Welsh language appearing first at all times.

6. Reception

- 6.1 All members of the public shall be able to access a fully bilingual service in every one of the Council's public receptions. This means that all customer advisers and receptionists in leisure centres and schools etc. will be able to communicate effectively in both Welsh and English.
- 6.2 Signs will be displayed in the Council receptions and any public service points that will note clearly that a bilingual service is available. This is to ensure that clause 1.3 of this policy is operated effectively and naturally.
- 6.3 Staff in receptions and public service points are encouraged, where appropriate, to wear badges and/or lanyards to make it clear to the public where there are Welsh speakers or learners who can provide a fully bilingual service.

7. Grants

- 7.1 Grants or benefits given to a sector, group or individual will be used as one tool to promote the use of Welsh and bilingualism locally. This can also be a means of supporting bilingualism visually.
- 7.2 When providing a grant or benefit to any organisation or community group, the Council will ask for an explanation of how they will provide a bilingual service with the grant, setting terms in accordance with the needs of the application.
- 7.3 The Council will expect organisations, groups, bodies and individuals providing services for the business community locally to do so bilingually.
- 7.4 The Council will expect any such businesses and organisations to show a commitment to the Welsh language and to operate according to the same standards as the Council.
- 7.5 By offering a grant to businesses, the Council will automatically encourage those businesses to use the Welsh language as a marketing tool.
- 7.6 All communication relating to the allocation of grants or service tenders will be in Welsh and English.
- 7.7 Any interviews conducted in relation to grants or tenders will need to be held in the preferred language of the applicant. It will be the responsibility of the Council officer to ensure that translation services are arranged if needed to ensure that language choice is respected.
- 7.8 Any contract relating to the allocation of grants to businesses will include a clause that will refer to the Council's language policy and specify the responsibility on each party to use the Welsh language in a constructive and appropriate way.

8. Joint Provision and Outsourcing Services

- 8.1 Arrangements for the joint provision and joint funding of services, as well as outsourcing, are of key importance to the future and an area which the Council will increasingly be required to develop. As structures and agreements with others are developed, the Council will protect and ensure the needs of the people of Gwynedd in terms of bilingual services.
- 8.2 We will take advantage of all opportunities to raise awareness of the importance and raise the profile of the Welsh language within the County among our joint-providers and to work together to provide better bilingual services.
- 8.3 Any provider agreements will refer to this policy and will contain clauses which will note clearly the requirements and expectations on external providers in order to ensure compliance with the requirements of this policy,
- 8.4 When drafting and reviewing joint provision and funding contracts, the Council will ensure compliance with this policy to ensure that there is no deterioration in the bilingual provision. We will monitor contracts to ensure compliance.
- 8.5 If a service is outsourced, or a contract/tender awarded to provide a service in a building owned by the Council they will be expected to operate to the same standards as set out in this policy and every effort will be made to ensure that the business or service is provided through the medium of Welsh, as well as English, including offering advice and support.
- 8.6 The Council works in partnership with public bodies, the voluntary sector and other agencies. It works on several levels in co-operation and thus:-
 - i. When the Council leads a partnership, strategically and operationally, it will ensure that the public service meets the Language Policy's requirements.
 - ii. When the Council participates in a partnership which another organisation leads, the input of the Council to that partnership will conform with the language policy, and the Council will encourage the same from other partners.
 - iii. When the Council is part of a consortia, it will encourage the consortia to adopt a language policy. When working in the public domain in the name of the consortia, the Council will operate within the Language Policy.
 - iv. When the Council joins or formulates a partnership, it will ask the proposed partners for their language policy or the way in which they will work bilingually. As a part of each partnership, the Council will provide guidance to other parties who are part of the partnership.

- 8.7 The Council will be able to support the above, by offering for example, guidance on bilingualism and hiring translation equipment.

9. Volunteers

- 9.1 If volunteers are used to provide services or activities on behalf of the Council, it should be ensured that they are also aware of the need to provide services bilingually and that bilingual volunteers are recruited where possible. If volunteers are recruited who are non-Welsh-speakers, an officer or a manager from the Council must ensure that this does not affect the service's ability to offer the activity bilingually.
- 9.2 If volunteers are recruited for the long-term (more than a single activity) it should be ensured that an element of awareness or confidence raising regarding the Welsh language should be included in any training within the role.

POLICY MAKING

10. New Policies and Initiatives

- 10.1 It should be ensured that any new plans, initiatives or policies adopted by the Council conform to the requirements of this Policy and promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language. Reference shall be made to this policy where relevant in any of the Council's other plans, initiatives or policies. Also, an assessment will be undertaken of the likely linguistic effects of any policy or new initiative in preparing it and the effect of any policy or initiative adopted by the Council will be assessed in monitoring that policy or initiative.
- 10.2 In the same way the measures of this policy will be applied as new policies and initiatives are implemented. This will be achieved by an objective assessment of the obligations.
- 10.3 Service Managers will ensure that full consideration is given to the possible effects on the Welsh language of any new policy decisions, or any changes or adaptations to existing policies. Assessments will be conducted where appropriate to ensure that no new policies have an adverse or negative effect on the sustainment of the Welsh language in Gwynedd.
- 10.4 Any research or consultation conducted in relation to new policies will be required to pay adequate attention to the possible effects of any decisions on the Welsh language.
- 10.5 The Welsh language should be considered alongside any other equality matter in creating new policies.

INTERNAL OPERATIONS

This section deals with the way in which the Council will comply with the Operational Standards and go beyond what is stated in the Standards to ensure that the internal operations of the Council remain through the medium of Welsh.

- 11.1 The internal democratic process of the Council will be conducted through the medium of Welsh. This means that the Welsh language will always be given priority in internal operations.
- 11.2 The Council intranet will be in Welsh only, as well as staff information bulletins and emails. English versions of the information bulletins will be provided as an attachment to the email.
- 11.3 In order to enable the Council to operate in accordance with this policy, it will be necessary that the Council's staff are able to communicate effectively in Welsh and English to a standard which is appropriate to the requirements of the post in order that they may fulfil their responsibilities.
- 11.4 The Council wishes to co-operate with its staff in order to achieve that situation and it recognises that it will be necessary to be flexible in achieving that aim. Similarly the Council expects its staff to show commitment and to co-operate in achieving that aim.
- 11.5 Translation support will be offered, from English to Welsh, and vice versa wherever needed, to ensure that no member of staff who is less confident or less able in either language is put at a disadvantage.
- 11.6 In order to ensure compliance with this Policy and the Welsh Language Standards, an annual assessment will be undertaken of the language skills of Council staff.

12. Staff Policies

- 12.1 All matters relating to employment and essential matters such as Health and Safety will be available in Welsh and English.
- 12.2 All members of staff shall be able to present complaints through the medium of Welsh or English, and all cases should be dealt with in the preferred language of the member of staff.
- 12.3 All members of staff will have the right to deal with any disciplinary issues or any other employment, working condition, or performance issues through Welsh or English, as they chose.

13. Training

- 13.1 The Council will provide in-job training opportunities to enable staff to develop their language skills in both English and Welsh.
- 13.2 Staff are encouraged to develop their language skills further and they will be released from their work, if needed, to learn Welsh or to improve their skills.

The Council will provide training for staff on many levels and provide funding for any relevant training.

- 13.3 It will be the responsibility of Line Managers to encourage staff to attend training and to assess the need for language improvement training within their teams.
- 13.4 Language awareness training will be provided for all staff members, that will raise awareness about the importance of the Welsh language and its history.
- 13.5 In providing for members of staff to develop the language skills appropriate to the requirements of their posts, training and appropriate support will be prepared and provided for the individual. This training and support will be based on a detailed assessment of his or her needs following the appointment to the post. It is appreciated that the ability to develop linguistic skills will vary from officer to officer and the Council will take this into consideration in assessing them.
- 13.6 There will also be an opportunity for elected members wishing to improve their linguistic skills to join the Council's language classes.
- 13.7 The Dafydd Orwig Memorial Prize is presented annually to learners in order to acknowledge the efforts of staff who have made particular progress over the past twelve months. The prize also acknowledges the work and contribution of Mentors.

14. Recruiting / Job Advertisement

- 14.1 The Council will adopt a Language Skills Strategy to support this Language Policy.
- 14.2 When advertising posts the Council will declare that post-holders will be required to be able to communicate through the medium of Welsh and English to the level required for the post.
- 14.3 All posts within the Council will be given a language level appropriate to the requirements of that post. It will be essential for the holders of designated posts to be able to fully meet these language requirements from the start of their employment in that post.
- 14.4 For some posts it may be possible for post-holders to develop the necessary skills to reach the required standard for the post over time. If it is not possible to appoint an officer who fully meets the language requirements, the Council will consider whether it would be appropriate to appoint an applicant who possesses the other skills that are relevant to the post in question and who shows a commitment to develop the linguistic skills up to a practical level. In these cases, the Council will provide the assistance that is required to do so and there will be an agreement between the Council, as the employer, and the post-holder, regarding a development programme suitable for the post and the individual, with progress against that programme monitored as part of the

officer's continuous evaluation arrangements.

- 14.5 The Line Manager and the appointee will be fully aware of the implications of the post's language level by reference to the language framework. Where the language framework is not sufficiently detailed, it will be necessary to set linguistic targets which match the level in the framework and which agree with the post's requirements. The Workforce Development Officer/Language Coordinator can help with this. The framework is used as a basis for setting the specific language requirements of the post.
- 14.6 Every staff recruitment advertisement published by the Council will be bilingual, with the exception of:-
- a) Welsh Only:
Advertisements published in Welsh-medium magazines and newspapers
 - b) In Welsh but with a short explanatory note in English:
Advertisements published in English-medium magazines and newspapers for posts:
 - where it is essential for the post-holder to fully meet the language requirements of the post from the commencement of employment in that post
 - where it is not essential for the post-holder to fully meet the language requirements of the post from the commencement of employment; this will be the case until evidence is available to show that appointing an officer who fully meets the language requirements is not possible
- 14.7 The vast majority of the Council's staff are bilingual but when appointed there will be some who are not able to speak Welsh. Every Department of the Council is expected to make internal arrangements so that correspondence sent by non-Welsh speaking members of staff is translated before being sent and that should usually be done internally without referring the correspondence to be translated by the Council's translators. The translators will be available to assist when necessary with long, complicated or technical correspondence.

RECORD-KEEPING

- 15.1 The Council welcomes any complaints regarding compliance with our Language Policy and the Welsh Language Standards as evidence of performance and an opportunity to improve.
- 15.2 We will deal with each language complaint according to the Council's corporate standards.
- 15.3 The Language Unit is responsible for monitoring language complaints and they are regularly reported to the Language Committee. The Unit will follow the procedure of reporting formally on any complaints made that have been dealt with in full, and informally on complaints that are still to be investigated or resolved.

- 15.4 When a complaint is not immediately reported to the Language Unit all Council Services are expected to note any language complaints and then report them to the Language Unit either as they arise or as part of their report for the annual Welsh Language Monitoring Report.
- 15.5 Any complaints relating to the Language Policy or the Council's compliance with the Welsh Language Standards (2015) will be reported to the Language Commissioner annually.

Monitoring and Reporting

The Council will report annually on its compliance with the Language Standards to the Welsh Language Commissioner. The implementation of this policy will be reviewed annually and adapted as required.