

Conwy County Borough Council's
Welsh Language Strategy
2017-2022

prepared under the remit of
The Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011
and the
Welsh Language Standards 2015

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1. Foreword

Conwy County Borough Council's first Welsh Language Scheme was approved by the Welsh Language Board on 23rd July, 1997, and was revised on 14th May, 2004 and then on 23rd April 2009.

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 replaced the Welsh Language Act 1993 and as part of the new legislation, in Wales the Welsh language has equal legal status with English and must not be treated less favourably. In turn, the Welsh Language Standards 2015 replaced the Council's Welsh Language Scheme.

As part of the Welsh Language Standards, local authorities in Wales must produce a Welsh Language Strategy that sets out how they will promote the use of the Welsh language and increase the number of Welsh speakers in their area.

It is our pleasure to introduce Conwy County Borough Council's Welsh Language Strategy for the next five years. This strategy outlines the Council's proposed approach towards promoting the Welsh Language and facilitating its use within the county. This document will be revised and monitored continuously over the next five years. At the end of the five years, the Council will publish a revised version of the Strategy.

This Welsh Language Strategy has been developed around the vision of working to ensure that the Welsh language thrives in Conwy communities, as well as within our own organisation. It builds on our past successes, meets the needs of the Welsh speakers and learners in the county borough, meets the legislative requirements and most importantly, is meaningful, appropriate and achievable for everyone involved.

This draft is also based around the six themes identified nationally in the Welsh Government's Welsh Language Strategy: 'A living language: a language for living' and also makes reference to the Welsh Government's new strategy on ensuring a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

Long term linguistic planning and the drawing-up of a language strategy are not easy tasks. Economic and social circumstances can change quickly and population movements – in and out of the county – mean that the crucial factors and therefore the relevant data become out-of-date quickly.

Though it is the Council's duty to publish the strategy, it cannot implement and deliver all the requirements alone. By consulting and working with many local partners, other organisations, schools, individuals, we believe that we can successfully promote the Welsh language and support its continuing success in the county borough.

The challenge ahead is an enormous one, but by setting a strong vision, we are confident that we will be able to successfully promote the Welsh language in the county.

2. Legislation and National Policy

The Welsh Language Act 1993 established the principle that the Welsh and English languages are equal in public life in Wales. The main terms of the Act were:

- to place a duty on the public sector to treat the Welsh and English languages equally when providing services to the public (to be achieved via the introduction of language schemes),
- to give the right to use the Welsh language in a court of law in Wales ,
- to establish the Welsh Language Board.

Eighteen years later, a further legislation appeared: the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 secured an official status for the Welsh language in Wales, and created a new legislative framework for the language, as well as creating the post of the Welsh Language Commissioner.

The Welsh Language Commissioner has a responsibility to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language, working on the basic principle that Welsh should not be treated less favourably than English in Wales. The Commissioner also has the powers to investigate any public sector body for non-compliance with the standards. The Standards in Conwy were introduced on 30 March 2016 and replaced the previous Welsh Language Scheme that was in place.

The Measure also created a range of Welsh language standards, and places a duty on organisations to satisfy the demands of those standards. During the lifetime of this Strategy these standards will gradually replace the existing system of Language Schemes.

The Welsh Government has also set a national target to increase the number of Welsh speakers to a million by 2050. The Government has stated that in Wales we need to get to a position where the Welsh language is a perfectly natural element of all aspects of everyday life. If we want to achieve that, the whole nation has to be part of the discussion – fluent Welsh speakers, Welsh speakers who are reluctant to use the language, new speakers who have learned the language, or people who do not count themselves as Welsh speakers.

3. The Welsh language in Conwy County Borough – The Current Situation

During the twentieth century, there was a continual decline in the number and strength of communities throughout Wales which used the Welsh language as their main daily medium of communication.

The decline in the number of communities which had previously been more or less entirely Welsh speaking during recent decades can be attributed to the following factors:

- failure to transfer the language in the family,
- lack of Welsh-language social opportunities,
- outward migration of young people,
- lack of job opportunities,
- lack of housing and affordable housing,
- inward migration of non-Welsh-speaking populations.

The Census supplies the main source of data for analysing the current position of the Welsh language, enabling us to make direct comparisons between the data from previous decades. The most up-to-date information regarding the Welsh language in Conwy County Borough is that of the 2011 Census. We have drawn on the information gathered by the 2011 Census as the baseline for the draft Strategy, in order to determine an achievable target increase in Welsh.

The percentage of Welsh speakers in Conwy has declined slightly since 1991:

	1991	2001	2011
Percentage of Welsh speakers in Conwy	30.6%	29.4%	27.4%

Between 2001 and 2011, the percentage of Welsh speakers dropped by 2%. This equates to a population figure of 442 people.

In 2011, the wards that had the highest and lowest percentage of Welsh speakers were as follows:

Ward Name	%
Uwch Aled	70.8%
Llangernyw	68.5%
Gower	63.5%
Llansannan	63.0%
Uwch Conwy	60.7%
Rhiw	16.7%
Gogarth	16.0%
Abergele Pensarn	11.6%
Kinmel Bay	11.5%
Tywyn	10.8%

The former Welsh Government Strategy Iaith Pawb aimed to increase the number of people who spoke Welsh by 5%. Their new vision of having a million Welsh speakers by 2050 is a very aspirational target which will be a challenge for Welsh Government and its partners to achieve.

4. Our Vision

This is Conwy County Borough Council's first Welsh Language Strategy. Our desire is to see the Welsh language thrive in Conwy.

Our ambition for the next five years is to halt the decline and increase the number of Welsh speakers in Conwy. As a result, we are proposing to increase the number of Welsh speakers in Conwy by 2% over the next five years, with a view to considering a longer term target to increase the number of Welsh speakers over the next 15 years. We aim to achieve this through working with partners on the following strategic areas.

5. Strategic Area 1: The Family

Vision:	Promoting use of the Welsh language within the Family.
Desired Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the number of families where the Welsh language is spoken with children.
Strategic Priorities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with partners to extend regular informal opportunities for parents to develop their Welsh language skills so as to assist their children to acquire and gain confidence in their ability to use the Welsh language. • Create a consistent message across the sector, in order to promote the benefits of transferring the Welsh language within the family and of allowing children to acquire the Welsh language. ▪ Raise awareness about the importance and availability of providing Welsh-medium activities for families.
Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of children, in primary school reception classes, who are learning Welsh. • Number of events run by the Council and partner organisations for the family where Welsh can be used as part of a family activity.
Existing legislation, policies, plans or strategies:	The Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations. 2015, Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, More than Just Words

No.	Action	Date
5.1	Promote Welsh language organisations such as Menter Iaith Conwy, the Urdd, Mudiad Meithrin, Family Information Service and their various activities for the family.	
5.2	Promote Welsh medium education.	

6. Strategic Area 2: Children and Young People

Vision:	Increase the use of the Welsh language amongst children and young people, improve their awareness of the value of Welsh through accessing Welsh-medium education, social events and services.
Desired Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people increasingly speak Welsh as part of their everyday routine, improve potential career prospects and realise the value of the language. • More leisure and youth activities held through the medium of Welsh. • More learners studying for qualifications through the medium of Welsh.
Strategic Priorities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support educators (teachers, youth workers etc.) to promote the extra-curricular activities available through the medium of Welsh, in order to increase the social use of the Welsh language. • Work with young people to raise their awareness of the Welsh language as a valuable skill for training and employment, especially in Years 10-13. • Raise awareness amongst staff that come into contact with children and young people of the need to foster positive attitudes towards the Welsh language. • Increase the number of children accessing Welsh medium education. • Develop bilingual leadership skills amongst young people to help them develop to become champions of the language within their communities.
Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More primary school children receiving their education through the medium of Welsh. • More pupils continually improving and using their Welsh language skills in secondary school. • More 16-19 year old students studying through the medium of Welsh and realising the benefits of doing so in the longer term in regards to job opportunities.
Existing legislation, policies, plans or strategies:	The Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations. 2015, Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

No.	Action	Date
6.1	Audit current Welsh medium opportunities and services for children and young people in order to identify gaps and areas of high demand.	
6.2	Promote and work with Welsh language organisations such as Menter Iaith Conwy and the Urdd widely.	
6.3	Work in partnership with a range of organisations such as the Urdd, Menter Iaith Conwy, Education Services and Conwy Youth Service in order to raise awareness of the value of Welsh language skills as a career or employment opportunity.	
6.4	Develop and strengthen links with external organisations to promote and facilitate various recreational activities through the medium of Welsh.	
6.5	Explore the demand for lessons such as swimming lessons through the medium of Welsh and develop plans to provide those lessons where the demand exists.	

7. Strategic Area 3: Communities

Vision:	Increase the use of the Welsh language within Conwy's communities.
Desired Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness that all Council services are available through the medium of Welsh. • More opportunities to use the Welsh language in social activities.
Strategic Priorities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote existing Welsh-language community activities and share good practice. • Work with community groups to mainstream the use of the Welsh language and work with adult learner providers to promote the opportunities to learn and practice their Welsh language skills.
Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of Welsh language activities which are arranged and held within communities across the county borough. • The number of people who attend those Welsh medium events.
Existing legislation, policies, plans or strategies:	The Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations. 2015, Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

No.	Action	Date
7.1	Promote the availability of Welsh courses and cuppa and a chat sessions for those wishing to learn Welsh or improve their skills.	
7.2	Promote the availability of bilingual services by ensuring Welsh speakers and learners within service areas continue to wear appropriate lanyards and/or badges showing their skill, this will gradually encourage the public to speak Welsh when accessing services.	
7.3	Implement the More Than Just Words active offer.	
7.4	Plan and coordinate a campaign to distribute Welsh speaking badges and signs across businesses and organisations in order to support local people to use the Welsh language.	

8. Strategic Area 4: The Workplace

Vision:	Increase opportunities for using the Welsh language in the workplace.
Desired Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More staff using the Welsh language in the workplace.
Strategic Priorities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase Welsh language skills of workforce. • Increase Welsh language skills and ensure that the knowledge about the linguistic skills of staff who work within the Council is continually updated. • Increase recognition that the Welsh language is a valuable skill in the workplace. • Increase awareness of the importance of the Welsh language as a skill when recruiting, amongst those who are responsible for recruitment. • Enable and support fluent staff and staff who are learning, to use the Welsh language in the workplace.
Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the number of staff employed who are able to speak Welsh language in the workplace. • Increase in the number of staff learning Welsh.
Existing legislation, policies, plans or strategies:	The Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations. 2015, Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

No.	Action	Date
8.1	Continue to encourage staff to complete their self-assessment of their Welsh language skills and input the information on the intranet tool in order to assess linguistic skills.	
8.2	This in turn will facilitate the use of the tool on e-mail to see who can speak Welsh etc.	
8.3	Re-establish and further develop Welsh language Link Officers' roles and responsibilities.	
8.4	Increase partnership work between schools, partners and the Council in order to promote the value of the Welsh language.	

8.5	Encourage businesses and the voluntary sector to use the laith Gwaith badges and lanyards and to develop a bilingual image.	
8.6	Ensure appropriate Welsh language training is available to staff to learn Welsh.	
8.7	Establish promoting Welsh as a recognised objective for managers so that they are able to provide evidence of the work undertaken to increase Welsh speaking staff and promote Welsh medium services within their service.	
8.8	Ensure all Heads of Service and managers are aware of the Welsh language skills of their staff and assist to increase skills where necessary through the recruitment process.	
8.9	Promote Welsh Language courses and cuppa and a chat opportunities.	
8.10	Ensure all of the staff's workforce have access to Cysgeir and Welsh spellchecker on their PC's.	
8.11	Ensure all new members of staff complete the e-learning module about Welsh Language Awareness.	

9. Strategic Area 5: Welsh Language Services

Vision:	Promote and improve the availability of Welsh-medium services locally.
Desired Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More Welsh-medium services available to the public. • More use made of the services that are available through the medium of Welsh. • Greater focus on working together for the benefit of the Welsh language.
Strategic Priorities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the use of Welsh in the workplace. • Increase the number of Welsh speakers by planning the workforce strategically.
Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The % and number of staff able to provide Welsh language services to the public.
Existing legislation, policies, plans or strategies:	The Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations. 2015, Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, More than Just Words

No.	Action	Date
9.1	Continue to ensure all council services use the laith Gwaith badges and lanyards as well as the electronic versions for their e-mail signatures.	
9.2	Support and encourage the Council's Welsh speaking staff and learners to use their skills in the workplace.	
9.3	Develop and promote Cuppa and a chat sessions for staff, and raise awareness of similar activities in the communities.	
9.4	Raise awareness of Welsh Language provision of services in order to meet the requirements of an active offer and continue to raise awareness of the ability to contact the local authority in Welsh by telephone, face to face or via written communication.	

10. Strategic Area 6: Infrastructure

Vision:	Organisations and services integrate the Welsh language into policies and activities.
Desired Outcome:	The Welsh language integrated appropriately in Council and partners' strategies, policies, and practices.
Strategic Priorities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the impact assessment processes consider Welsh language issues in line with Welsh Language Standards 88-90. • Ensure that the Council's policy development practices comply with the relevant Policy Making Standards. • Ensure that the review of this Strategy is undertaken in 5 years as required by Welsh Language Standard 146.
Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % and number of policies that have been impact assessed in line with the requirements of Welsh Language Standards 88-90.
Existing legislation, policies, plans or strategies:	The Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations. 2015, Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, Welsh Government Technical Advice Note 20: Planning and the Welsh Language (2013).

No.	Action	Date
10.1	Welsh language to be further embedded in consultation practices/exercises (as an element for consideration in addition to the organisations that are consultees).	
10.2	Welsh language as an integral part of developing and impact assessing proposed Conwy County Borough Council policies.	
10.3	Encourage wider partners to consider to have the Welsh language as an integral part of developing and impact assessing proposed policies and practices.	

11. Monitoring the Strategy

This Welsh Language Strategy will be monitored by the Welsh Language Officer during the course of the next five year. Its outcomes will be scrutinised at Principal Scrutiny at regular intervals with an annual report as required by the Standards on progress to date.