

Report

Cabinet

Part 1

Date: 18 February 2022

Subject **Welsh Language Strategy 2022-2027**

Purpose To approve the draft 5 year Welsh Language Strategy for Newport as required by the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and Welsh Language Standards prior to submission to Council

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Summary In accordance with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 the Council is required to produce, and publish on our website, a 5-year strategy that sets out proposals to promote the Welsh language and to facilitate the use of the Welsh language more widely in the area.

We know that one of the main ways we can measure an increase in the number of Welsh speakers across Newport is through monitoring numbers of children being educated through the medium of Welsh. Therefore our 5 year targets as required by our Welsh Language Standards reflect those tangible measures set out in our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP).

The draft strategy for the period 2022-2027 is attached at Appendix 1.

Proposal **To approve the attached draft Strategy prior to submission to full Council in March.**

Action by Director, Transformation and Corporate Centre

Timetable Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Cabinet Member Assets and Resources
- Member Champion – Welsh Language
- Cabinet Member for Education and Skills
- Welsh Language officer Implementation Group
- Welsh in Education Forum
- Fforwm Iaith
- Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee
- General Public

Background

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 established a legal framework to impose duties on certain organisations to comply with standards in relation to the Welsh language by way of sub-legislation (Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015).

The Standards issued to Newport City Council are listed in 'The Newport City Council Compliance Notice – Section 44 Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011'. Standard 145 (below) requires the Council to produce and publish a five-year strategy setting out how we will promote and facilitate the use of Welsh:

“You must produce, and publish on your website, a 5-year strategy that sets out how you propose to promote the Welsh language and to facilitate the use of the Welsh language more widely in your area; and the strategy must include (amongst other matters)

- (a) a target (in terms of the percentage of speakers in your area) for increasing or maintaining the number of Welsh speakers in your area by the end of the 5 year period concerned,
- (b) a statement setting out how you intend to reach that target; and you must review the strategy and publish a revised version on your website within 5 years of publishing a strategy (or of publishing a revised strategy)”

Our previous strategy was agreed in 2017 for the period 2017-2022. The draft Strategy for the next five years includes both targets to increase the number of Welsh speakers within Newport, and a statement setting out how we will do this.

Proposed 5 year target for increasing or maintaining the percentage of Welsh speakers in Newport

We know that one of the main ways we can measure an increase in the number of Welsh speakers across Newport is through monitoring numbers of children being educated through the medium of Welsh. Therefore our 5 year targets as required by our Welsh Language Standards reflect those tangible measures set out in our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). Newport's WESP has been agreed by Cabinet and will be shared with Welsh Government for agreement by September 2022.

The WESP sets out targets to increase the numbers of children in Welsh medium education. The council is required to increase the number of pupils in Welsh medium education by 6 percentage points over the next 10 years (by 2032). This will be an increase from 101 to 221 pupils.

The Strategy sets out the 5 and 10 year WESP targets which will enable this ambition to be met, across 7 outcome areas:

- Outcome 1: More Nursery children learning in Welsh
- Outcome 2: More reception class children learning in Welsh
- Outcome 3: More learners improve their Welsh language when moving from primary school to secondary school
- Outcome 4: More learners study for exams in Welsh
- Outcome 5: More learners use Welsh outside of the school classroom
- Outcome 6: An increase in classes for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) learning in Welsh
- Outcome 7: More teachers and staff able to teach Welsh and in Welsh

The Strategy

The Strategy is not only about increasing the number of Welsh speakers in Newport, but about making the Welsh language inclusive and inspiring, supporting Welsh learners, and increasing the visibility of the Welsh language across the city. The Strategy also supports the delivery of Welsh Government's target of reaching a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

The Strategy introduces the council's wider vision for Welsh language in Newport – 'See, Hear, Learn, Use, Love' and includes actions aside from Education-focussed work to promote and facilitate the Welsh language across Newport. These actions are organised into 3 strategic themes – Communities and Culture, Education, and Employment and Skills. An action plan sets out key commitments across these themes.

The Strategy has been informed by our officer Welsh Language Implementation Group, our ongoing work with public sector partners, engagement with key stakeholders and consultation on the views that citizens in Newport hold on the Welsh language – as well as the work of our Education service and our new Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, agreed by Cabinet in January. The draft Strategy was made available for public comment on the council's website between the 24th January and 5th February.

We will continue to use existing governance structures to monitor the progress of our Strategy as we look to embed Welsh language across business-as-usual activities. This will include regular progress reports on key actions into our Welsh in Education Forum and our internal Welsh Language Implementation Group. The Welsh Language Forum will also play a key role in ensuring partners are engaged and working towards our vision for Welsh in Newport, and our Right Skills Board in embedding our work around employers and skills.

Annual reporting on progress against our key themes will be incorporated within our Welsh Language Annual Report which is published by the 31st March each year as required by our Welsh Language Standards.

Financial Summary (Capital and Revenue)

There are no additional staffing costs associated with the Welsh Language Strategy, and actions will be delivered using existing resources and budgets.

Risks

It is important to identify and manage any project or scheme's exposure to risk and have in place controls to deal with those risks.

Risk Title / Description	Risk Impact score of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Risk Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	Risk Mitigation Action(s) What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect?	Risk Owner Officer(s) responsible for dealing with the risk?
That the Council is not compliant with the Welsh Language Standards in publishing the 5 year strategy.	H	L	This report proposes a draft strategy	Director, Transformation and Corporate Centre
That the proposals in the strategy are not delivered.	M	L	Monitoring will be arranged through existing governance structures	Director, Transformation and Corporate Centre

* Taking account of proposed mitigation measures

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

As well as meeting our requirements under our Welsh language Standards, the Strategy is deliberately aligned with a range of national and local strategies and objectives including:

- Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 – A million Welsh Speakers
- Well-Being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 – Wellbeing Goal 'A Wales of vibrant cultures and thriving Welsh language'

- Mwy na Geiriau – Welsh Government's Strategy for Welsh in Health and Social Care
- Newport City Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan
- Newport City Council's Digital Strategy
- Newport City Council's Local Development Plan
- Welsh Government's Wales Language Technology Plan

Options Available and considered

The options available are:

1. To agree the draft before submission to Council in March
2. Not to agree the draft

Preferred Option and Why

Option 1 is the preferred option in order to meet our statutory requirements in a timely manner.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

Approval of the Welsh Language Strategy will have no adverse financial impact, all associated costs will be met from existing budgets.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

The Council has a statutory duty in accordance with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards to produce, and publish, a 5-year strategy that sets out proposals to promote the Welsh language and to facilitate the use of the Welsh language more widely in the area. The strategy must include targets for increasing or maintaining the numbers of Welsh speakers in the area and the delivery of the strategy must be kept under review. This is also consistent with the well-being goals and the sustainability objectives of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. The proposed strategy meets the requirements of the Standards and focuses, in particular, on Welsh language education, building on the existing principles of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

Comments of Head of People and Business Change

This development of the Welsh Language Strategy for the City sets the strategic direction for the next 5 years. This report sets out the draft objectives for Cabinet and builds on existing work to develop Welsh language as evidenced in the annual reports. Development of Welsh language also forms part of our corporate and equalities priorities, and is a key element of the wellbeing objectives of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

The strategy and action plan note the importance of working with partners to achieve the objectives,

The action plan includes steps to recognise and increase Welsh language skills within the Council's own workforce. These include a GCSE Welsh requirement for Apprentice candidates, use of the ALTE Welsh language skills framework and bilingual job advertisements

Scrutiny Committees

The draft Strategy was discussed at Overview Scrutiny and Management Committee on the 21st January 2022. Comments and responses are below:

Committee would like clarification on the figures of those fluent in Welsh, confident in Welsh and Welsh learners as they don't marry up precisely with the number of those said to have accessed the Contact Centre through the medium of Welsh.

Feedback on this part of the report (consultation results) was noted. The figures stated related to 2 different questions asked in the survey so were incongruous. Amendments have been made to provide clarity around this.

Committee stated that they would have liked to see parts of the report – perhaps headings and introductions – written bilingually as it would better represent the content of the report and the Council's aims with the Welsh language.

Feedback from the Committee was noted – the full Strategy will be published in both Welsh and English in line with the council's Welsh Language Standards.

Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment:

Summary of impact – Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act

A full Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment (FEIA) has been undertaken on the Welsh Language Strategy and is attached at Appendix 2. The key themes and actions that underpin them balance short term needs with the delivery of medium to long-term solutions over the course of the 5 year timescale, and were developed in consultation with internal and external stakeholders, including communities across Newport.

The Strategy identifies key challenges for the Welsh language in Newport, for example, employment and skills gaps, low conversion rates for Welsh learners moving from pre-school to primary school environments, and the perceived lack of visibility of the language across the city. The Strategy sets out how work will develop to prevent these problems from getting worse, and the resources/partnership work which enable this work to happen.

The Strategy is dependent on effective partnership work and contributes to the Wellbeing Goals of a prosperous Wales, a more equal Wales, a Wales of cohesive communities and a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language.

Summary of impact – Equality Act 2010

The FEIA undertaken on the Welsh Language Strategy identifies positive impacts for people that share Protected Characteristics of age, race and disability. There were no negative impacts identified. There are particular positive impacts identified for pre-school and school aged children as a result of the Strategy's Education theme, and for ethnic minority communities who are prioritised for engagement within the Strategy.

Summary of impact – Socio-economic Duty

The Strategy has been identified as supporting the reduction of inequalities that may arise as a result of socio-economic disadvantage in the areas of work, participation and education. These areas directly relate to the key themes in the Strategy – Employment and Skills, Communities and Culture and Education.

The Strategy sets out a commitment to reach out to communities who may not traditionally engage with the Welsh language, including ethnic minority communities, refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, and those communities in Pillgwenlly, one of the most deprived areas in Newport. This commitment will help to ensure that the Welsh language is accessible to all, and everyone is offered an opportunity to lever the social, economic and educational benefits that it can offer.

Summary of impact – Welsh language

As this is a Welsh Language Strategy, a range of positive impacts have been identified for the Welsh language:

- Increasing and raising awareness of the Welsh language across all of Newport's diverse communities, ensuring it is inclusive and accessible to all
- Increasing the visibility of the Welsh language across Newport in community settings
- Encouraging partnership working and consistency between stakeholders in terms of the Welsh language in the workplace and potentially increase economic opportunities

- Ensuring communities in Newport are aware of the culture and history of Newport concerning the Welsh language and its importance in modern life; developing a sense of place and ownership,
- Increasing partnership work with stakeholders to develop shared learning, resources, and opportunities,
- Inspiring children and pupils to learn and use the language both in and out of school, as well as support or encourage parents/caregivers to invest in the language

Consultation

This Strategy has been informed by the people living in Newport, Welsh language stakeholders and feedback from internal and external partners. During 2021 we launched a number of community surveys to find out more about what people in Newport thought about the Welsh language, and inform the focus of our strategic themes. Around 600 responses were received and highlighted key areas that the strategy should address, including:

- A reluctance to learn Welsh, or see the value of learning Welsh
- Low perceived visibility of the Welsh language across the city
- A concern that people were being ‘forced’ to engage with the Welsh language
- Lack of awareness of Welsh language opportunities, activities and groups across the city
- A lack of confidence in using Welsh language skills

A full summary of survey responses is included in the Strategy and FEIA.

The Strategy was also made available for public comment between the 24th January and 5th of February. A number of comments were received and taken into account when finalising the Strategy for submission to Cabinet.

Background Papers

[Newport's Welsh Language Standards](#)

[Newport's draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plan](#)

[Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers](#)

Dated: 11 February 2022