

SUBJECT: Welsh Language Strategy 2017- 22
MEETING: Council
DATE: 19th January 2017
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To present the Welsh Language Strategy for 2017 – 2022, which has been produced in line with the requirements of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and specifically Standards 145 and 146

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Council agree this 5 Year Strategy as required by Standard 145 set out in the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 The 5 Year Welsh Language Strategy sets out a vision of how the Welsh Language will look in Monmouthshire in 5 years' time and targets have been set to achieve that vision accordingly.
- 3.2 This strategy is closely linked to our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2017 which has been scrutinised by the Children and Young Peoples Select Committee. In order to ensure a consistency of approach and to ease performance monitoring, some of the performance measures have been shared.
- 3.3 It is also aligned with the Welsh Government's ambitious strategy to have a million Welsh speakers by 2050. These two strategies have given added impetus to the Vision and its targets.
- 3.4 This strategy is challenging but achievable with the appropriate level of planning and support from our partners in the Council's Welsh Language Forum. It is worth noting at this point that the targets that are common to the 5 Year Welsh Language Strategy and the WESP may be subject to change dependent upon whether amendments are made in the light of comments or suggestions made in both consultation processes (Appendix A)

4. REASONS:

Monmouthshire County Council has a statutory responsibility to produce a 5 Year Welsh Language Strategy 2017 - 2022 under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 There are no additional financial or human resource implications arising out of this strategy.

6. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:

There are no significant equality impacts identified in the assessment (Appendix 1).

The actual impacts from this report's recommendations will be reviewed annually.

7. CONSULTEES:

- 7.1 The strategy was subject to formal consultation between the 14th November and the 16th December 2016

Strong Communities Select, Menter Iaith Blaenau Gwent Torfaen Mynwy (MIBGTM), the Urdd, Mudiad Meithrin, Public Consultation Exercise on Council website, Facebook and Twitter, Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni, Ysgol Gymraeg Y Ffin, Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw and Ysgol Gyfun Gwent Is Coed, Rhieni Dros Addysg Gymraeg (RHAG).

- 7.2 As a result of the comments from Response 1 number 2D second paragraph noted in Appendix 1 below it is proposed that Welsh and English pages are developed on the council website that will give the information requested – the local Menter Iaith, Monmouthshire Welsh language clubs/societies, Welsh Medium schools and Welsh classes provided in the County.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Monmouthshire County Council's Welsh Language Standards

9. AUTHOR:

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Appendix A

Response 1

Do you have any further comments regarding the Vision or the Targets?

2C. This target is not ambitious enough and this has already been noted in the response to the draft WESP. The increase is based mainly on the number of children already in the system and there is no specific target to increase numbers substantially (e.g. by providing another school in Raglan/Monmouth, as the KS1 classes in Ysgol y Fenni are oversubscribed). It must also be noted that the question is misleading. What is proposed is an increase of 15% on the present numbers, not an increase to 15% of children educated through the medium of Welsh.

2D. Transport is one major factor that affects decisions by parents to transfer from KS2-KS3. Transport to Gwent Iscoed and Gwynllyw schools should be facilitated and the post-16 charge of £385 abolished (some parents think there is no point in sending children a long distance on the bus, as they will not be able to afford the bus when they reach the 6th form.

Is it possible for space to be allocated on the Monmouthshire website to the language? Giving contact details/websites for Welsh societies, Menter Iaith, schools, lessons etc?

Response 2

Do you have further comments regarding the Vision or the Targets?

The authority should take action to support the work of voluntary societies to normalise the use of the language in the community e.g. meeting, social events and activities through the medium of Welsh.

Response 3

I don't believe that the targets are challenging enough. The number of children who receive their education through the medium of Welsh needs to be higher than less than a hundred. New Welsh schools are required. Also the number of staff who are learning Welsh needs to be increased etc.

Response 4

Our children and young people are the future of the language, therefore it is vital that they are taught the language in our schools. I believe that all primary school children should be bi-lingual by the time they are ready to proceed to secondary schools. This is vital, even if they show no interest in the language, in later years the benefits of planting the seeds of the language will ensure they value it when they are older.

Currently, there are only 2 Welsh primary schools in Monmouthshire. I believe that while all schools by law are supposed to provide some Welsh education, many only apply this casually, and do not emphasise the importance of the Welsh language, and see it as an extra burden on

the curriculum. This may be because there are insufficient staff that are reasonably fluent in the language or for other reasons, such as curriculum timescales etc. However, this situation must improve in all schools if the language is to be sustained and developed in the county.

Another aspect regarding the future vision of the language, is to emphasise its importance of everyday use in all the towns and villages in the county. This means that all places of work, shops and services should welcome the use of the language and be very supportive in terms of their signage and methods of greeting customers in the language. It is not difficult to learn simple greetings and acknowledgements, and this would make all the difference as it would become accepted and used on a day to day basis. Some shops and commercial businesses do this already (e.g: Aldi and the Post Office now make bi-lingual announcements in their Abergavenny stores). However, others ignore the language and refuse to respond. It is the language that makes Wales unique, and in Scotland and Ireland the use of their language has almost died out through lack of use and promotion. The council can encourage shops and businesses by providing basic information about greetings etc., and ensuring that all displays and information are bi-lingual.