

Powys County Council Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2017-2022

Introduction

Powys County Council is committed to supporting and promoting the Welsh language within its area, and the purpose of this strategy is to co-ordinate and build on current efforts in order to increase the number of people who are able to speak Welsh and who do so on a regular basis.

The 2011 Census showed a reduction in the number of Welsh speakers in Powys, from 21.1% in 2001 to 18.6% in 2011, and the Council is committed to reversing that trend.

Under the Welsh Language Standards, set under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, the Council is required to produce and implement a Welsh Language Promotion Strategy.

Standard 145

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, and

(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).

The purpose of this Strategy therefore is to meet the requirements set upon Powys County Council by Welsh Government and the Welsh Language Commissioner under the Welsh Language Standards, but more importantly to fulfil the Council's desire and commitment to promote and strengthen the Welsh language in Powys, maintaining Welsh as a community language in appropriate localities.

But this work isn't being done in isolation, but rather it is part of a journey and of wider efforts being made to promote and strengthen the Welsh language in the county.

This includes the work of the Council's Welsh Language Working Group, established to consider ways in which the Council, partner organisations and the wider community can promote the Welsh language and reverse the decline in the number of Welsh speakers.

In implementing the Welsh Language Standards, Powys County Council is committed to ensuring that Welsh is treated no less favourably than English, and has taken steps to improve services provided in Welsh across the Council, and to improve ease of access to those services.

The Welsh Language Promotion, Challenge and Support Group supports Powys' Regional Partnership Board and its partners to ensure the implementation and monitoring of the More than Just Words Strategic Framework, to improve services provided in Welsh within Health and Social Care, and to comply with the requirements within the Social Services and Wellbeing Act in relation to Welsh language. The group's membership includes public and voluntary sector organisations operating within Powys, in order to take a co-ordinated approach to improving those services.

Menter Maldwyn and Menter Brycheiniog a Maesyfed, Powys' two language initiatives, work in north and south Powys respectively to provide support and advice to individuals, organisations and businesses and arrange activities to raise the profile of the Welsh language, and increase the opportunities to use the Welsh language within the community.

The Urdd and Young Farmer's Clubs provide dynamic and accessible activities throughout the county, which include valuable opportunities to compete and take part in activities in Welsh in rural areas.

The National Eisteddfod was recently held within Powys, and the Urdd Eisteddfod will be visiting Powys in 2018. As two of Wales' main national events, showcasing the Welsh language, they provide a platform to promote the Welsh language among residents, businesses, organisations and visitors to the county.

The council is committed to providing access to Welsh-medium education to pupils across Powys, in both Welsh medium and dual-stream schools. In recent years the council, in collaboration with Welsh Government through the 21st century schools programme, has invested in new facilities for Welsh-medium primary provision in Ystradgynlais (Ysgol Gymraeg Dyffryn y Glowyr) and Newtown (Ysgol Dafydd Llwyd). The authority is also planning a similar investment in Welshpool, with a new Welsh-medium school due to open in the town in September 2017, moving to a brand new building in the coming years. The council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) for 2017-20 includes a commitment to carry out reviews of Welsh-medium primary provision in other areas of Powys, and capital investment will be directed to support this work, where appropriate.

The Council also offers its staff opportunities to learn Welsh, and supports their learning in the workplace.

The purpose of this Strategy is therefore to develop and build on this work, and to establish an infrastructure that will ensure that more people are able to speak Welsh; to make it easier and normal for people to use the Welsh language; to provide more opportunities to use the Welsh language; to ensure the Welsh language is considered fully in the development of policies and services; and that people are aware of their rights to receive services through the medium of Welsh, and that they can have confidence in the services provided through the medium of Welsh. The council appreciates the importance of the maintenance of Welsh as a community language and will work to support these areas' linguistic status.

Welsh Language Profile

The Welsh Language in Powys

2011 Census

According to the 2011 Census, 23,990 of Powys residents speak Welsh from a population of 129,083, which accounts for 18.6% of the population. This represented a reduction from the 25,798 or 21.1% of the county's population who spoke Welsh according to the 2001 census. This general picture is very similar to that for the whole of Wales, with a reduction from 20.8% in 2001 to 19% in 2011.

The reduction of 2.5% in Powys is therefore consistent with that experienced in other counties, such as Ynys Môn (-2.9%), Conwy (-2%), Pembrokeshire (-2.6%) and Neath Port Talbot (-2.7%)

However, the situation within the county's communities vary with a reduction in the county's traditional strongholds, such as Llanbryn-mair (-5.1%), Glantwymyn (-5.3%), Banwy (-6.1%) and Ystradgynlais (-7.6%) being areas that continue to have a relatively high proportion of Welsh speakers, with the Welsh language continuing to be a community language. But there was a more dramatic reduction in communities closer to the 'linguistic border', such as Llanwrtyd (-8.4%), Carno (-10.1%), Llanfihangel-yng-Ngwynfa (-11.7%), Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant (-12%) and Llanwddyn (-21.6%).

Between 2001 and 2011, the number of communities with over 60% of the population speaking Welsh had reduced from 3 (Banwy, Cadfarch and Llanfihangel-yng-Ngwynfa) to 1 (Cadfarch), and the number of communities with over 50% of the population speaking Welsh reduced from 11 to 7.

However, there was an increase in the proportion of Welsh speakers in communities where Welsh wasn't traditionally as strong, although the increase in percentage is smaller than the most dramatic reductions referenced above. There was an increase in Gwernyfed (+2.2%), Llanddewi Ystradenni (+2.5%), Llanellwedd (+2.7%), Tregynon (+3.1%), Glascwm (+4.1%), Betws Cedewain (+4.4%), Trewern (+4.4%) and Duhonw (+5.7%).

This again reflects the picture across Wales, with a reduction in the traditional strongholds of Gwynedd, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire between 2001 and 2011, but a more positive picture in parts of Wales where Welsh had not been as prominent.

The importance of this is that it shows that positive action can lead to an increase.

The picture in terms of Welsh speakers according to age also varies within Powys. According to the 2011 census, the percentage of Welsh speakers within the different age groups was as follows:

	All categories: Age 3 and over	Age 3 to 15	Age 16 to 24	Age 25 to 34	Age 35 to 49	Age 50 to 64	Age 65 and over
Llanfyllin Locality	31.7%	52.0%	42.4%	31.1%	25.5%	23.1%	29.7%
Machynlleth Locality	53.8%	78.3%	65.6%	57.3%	47.2%	42.7%	50.0%
Llanidloes Locality	17.9%	33.4%	24.6%	16.7%	12.4%	12.9%	16.3%
Llanfair Caereinion Locality	27.5%	55.2%	42.0%	24.7%	20.6%	16.0%	22.0%
Welshpool and Montgomery Locality	12.3%	34.2%	16.8%	10.6%	6.8%	5.6%	7.3%
Newtown Locality	13.4%	33.9%	16.0%	11.5%	7.4%	7.4%	7.6%
Llandrindod and Rhayader Locality	12.0%	38.4%	24.6%	9.6%	7.0%	5.0%	4.9%
Knighton and Presteigne Locality	8.6%	35.0%	18.0%	7.1%	2.8%	2.4%	1.9%
Builth and Llanwrtyd Locality	15.3%	44.2%	24.6%	14.0%	7.9%	7.0%	7.9%
Hay and Talgarth Locality	9.8%	35.9%	16.9%	7.0%	5.1%	3.1%	3.9%
Crickhowell Locality	10.0%	32.0%	21.0%	7.3%	4.3%	6.2%	3.4%
Brecon Locality	14.6%	33.6%	19.2%	10.0%	9.4%	9.2%	11.6%
Ystradgynlais Locality	39.0%	44.2%	36.9%	29.0%	28.7%	36.6%	51.6%
Powys	18.6%	39.9%	25.4%	16.0%	12.6%	12.1%	14.8%

Comparing the figures for 2011 with the 2001 census, the percentage of Welsh speakers in the 16-64 age group has remained relatively consistent, but with a reduction in areas with a higher proportion of Welsh speakers; from 52.8% to 49.5% in the Machynlleth locality, from 31.9% to 28% in the Llanfyllin locality, and from 41.3% to 32.9% in the Ystradgynlais locality. There were more significant reductions in the 65+ age group, e.g. from 16.2% to 11.6% in the Brecon locality, from 30.1% to 22% in the Llanfair Caereinion locality and from 62.6% to 51.6% in the Ystradgynlais locality.

However, there were generally more positive figures in the 3-15 age group, and even though there was a reduction in the percentage of Welsh speakers within this group in Llanfyllin (60.3% down to 52%) and Brecon (36.2% down to 33.6%), there was an increase in the Builth Wells locality (from 42.9% to 44.2%), Llanfair Caereinion (51.5% to 55.2%), Newtown (31.1% to 33.9%) and Machynlleth (71.8% to 78.3%). (The figures can be seen in full in Appendix 1)

The other factor to consider is the general increase in the Powys population in the last few decades. The county's population increased from 115,038 in 1991, to 122,457 in 2001, and to 129,083 in 2011, and whilst there was a reduction in the number of Welsh speakers between 2001 and 2011, the number was slightly higher in 2011 than the figure in the 1991 census – 23,990 compared to 23,732. The general increase in the population is therefore responsible for the reduction in the percentage of Welsh speakers within that period.

Legislative Context

Welsh Language Standards

Powys County Council's Welsh Language Standards became operational on 30 March 2016. After a period of consultation and preparation, 167 Standards were imposed by the Welsh Language Commissioner under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, regulated by the Commissioner. The Council's Welsh Language Scheme was therefore replaced, and the Standards were adopted as the way the Council would be operating within the following five areas:

- 1) Welsh language service provision,
- 2) Formulating policy in a way which will promote the Welsh language,
- 3) Operating through the medium of Welsh,
- 4) Keeping records about the Welsh language,
- 5) Promoting the Welsh language.

The Welsh Language Promotion Standards require the Council to plan at a county level to promote the Welsh language, by producing and implementing a Welsh Language Promotion Strategy, as follows;

Standard 145

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, and*
- (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).*

Standard 146

Five years after publishing a strategy in accordance with standard 145 you must –

- (a) assess to what extent you have followed that strategy and have reached the target set by it, and*
- (b) publish that assessment on your website, ensuring that it contains the following information –*
 - (i) the number of Welsh speakers in your area, and the age of those speakers;*
 - (ii) a list of the activities that you have arranged or funded during the previous 5 years in order to promote the use of the Welsh language.*

Although the promotion standards are new to the Council, efforts are already being made to promote and increase the use of the Welsh language in the county, such as through the work of the Mentrau Iaith – Menter Maldwyn and Menter Brycheiniog a Maesyfed; Powys County Council's Welsh Language Working Group; the Welsh Language Support, Promotion

and Challenge Group; the Welsh Medium Education Forum and work under the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, as well as work by several other organisations to promote the language. The intention of this Strategy is to build upon that work to plan to develop the Welsh language at a county and national level, and to contribute towards the Welsh Government's objective of having a Million Welsh Speakers by 2050.

A living language: a language for living

The Welsh Government published its Strategy for the Welsh language, 'A living language: a language for living' in April 2012. The strategy reflects the Government's vision to see the Welsh language thrive. The strategy builds upon the vision outlined in 'Iaith Pawb: A National Action Plan for a Bilingual Wales' published in 2003. It outlines how the Government will work with a wide range of partners which will contribute towards realizing the vision.

To this end, the six aims within 'A living language: a language for living' are:

- to encourage and support the use of the Welsh language within families
- to increase the provision of Welsh-medium activities for children and young people and to increase their awareness of the value of the language
- to strengthen the position of the Welsh language in the community
- to increase opportunities for people to use Welsh in the workplace
- to improve Welsh language services to citizens
- to strengthen the infrastructure for the language, including digital technology.

These six strategic areas were also developed as the areas of work for the Mentrau Iaith during that period.

'A living language: a language for living' was followed by 'moving forward', a policy statement for 2014-17, which placed a focus on

1. The need to strengthen the links between the economy and the Welsh language.
2. The need for better strategic planning for the Welsh language.
3. The use of Welsh in the community.
4. The challenge of changing linguistic behaviour.

Welsh Government's Welsh-medium Education Strategy

This strategy, which was created in 2010, outlines the government's vision for an education system that responds in a strategic way to the increasing demand for Welsh medium education. One of the Strategy's main steps was to call for plans from the local authorities to satisfy local needs. The **Powys Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2014-17** was created to outline how the County will fulfil the Welsh Government's aims and targets and how it will plan more effectively for Welsh medium education in the county. The Council is formulating a new **Welsh in Education Strategic Plan** for 2017-2010, which will have a crucial role in the Council's efforts to increase the number of Welsh speakers in the county. The objectives within the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan will therefore provide the objectives for

promoting the Welsh language within education section of this Strategy, and the Promotion Strategy will in turn reinforce and support the Education Strategy.

More than just Words

The 'More than just Words' Strategic Framework was drawn up in 2012 with the aim of strengthening Welsh language services in health, social services and social care. Central to the strategy is the challenge of developing the 'Active Offer', namely that staff members will offer Welsh language services to patients, rather than waiting for patients to request them. The strategy was updated in 2016 with 'More than just words.... follow-on strategic framework for Welsh Language Services in Health , Social Services and Social Care 2016-2019 ', and tools were provided to enable staff to operate it.

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Public Services Board

This Act is a means of helping the public bodies that are listed in the Act to think in the long term, work better with people and communities and each other, to try to prevent problems and follow a consistent approach in order to improve the well-being of social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.

The act has seven well-being goals. This strategy will contribute to the goal of having a Wales of vibrant culture and a thriving Welsh language, by creating a society which promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language and encourages people to participate in the arts, in sports and leisure activities.

Vision

The Council's target in this Strategy, and subsequent strategies will be to contribute towards the Welsh Government's target of ensuring a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

To achieve that target, a third of Powys' population must speak Welsh by 2050.

The target for this Strategy will be to restore the percentage of Welsh speakers in Powys to at least that of the 2001 Census, which was 21.1%

The Council's aim within this Strategy will therefore be to set the infrastructure for supporting the 3 strategic themes identified within the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 strategy to achieve a million Welsh speakers by 2050, which are to

- Increase the number of Welsh speakers;
- Increase the use of Welsh; and
- To create favourable conditions to the development and protection of the language.

We will do this by working within 6 key areas, each with actions to ensure progress under Welsh Government's strategic themes.

Powys County Council's 6 key areas for action are as follows;

1. Planning and language policy
2. Normalisation
3. Education
4. People
5. Support
6. Rights

To ensure success within the 6 areas for action outlined above, action will be required within additional general priority areas to support that work, which are identified in section 7 below.

1. Planning and Language Policy

To secure this increase in Powys and in Wales, the Welsh language must be an integral part of the process of formulating policy and planning services, to ensure opportunities to use the Welsh language in official and community circles are protected and promoted, and to take advantage of opportunities to promote the Welsh language and the services provided through the medium of Welsh.

The objective is therefore to mainstream the Welsh language, so that it is an integral part of strategic planning at every level.

In order to do this we will:

Increase the use of Welsh

- Ensure that language requirements for posts within the Council are set so that the public can be confident of being able to use Council services in Welsh at all times

Create favourable conditions

- Assess all Council decisions and policies for their impact on the Welsh language, consider opportunities to use the Welsh language, that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language, opportunities to promote the Welsh language and impact on staff in terms of the Welsh language.
- Ensure an overview of Council plans and strategies through the Welsh Language Working Group
- Ensure the Welsh language is a cross-cutting theme within the work of the Council and its partners
- Establish the principle that the Welsh language belongs to all parts of Powys

2. Normalisation

Ensuring that the Welsh language is used and that there is goodwill towards the language is crucial in supporting the planning and development work, and to increase the number of Welsh speakers. The language must therefore be a normal part of everyday life in all parts of the county in order to overcome factors which can mean that people are reluctant to use the language, and in ensuring that there are opportunities to use the language regularly.

Therefore, the objective is to ensure that using the language is natural and normal, and thus establishing a solid basis for increasing the number of Welsh speakers and encouraging more people to use it.

In order to do this we will:

Increase the use of Welsh

- Ensure that the Welsh language is visible in all parts of the county
- Ensure that the Welsh language is visible on social media
- Support community activity so that the Welsh language is heard throughout the county
- Ensure, through Council grant schemes, and through its spending power within contracts and agreements, that other organisations provide an appropriate platform for the Welsh language through their activities
- Promote the advantages of using the Welsh language within business, tourism, care etc.

3. Education

Education is a key area in which to promote the Welsh language and develop and increase the number of Welsh speakers in Powys. The education system is key to creating more Welsh speakers, whether by teaching the language to children within the statutory schools system or by teaching Welsh to adults in the community.

The objective therefore is to increase the number of children and young people receiving Welsh medium education to create more Welsh speakers, and to develop the Welsh language skills of adults in the county, to enable them to use the language in the community and in the workplace.

In order to do this we will:

Increase the number of Welsh speakers

- Implement the aims and objectives of Powys County Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2017-2020
- Promote the advantages of Welsh medium education, whether in dedicated Welsh medium schools or thriving streams in dual-stream schools
- Conduct specific marketing campaigns involving new provision and changes in Welsh medium education provision
- Conduct marketing campaigns on developments in provision for latecomers
- Work to increase the number of adults learning Welsh and developing their Welsh language skills in Powys

4. People

Every language requires people and a community. A community can of course mean several things, from the traditional definition based on a geographical location, to interest groups and digital networks where the people who make up that community are dispersed. Together with formal education, the language can be developed and nurtured within these communities, which could be based on family units, geographical areas, interest groups or digital networks.

Therefore, the objective is to encourage and support the use of the Welsh language within these areas, to make the use of the language a natural and easy process, and to enable the creation of more Welsh speakers.

In order to do this we will:

Increase the number of Welsh speakers

- Ensure an increase in Welsh language transmission within families by promoting language transmission and support opportunities for young families to use the Welsh language

Increase the use of Welsh

- Ensure places where people can be confident of being able to use the Welsh language from day to day, and develop more of these places by working with service providers, enterprise centres and workplaces
- Provide support for those learning and developing their Welsh language skills on their journey from being Welsh learners to fluent Welsh speakers, including opportunities to practice their skills in a less formal/informal setting
- Support and take advantage of events such as the Urdd Eisteddfod in 2018 to promote Welsh medium activities and to increase Welsh language use

5. Support

A solid infrastructure is required to be able to increase the number of Welsh speakers and to encourage its use among those who speak it. To enable that, groups and organisations who already operate within the county must be supported and encouraged to provide opportunities and services through the medium of Welsh, and to promote those services to encourage more people to use them.

The objective is therefore to support the increase in opportunities to use the Welsh language in people's dealings with different groups, societies and organisations, and to increase the number of activities being offered in Welsh within the county.

In order to do this we will:

Create favourable conditions

- Support Powys' Menterau Iaith in their work promoting the Welsh language and developing opportunities to use the Welsh language within the county
- Support the work of the Urdd and Young Farmers in developing opportunities for young people in Powys through the medium of Welsh
- Support staff to develop their Welsh language skills to enable them to work through the medium of Welsh, to increase the Council's capacity to provide services to its customers through the medium of Welsh
- Support other organisations working within Powys through the work of the Welsh Language Support, Promotion and Challenge Group

6. Rights

Confidence in the provision is key to ensuring that people use those services provided in Welsh. The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, and the Welsh Language Standards outline how Powys County Council, along with other organisations throughout Wales, will operate through the medium of Welsh, and promote the Welsh language.

The objective is therefore to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the Standards to develop the Welsh language within the county, and to ensure that the public are aware of their rights and of the service provided for them in Welsh, and that they have confidence in the services provided in Welsh by those organisations.

In order to do this we will:

Create favourable conditions

- Operate according to the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards, set under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, and take advantage of opportunities provided by the Standards to promote the Welsh language in Powys

7. Additional General Priority Areas

To ensure success within the 6 areas for development outlined above, action will be required within these additional general priority areas to support that work.

1. Mapping

Map what is currently being done within the county to promote the Welsh language, and the opportunities and activities currently available in Welsh.

2. Impact Assessment

Look at methods, in addition to census results, to measure the impact of Welsh language promotion activity.

3. Publicising good news stories

Publicise successes in promoting the Welsh language in the area, and businesses that have succeeded by operating bilingually, and where the Welsh language is a core element of their work.

4. Influence population movements

Look at appropriate steps to positively influence housing and planning policy, ensuring linguistic impact assessments are conducted as part of the planning process.

Ensuring newcomers receive information about the Welsh language's value and place within our communities.

Look to develop conditions which would attract Welsh speakers to live and work in the county.