



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

Welsh Language Promotion Strategy Progress Report 2020-2021

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Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Cymraeg
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Introduction

This Annual Report highlights our work in progressing the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2018-2023.

2020-2021 was not a 'normal' year with services being affected, staff being redeployed and new ways of working becoming the norm as a consequence of the pandemic outbreak, not just for the Council but also for our partners on the Fforwm Iaith – who have been supportive of and assisted in making progress towards our priorities set out in the Strategy.

The various lockdowns, ongoing restrictive practices as well as essential recovery work of all organisations have impacted on the amount of progress that was possible during the period. However, we and the Fforwm Iaith are committed to continue to progress actions during the life of the strategy.

A 'light touch' review of the actions was undertaken during 2020-2021 and although a number of actions were 'complete' or 'ongoing' further activity had already been identified under these actions and so it is considered appropriate to continue to report on them for the duration of the strategy.

Section One – Council focussed actions

Strategic Priority1: Children and Young People

1.1 Have a positive impact on Early Years provision

1.1.1 Provide appropriate Welsh language and childcare training for early years' practitioners in order to increase Welsh- medium provision.

- Throughout lockdown a number of online training courses were launched for example:
 - Welsh in Childcare
 - Clwb Cwtsh ran online sessions during the Autumn term
 - Termly sessions for Mudiad Meithrin members have been run by Academi
 - Clwb Cylch – online Cylch Meithrin sessions have been held weekly.
 - CAMAU Welsh in Childcare courses were available from January 2021 and promoted to all providers.
- We encouraged staff to complete the Cwlwm Welsh level checker online. (Cwlwm brings together the five leading childcare organisations in Wales to deliver a bilingual integrated service that will ensure the best possible outcomes for children and families across Wales.)
- Welsh resources continued to be distributed during restricted support visits by our development officer.
- Prior to the pandemic our development officer held story/singing sessions in all non-Welsh speaking settings to encourage staff to use more incidental Welsh. Unfortunately these sessions could not continue during 2020- 2021.

1.1.2 Increase the number of children attending Welsh-medium early years provision

- Welsh Government funding was secured to provide new/additional childcare spaces and additional Foundation Phase classrooms at specific Welsh-medium schools in order to meet the increase in numbers of pupils attending Welsh-medium early years' provision. Work was undertaken during the period in preparation for the new academic year; 24 new child care spaces have been funded in both YGG Tyle'r Ynn and YGG Cwmllynfell from September 2021 while an additional 10 childcare spaces have been funded in YGG Pontardawe from October/November 2021.
- During 2020-2021 there was an understandable decrease in the number of children accessing Welsh language childcare in Flying Start areas (77 compared to 130 in 2019-2020). The number of Welsh Flying Start childcare places also saw a decrease 65 compared to 90 in 2019-2020.

1.1.3 Increase the use of Welsh in playgroups and day nurseries that are primarily English-medium

- Our Early Years Childcare Unit is to adapt and implement a version of the Welsh charter for childcare settings. Initial plans and outlines have been discussed about an award scheme for English speaking settings and we are hoping to design and plan in the coming year.

1.2 Education – primary sector

1.2.1 Launch a county wide marketing campaign to promote the advantages of Welsh-medium education and the benefits of bilingualism

- Language promotion packs, created by Menter Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot, are being distributed many areas including Cwmllynfell, Rhos and Graig Newydd (Godre'r Graig).

- A 'Being Bilingual' booklet continues to be shared with schools. Partnership work with Menter Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot is strong and most Welsh-medium schools engage well with the Menter Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot to develop Welsh-medium activities within their schools for pupils and parents, for example the virtual Welsh Music Gig 'Tanio'r Ddraig'. However, these activities need to reach the wider communities in order to further promote the advantages of Welsh-medium education and the benefits of bilingualism.

1.2.2 Increase the capacity of Welsh-medium primary schools in key locations and actively consider the opening of new Welsh-medium primary schools in the not too distant future

- Welsh Government grant funding has been awarded for projects on several Welsh-medium schools:
 - YG Ystalyfera-Bro Dur - Ystalyfera campus – a further £9m new build accommodation for secondary aged pupils to include an astro turf pitch and sports facilities. Completion date September 2022.
 - YGG Rhosafan - Reducing Infant Class Size Grant (£1.34m) 4 classroom extension, completion date July 2021
 - YGG Tyle'r Ynn: (£1.14m) 2 classroom extension plus new childcare, completion July 2021
 - YGG Cwmllynfell: (£640K) 1 classroom, 1 new childcare facility completion August 2021
 - YGG Pontardawe: (£1.62m) 2 classrooms plus childcare facility, hall refurbishment, completion July 2021
 - YGG Blaendulais: (£1m) additional 16 place facility, scheme currently under development

1.2.3 Consider the effects of new housing developments on the growth of Welsh-medium education or the impact on Welsh speaking communities

- The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan Forum met in July 2021 to begin the development of a new 10 year WESP. Ambitious targets will be required to meet the Welsh Government's 10 year target for Neath Port Talbot to increase the number of Year 1 children taught through the medium of Welsh: from

17% (252 pupils) in 2019/20 to 27% (400 pupils) by 2032. It is anticipated that a draft WESP will be available for consultation by early November 2021.

1.2.4 Respond to Welsh Government's drive to create a million Welsh speakers by 2050 by targeting the key sector of Welsh-medium education

- This action will be realised with the development of the new WESP and progress on other initiatives.

1.2.5 Support the development and growth of the Language Charter which encourages the proactive use of Welsh in schools and in the community. Support the Second Language Charter for English-medium schools.

- Due to the recent pandemic there has been no progress in this area. However, when pupils have been able to return to school there has been an emphasis on improving pupils' oracy skills, especially in the Welsh-medium sector.
- Seven Welsh-medium primary schools are following the silver award targets for the Welsh Charter, with three following the Gold award. Nearly all, English-medium schools are currently engaged in the Welsh Charter scheme at the moment. 'Athrawon Bro' work very effectively with the English-medium schools to promote and develop the 'Cymraeg Campus' Welsh Charter scheme and continually encourage more schools to get involved.
- Our development officers continue to work closely with schools to secure a language learning continuum between current key stages that secures a better and a more ambitious language learning for pupils. We also work with curriculum leaders to promote a more meaningful relationship between the learner and the Welsh language that goes beyond the academic focus and aligns with the new Curriculum for Wales. The development officers have continued to work effectively with Menter Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot, yr Urdd and other key agencies to ensure that informal opportunities to use Welsh are facilitated and promoted; even though most of this work has been carried out remotely.

1.2.6 Ensure that parents are informed and are supported should they wish to continue their child's Welsh-medium education

- Following a virtual meeting of the Fforwm Iaith in May 2020 a Facebook group 'Welsh Homework Help' was created by Mentrau Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot and Abertawe to offer parents in the Swansea/Neath Port Talbot area practical support on homework, and any issues about Welsh medium education. Teachers, support staff and professionals from organisations such as the Mentrau Iaith (Castell-nedd Port Talbot and Abertawe), Cymraeg I Blant, the Urdd and others on the Fforwm provide this support for parents. Parents can post questions and ask for help or explanation or ask for resources to help. In March 2021 there were 267 members of the group.

As part of the creation of this group the following documents were created:

- 'What opportunities are there to use Welsh outside the classroom' - Alphabet (phonetic copy)
- A list of Welsh medium apps suitable for children (including links to the relevant 'app store').
- Document FAQs. This document contains the most frequently asked questions (based on input from Mentrau staff and the Fforwm Iaith). It is hoped to continue to add to this document as parents ask questions within the group.

In addition to the above documents, number of other resources have been included for example, Welsh Government's documents on the benefits of Welsh-medium education and a Welsh-language Children's Songbook, links to Welsh Government education websites, Cyw Mudiad Meithrin websites, Welsh for Children etc. and 'live' videos as well as promoting suitable events for children / families by the Mentrau, and other organisations and sharing information from the council and local schools about schools re-opening, and other news suitable for parents, including the schools arrangements for Covid-19.

1.3 Education – secondary sector

1.3.1 Increase number of learners in Welsh- medium secondary schools

- There has been a slight fall in numbers and percentage in Y7; 248 (14.9%) in 2021 compared to 257 (15.2%) in 2020.
- The percentage who commit to YG Ystalyfera Bro-Dur is higher than it has been for many years (86%). Those who do not transfer are highest in Pontardawe, Trebannws and Ystalyfera. Although this remains a concern, the transfer percentages have improved significantly (+ 6%).
- All proposed projects mentioned above are aimed at increasing WM provision and addressing key WESP priorities such as improved transition between key stages 2 and 3 in specific geographical areas.
- The WESP Forum has created a sub-committee to review and improve the current NPT website regarding education. Due to the recent pandemic this work is still ongoing. The new sub-group of the WESP Forum will decide which documentation needs to be put on the website to promote the advantages of Welsh-medium education.

1.3.2 Increase opportunities in English medium schools to use Welsh as a medium of instruction

1.3.3 Enable learners to switch from English medium to Welsh medium education at the end of Key Stage 2

- These two actions were very much aspirational when the strategy was initially developed and unfortunately little progress has been made. However, with the development of the new WESP during 2021-2022 there are likely to be greater opportunity to progress these actions: particularly with the consideration of language ‘immersion’ at Key Stage 2 and 3 as well as the emphasis on promoting and improving Welsh in English medium schools.

1.3.4 Ensure that Welsh Language Awareness programs are included in PSE curriculum in secondary schools to include traditional music, culture, and history/heritage

- This action will be realised with the introduction of the new Curriculum for Wales; the framework of which will 'reflect Wales, its cultural heritage and diversity, its languages and the values, histories and traditions of its communities and all of its people' to enable learners appreciate 'cynefin'.

1.3.5 Work with key partners to create opportunities for children and young people to use Welsh outside of school times to strengthen the link between the language of education and the community

- Three Welsh speaking youth workers were appointed to support Welsh language in youth clubs.
- During January – March 2021 the youth service in consultation with young people set up a virtual Welsh Language Youth Club with the support of Welsh speaking staff and young people. The Youth Service were successful in obtain Leadership Funding to enable us to provide this Club.
- Welsh language training was offered to all part time community based youth workers during lock down to help further create opportunities to use Welsh outside of the school environment and increase the use of Welsh language in communities.

1.3.6 Increase the number of social activities through the medium of Welsh or including Welsh culture and heritage for primary age children

- When appropriate during the period Youth Service staff attended Welsh-medium primary schools to raise awareness of the Welsh Language Youth Club which has resulted in a number of young people signing up to attend the new club.

1.3.7 Increase the number of social activities through the medium of Welsh or including Welsh culture and heritage for secondary age children

- As a result of the pandemic all our youth clubs closed from April 2020. However, as time progressed we were able to continue virtually and were able to deliver Welsh Language and Culture sessions in four of our clubs: one club successfully delivered four sessions while the remainder delivered one session each.
- Our youth club curriculum and activities continued to be delivered through the medium of Welsh, albeit virtually, during the period, which often meant delivering arts and craft, wellbeing resources and other equipment the homes of young people to enable them to take part in the virtual sessions.
- The Youth Council made a virtual visit of the Senedd where Welsh Government officers explained the work of the Senedd and how they are involving young people in their decision making.
- In June 2020 Spencer Major, Youth Work Volunteering Team, won the Youth Work Excellence 'Outstanding volunteer in a youth work setting' Award for his work in supporting young people in the Blaengwynfi and Cymmer Youth Clubs. His role in delivering and developing a broad range of activities in line with Citizenship, Art, Sport, Health & Welsh (CASHW) in a fun and engaging way as well as setting up forums in both youth clubs to provide young people with a space to discuss issues that affect them, was highly praised in making a valuable contribution to the Neath Port Talbot Youth Service.

1.3.8 Encourage greater social use of Welsh by pupils attending Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera Bro Dur.

- Our Youth Service was successful in applying for Leadership funding to develop a Welsh Language Youth Club. This virtual youth club, was established to encourage the social use of Welsh amongst pupils at Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera, has been shortlisted for a Youth Work Excellence Award, which recognises and celebrates outstanding youth work projects, youth workers and those involved in youth work across Wales. Finalists will be announced in November with an awards ceremony held in December 2021.

- Following the establishment of the virtual Welsh language youth club at Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera there are plans for an additional new Welsh language youth club at Ystalyfera Bro Dur during 2021

1.3.9 Provide opportunities for young people in Ystalyfera and Bro Dur to use Welsh in the community

- Our youth service helped deliver food hygiene courses to pupils at Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera
- NPT Youth Council is supported by our Youth Service which funds a dedicated worker, venue and travel costs to projects and events which include reward activities. The Youth Council, elected through a democratic process with candidates from secondary schools, partners and young people in Neath Port Talbot, has an increased number of seats for the 2021-2022 term amongst which is one for Welsh language.
- Part time community based youth workers undertook Welsh language training to help create and provide more opportunities to use Welsh in the Communities:
 - 18 staff completed the Welsh Welcome course (part 1 & part 2)
 - 12 staff completed the Welsh Welcome Back course (part 1 & part2)
 - 5 staff completed the Welsh Practitioners course (part 1 & part 2)

Strategic Priority 2: Families

2.1 Language Transfer in the Home

2.1.1 Raise awareness of the importance of language transmission amongst young Welsh speaking adults

- The closure of youth clubs and other venues during the pandemic has had a detriment impact on the use of Welsh in social settings.
- The development and delivery of language awareness programs in PSE courses at schools have not been able to be progresses the new Curriculum for Wales will provide greater opportunity to meet this action in the future.

2.1.2 Raise awareness of the importance of language transmission amongst families

- During the last year online lessons have provided indirect exposure to the language for many families and as a consequence there has been potential for the greater use of Welsh at home.
- Language awareness and family activities have been held online by Menter Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot including weekly newsletters with actives for adults and families, recipes for all to follow amongst others.
- During the early weeks of lockdown a Community Officer started with Menter Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot to help promote the language by organising activities and events, and working with the local community.

2.1.3 Organise a marketing campaign targeting young Welsh speaking adults

- We have not be able to progress this action to date. However, it will be considered as part of the promotional activities to be undertaken/coordinated during 2021-2022.

2.1.4 Provide support for parents with children in Welsh medium schools to alleviate concerns about helping with homework

- In July 2020 Menter Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot, together with Menter Abertawe, created a resource for parents with children in Welsh-medium education, to help them with homework and education. The new Facebook group 'Welsh Homework Help in Swansea and NPT' is available for parents, but also for teachers who are willing to offer help and support. Over 200 people signed up within the first week!

2.1.5 Provide childcare through the medium of Welsh

- Our Early Years' Childcare Unit, assisted by Menter Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot, sourced venues and volunteers for Ti a Fi sessions.
- A number of sessions have been held online during the period including weekly Cylch Ti a Fi sessions; Welsh Rhymetime, sign and story, recorded singing sessions, 'Me and My Baby' online group and 'Cuppa and chat Cymraeg' provided by Cymraeg i Blant CNPT.
- Outdoor group Cylch Ti a Fi tu allan (outdoors) have held sessions in Trebanos and other outdoor groups will be restarting in Pontardawe and Skewen.
- Croesi'r Bont (Welsh language immersion practise initiated in Denbighshire) has been extended to Meithrinfa Ddydd Y Waun.
- The development officer continues to work closely with our Family Information Service and Early Years' Flying Start teams to promote the use of Welsh on social media platforms

2.1.6 Provide Welsh medium childcare opportunities during school holidays

- The review of childcare needs during school holidays has yet to be completed

2.1.7 Increase the number of Welsh language activities that cater for the interest of families

- Leisure centres were closed for the majority of the last year and consequently no progress in relation to activities in leisure centres is able to be reported.
- Due to restrictions activities to celebrate notable days such as St Dwynwen's Day and St David's Day were unable to be held.
- Menter Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot produced weekly newsletters to promote activities /online events throughout 2020-2021. These have included Clwb Cwtsh, opportunities to learn to speak Welsh for parents and children; Cylch Canu, a chat and Welsh rhyme session; Dydd Miwsig Cymru/Welsh Language Music Day to celebrate all forms of Welsh language music, weekly playlists, recipes coffee mornings and craft activities amongst others.

2.1.8 Increase family focussed activities through the medium of Welsh

- With the closure of leisure centres and cultural centres over the last year we have not be able to progress this action. However, as centres have reopened there will be opportunity to address this during the remaining years of the strategy.

Strategic Priority 3: Communities

3.1 Welsh in the Community

3.1.1 Use communication technology to advertise employment opportunities requiring bilingual skills

- Our internal job vacancies page is accessible to all staff and all vacancies indicate if Welsh language skills are required. Job vacancies continue to be advertised via a dedicated webpage on our website again indicating if Welsh language skills are required. In addition Welsh essential/desirable posts continue to be advertised on external Welsh job sites.
- While the use of social media and other platforms also continue to be used for advertising job vacancies further consideration of their effectiveness and reach will be required.

3.1.2 Ensure that Leisure Centres proactively promote the use of Welsh, both in terms of provision and making it visible.

- Leisure centres were closed for the majority of the last year and consequently no progress is able to be reported.

3.1.3 Ensure access for adults to Welsh medium learning opportunities

- During 2020-2021 we had hoped to develop a webpage to include accessible information and links on language training opportunities in the county borough for but unfortunately due to the circumstances this was not possible. This will now be progressed during 2021-2022.

3.1.4 Consider a Sense of Place (to include Welsh language, culture and heritage) in the development of the Destination Management Plan

- The Tourism Team previously secured £93,000 from Visit Wales to deliver a destination marketing campaign to showcase key product in both the valleys and urban areas of the county borough. While

the launch of the campaign was delayed due to the pandemic, in September 2021 a new website was launched to showcase the new Neath Port Talbot destination brand The Dramatic Heart of Wales.

3.1.5 Celebrate the culture and heritage of the county borough

- Our shared heritage and culture will be a feature of the new curriculum for schools and it is anticipated that some links to the local area will be incorporated.
- Over the last year there has been little opportunity to progress this however the [NPT Heritage & History](#) webpage provides an appropriate medium for this work over the coming years.

3.2 Welsh in the Workplace

3.2.1 The Council to comply fully with the Welsh Language Standards

- Meetings of our Welsh Language Officer Group were suspended during the first half of the year but resumed later in the year to consider the Welsh Language Commissioner's monitoring report and promotional initiatives to be undertaken during the coming year.
- Further details on compliance with the Standards can be found in the Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2020-2021 which was publicised and published on our website by 30 June 2021.
- Our Equality and Community Cohesion Group continues to receive updates from our Welsh Language Officer Group and compliance is reported via the Welsh Language Standards Annual Report.

3.2.2 Ensure that numbers of staff are adequate for the level of Welsh being requested in order to comply with the Welsh Language Standards.

- Although we continued to advertise posts as Welsh essential/desirable the number of posts advertised during the year was significantly reduced as a consequence of the pandemic.

- A language skills strategy is to be developed over the coming year to help ensure the proportion of bilingual staff reflects that of the county borough.

3.2.3 Map current levels of Welsh language skills

- A new language assessment framework will form part of the implementation of a new HR/Payroll system being introduced during 2021-2022. The framework will enable staff to assess their language skills, and then update their HR records, in line with widely recognised criteria.

3.2.4 Provide opportunities for staff to improve their language skills

- Opportunities to learn/improve Welsh language skills have continued during 2020-2021 with online courses being made available for all staff. In 2020 -2021 258 staff accessed Welsh language training including 126 staff who completed Welcome/Welcome Back language courses and 68 Teachers who completed the Dysgu Cymraeg - E-Learning Teachers Part 1 (Welsh Course) with 58 also completing Part 2.

3.2.5 Enable staff and Elected Members to be aware of history and culture of Welsh language including compliance with Welsh language legislation

- A short programme of Welsh language awareness and compliance sessions were delivered to accountable managers by Menter Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot prior to the first lockdown.
- We will explore potential links between the Welsh Language, the proposed Heritage, Culture Sport and Leisure Strategy and other initiatives going forward.

3.2.6 Create an environment that encourages greater use of Welsh

- Although last year was extremely restrictive the Welsh Language Officer Group drafted a range of promotional activities which were supported by the Equality and Community Cohesion Group. A review of resources, production and distribution of promotional material along with more publicity linked to the

celebration of significant days and events are all identified activities to take place during 2021-2022 to help raise the profile and stimulate greater use of the language.

3.2.7 Provide intranet support for Welsh speakers and learners

- Resources to help and support all staff including Welsh speakers and learners continue to be available on our intranet; useful language resources e.g. e- learning, on-line grammar and spell checkers, on-line dictionaries and translation tools are accessible by all staff.
- A review, and revision as necessary, of these of these resources is to be undertaken during 2021-2022.
- During 2020-2021 we continued to work to enhance the number of Welsh speaking staff and many took the opportunity during the year to undertake Welsh language e-learning courses: 258 staff (243 from our Education Leisure and Lifelong Learning Directorate) completed e-learning Welsh language courses during the year.

Details of Welsh language courses are included on both our ‘Coronavirus (COVID-19) latest information Training and Resources’ and our ‘Human Resources Learning, Training & Development’ webpages.

3.2.8 Normalise the use of Welsh in the workplace

- While policies relating to staff employment have been produced in Welsh and are available on our intranet, to date no member of staff has wished to receive information regarding their employment in Welsh.
- Promotional activities to be undertaken/coordinated by WLOG during 2021-2022 will help raise the profile of Welsh within the workplace and so encourage its use.

3.2.9 Promote schemes that visually illustrate that Welsh is welcomed in the workplace

- We continued to promote Welsh amongst staff and towards the public; for example bilingual out of office messages, email signatures, letter heads. While previously laith Cymraeg badges and lanyards had been distributed to staff who were Welsh speakers/leaners, given the circumstances of the last year these have not been as visible. However, with the improving situation and many aspects of our lives returning to 'normal' a reinvigorated promotional drive is planned for the coming year; promotional material such as badges/lanyards/posters will be distributed as well as updated backgrounds with the laith Cymraeg logo will be available for use on Teams/Zoom.

3.2.10 Distribute Welsh language promotional material to staff

- Active promotion of the Welsh language amongst staff has been limited during the last year; staff have been redeployed to other service areas, access or distribution of additional material has not been possible. However, new promotional initiatives due to be undertaken during 2021-2022 will help ensure greater awareness of the language.

3.2.11 Develop confidence in the use of written Welsh

- With the pressures of enforced home working for many of our staff during 2020-2021 (from 50 to 1500 staff working from home within four weeks) it was not possible to ensure Cysill and Cysgair were installed on all laptops/tablets at the beginning of the first lockdown period. However, as time progressed our IT section worked to rectify this ensuring all staff who had the software previously have been able to access it at home.

3.2.12 Develop bilingual intranet interface and menus and bilingual interface for web applications

- This action requires further consideration in light of technological developments that have taken place over the last year particularly; the outcome will be reported in the annual report 2021-2022.

3.2.13 Encourage staff and Elected Members to use Welsh in internal and external meetings and in presentations

- There has been an increase in the use of Welsh at meetings over recent years. The use a small number of words and phrases by Welsh speaking elected members at meetings has helped spark confidence in others to use short phrases at meetings too.
- In March 2020 all Council meetings were suspended due to the outbreak of the pandemic but following the enactment of legislation to remove the requirement for Members to be seen and heard in formal meetings of the Council, key meetings were quickly resumed using Microsoft Teams. Unfortunately this platform is not able to support bilingual meetings and consequently all Council meetings will be moved to Zoom, which does have this capability, during 2021-2022.

3.2.14 Encourage Elected Members to use Welsh in internal and external meetings and in presentations

- While it was proposed to produce a list of words/phrases for use at meetings by non-Welsh speakers to encourage the use of Welsh at meetings, the use of Welsh phrases, etc., has developed organically over time thereby reducing the immediate need for an 'official' list. However, additional approaches are to be explored to help encourage the use Welsh at meetings etc.

3.3 Third party organisations associated with NPT CBC

3.3.1 Ensure that all groups or organisations receiving third party funding from the Council meet the Welsh language criteria of the grant

- Third sector grant funding application forms include a specific section on the Welsh language: the effect funding will have on opportunities to use the language and its equal treatment with English. All applications are assessed against Welsh language criteria.

3.4 Linking Economic Development with language

3.4.1 Ensure that all frontline Economic Development staff provides appropriate information with regard to Welsh language promotion and how it can improve business as a unique selling point.

- Since the development of the strategy, progress on this action has been slow due to a couple of significant contributory factors; Menter Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot's 'Cymraeg Byd Busnes' officer, who was to assist with this action, returned from maternity leave in time for the outbreak of the pandemic which resulted in all work being suspended while we and others came to terms with new ways of working and reprioritising of resources.
- Working with Menter Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot we aim to progress this action during 2021-2022.

3.4.2 Encourage businesses to promote the Welsh language

- Progress on this action has been again been limited but work will be undertaken to progress this during 2021-2022.

3.5 Strengthening links with the Council's key policies and strategies

3.5.1 Review the Local Development Plan to strengthen the Welsh language element in relation to all areas of the county borough, not only areas of linguistic sensitivity.

- Work on the next iteration of the Local Development Plan is underway and consideration will be given to strengthening the Welsh language elements of it and associated policies across the county borough.

3.5.2 Ensure that the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy is integrated into the Valleys Action Plan developed by the task and Finish Group.

- The principles of the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy underpin the Valley Action Plan for example, childcare provision includes Welsh language providers (see progress in relation to early years action); all third sector grant applications include Welsh language elements with successful applications received from organisations based in valley areas and/or whose activities will benefit our valleys.

3.5.3 Encourage third party community organisations that that have taken on assets from the council to adopt Welsh language policies in line with NPTCBC.

- It has not be possible to progress this action at this time however consideration will be given over the coming year as to how best we can meet this action

Section 2 – Fforwm Iaith focused actions

Strategic Priority 1: Children and Young People

1.1 Education - Early Years provision

1.1.4 Increase number of Cylchoedd Ti a Fi and Cylchoedd Meithrin

- Please see corresponding actions in Section one

1.1.5 Increase the number of parents who send their children to Welsh medium education

- Cymraeg i Blant made available online sessions for parents during the period, for example, one-to-one message sessions, 'Story and Song Signing' sessions, a new 'Practicing Your Welsh' course ('Cuppa & Chat Welsh' to accompany the 'Clwb Cwtsh' course) and 'Me and My Baby' course for prospective and new parents. Not only were Cymraeg i Blant able to continue to offer support to parents in Neath Port Talbot throughout the period. but were also able to reach more parents online and work more intensively with them, with more digital resources made available to support them to use Welsh in the home.

1.1.6 Provide basic language training for workers in mainly English medium settings

- While there has been no significant progress in developing provision for staff working in the early years sector (nurseries and day care etc), specific short courses for teachers and headteachers have been delivered by Learn Welsh Swansea Bay Region for several years, for example:
 - Introducing Welsh in the Classroom to teachers,
 - Introducing Welsh in the Classroom to Teaching Assistants,
 - Everyday Welsh (for teachers who want to make occasional use of Welsh),
 - Language Patterns for the Foundation Phase (nursery and reception age),

- Language Patterns for Years 1 + 2,
- Language Patterns for Years 3 + 4
- Language Patterns for Years 5 + 6,
- Courses for Headteachers

1.1.7 Improve language progression from Cylchoedd Meithrin to Welsh medium education

- This action will be realised with the development of the new WESP and progress on other initiatives

1.2 Further education sector

1.2.7 Increase Welsh medium provision in Neath Port Talbot College

- As a consequence of the pandemic no progress was made during 2020-2021.

1.2.8 Provide social opportunities for college learners to meet and use the Welsh language

- Menter Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot continued to offer many opportunities for young people, children and members of the wider community to socialise virtually over the period; creating/publishing content that appealed to a large number of people, using a variety of themes, topics and activities. While not specifically aimed at young people in NPT College the wide appeal of activities/events ensured that fluent speakers and learners alike were able to participate:
 - Themed weekly activities and resources available via Facebook/the website
 - Welsh Music Day – celebrated with a virtual gig by Bronwen Lewis
 - Competitions
 - Youth Forum – this was relaunched during the period in association with the Urdd
 - Podcasts

Strategic Priority 2: Families

2.1 Language Transfer in the Home

2.1.9 Ensure that more parents use Welsh as the language of the home

- Although restrictive 2020-2021 also provided opportunities; with Cymraeg i Blant able to reach more parents online, work more intensively with them and provide more digital resources to support them to use Welsh in the home.

2.1.10 Raise awareness of the importance of language transmission amongst young Welsh speaking adults

- Welsh Government's Language Transfer Strategy (published 2021) focuses on four areas:
 - Inspire children and young people to speak Welsh with their children in the future.
 - Reignite the Welsh language skills of those who may not have used Welsh since their school days, or who aren't confident in their language skills, to speak Welsh with their own children.
 - Support and encourage use of Welsh within families where not everybody speaks Welsh.
 - Support Welsh-speaking families to speak Welsh with their children.

It will be necessary to refocus this action to enable the council and partners to play their part realising this strategy.

2.2 Welsh for Adults

2.2.1 Increase the number of adults learning Welsh

- Even though a new 'mainstream' curriculum has been introduced to deliver a range of provision across all levels of learning together with supplementary courses, courses for workplaces and a program of activities to support learners, progress within Neath Port Talbot has been challenging.

With the outbreak of the pandemic in March 2020 plans for face to face provision were suspended although a large proportion of Learn Welsh Swansea Bay Region lessons were made available online ensuring a relatively seamless learning experience for learners. This was made possible by the work undertaken by tutors to convert teaching materials into digital formats to enable lessons to be delivered online.

There has been a gradual increase in the number of enrolments in Neath Port Talbot over the last 3 years, but a more mixed picture of those numbers completing their course (especially last year when provision was introduced online in 2020):

- 2018-19 - 301 registrations; 234 completions (78%)
- 2019-20 - 331 registrations; 279 completions (84%)
- 2020-21(online) - 375 registration; 226 completions (60%)

2.2.2 Increase the number of learners progressing from Entry and Foundation levels to Higher level courses

- This has been a constant challenge, and despite the challenges we experienced during the Covid era, overall the numbers for Learn Welsh Swansea Bay Region progression courses have been better for 2021-22 than in previous years. However, it is difficult to draw comparisons based on the data due to the specific circumstances and plans put in place during this period. 'Transition' sessions continue to be delivered within mainstream lessons to build the confidence among learners to progress to the next level.

2.2.3 Provide more language courses in the workplace at various levels of proficiency to enable more employees to work bilingually

- Engagement with local workplaces remains a key feature of the work of the Welsh for Adults Centre, although this has proved extremely challenging during 2020-2021. However, online courses across all levels (as above) have been made available.

2.2.4 Provide informal opportunities for Welsh learners to meet and practice their language skills

- An annual program of learner support activities is organised by Learn Welsh Swansea Bay Region, and regular and one off events information is shared with learners on a monthly basis. During the initial lockdown and subsequent restrictions alternative online events were sought. Whilst online activity can be somewhat disadvantageous one benefit has been that learners can join regardless of their geographical location. In time, as the public health situation improves, it may be possible to consider resuming face-to-face events.

2.2.5 Provide opportunities for Welsh learners to integrate into Welsh speaking networks and organisations

- The national 'Siarad' Speaking scheme, coordinated locally by Learn Welsh Swansea Bay Region, brings Welsh speakers and learners together for 10 hours of informal conversations in digital (since April 2020) social settings.

The scheme aims to increase learners' confidence and introduce them to opportunities to use their Welsh locally and is available to learners on Intermediate (Canolradd), Advanced (Uwch) or Proficient (Hyfedredd) level courses.

- Menter Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot has worked to continue to offer our communities opportunities to socialise. Although it has not been possible to carry out face-to-face activities, Menter Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot has:
 - Held over 450 activities
 - Seen over 3,300 children attending various sessions
 - Seen over 16,000 adults taking part in activities
 - Created over 250 diverse resources for children/families
 - Created 27 unique playlists on Spotify

2.2.6 Provide on-line opportunities for Welsh learners to practice their Welsh

- The last year has necessitated a move to online activities and events for all. Menter Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot created and shared online content, and provided social opportunities and activities to support parents whose children are in Welsh-medium education, resources for children of all ages, and for learners, while offering information on Welsh heritage and history, local issues and more. In addition existing activities like the Aberavon Coffee Morning were able to continue with Menter Iaith Castell - nedd Port Talbot enabling virtual sessions to take place.
- The national Learner Support program provided regular opportunities during the period for Welsh learners to practice their Welsh for example, through discussion clubs and online coffee mornings. In addition, supplementary courses and workshops were available such as Sadwrn Siarad (which were very popular during the lock-up periods). In addition the weekly sessions were extended to allow more opportunities to practice conversation.

Strategic Priority 3: Communities

3.1 Welsh in the Community

3.1.6 Ensure that the fall in the percentage of Welsh speakers in the Swansea Valley is limited, with an action plan specifically designed for the area and working alongside Ty'r Gwrhyd to strategically impact on the area.

- Ty'r Gwrhyd's role as a community centre supporting the Welsh language, holding Welsh medium social activities, community events and educational programmes for all ages, as well as being home to a Welsh bookshop and offices, is a key component in the work to halt the decline of the language in the Swansea and Neath Valleys.

To date there has been little significant progress on this action and consideration will need to be given as to whether it remains relevant or if more appropriate action should be developed to stem the decline.

3.1.7 Ensure that the populated areas of Neath and Port Talbot are targeted as areas of potential growth and develop action plans for each town and its people.

- Work on realising this action has not yet commenced and with the outbreak of the pandemic it may not be possible to fully address this during the life of this strategy. However Learn Welsh Swansea Bay Region staff are located at Ty Gwrhyd Centre and continue to work to raise the profile and encourage the use of Welsh across all areas of Neath Port Talbot.
- The first half of 2019 saw the opening of a pop up unit at Aberavon Shopping Centre, made possible through an innovation grant from the National Centre for Learning Welsh, with the aim of promoting opportunities to learn Welsh in the Port Talbot area (including free taster sessions) and provide information on the benefits of Welsh medium education.

3.1.8 Ensure that sports clubs are supported to use Welsh as a natural language and encourage the use of Welsh in informal and formal club settings

- Work to engage with sports clubs and societies by the Learn Welsh Swansea Bay Region to increase awareness of opportunities to use and learn Welsh, including free taster courses to sports clubs in the area, has taken place over the period but there has been little take up to date.

3.1.9 Encourage the use of Welsh in Community and Town council meetings, as well as NPTCVS, Chamber of Trade and voluntary sector meetings and forums

- As there has been no significant progress on this action it consideration of whether it remains relevant or if a more appropriate action should be developed.

3.1.10 Ensure community and volunteer involvement in planning and organising Welsh language activities

- Menter Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot played an important role in the humanitarian response during the first lock down period: gathering and sharing information about businesses that were still operating/changes to services, providing a Welsh language 'keep in touch' service when required, as well as supporting NPTCVS to share bilingual/Welsh medium messages.
- Opportunities to contribute to a local community newspaper's content (creating articles, activities or crafts, as well as contributing to designing or creating the online newsletter) were offered to the sixth form at Ysgol Ystalyfera but were not taken up.