



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

Welsh Language Promotion Strategy

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Introduction

Our first five year Welsh Language Promotion Strategy was launched in 2018 and this strategy for 2023-2028 represents the first revision of the Council's strategy to promote and support the Welsh language in Neath Port Talbot.

This revision has taken account of, and builds on, the progress made in the initial strategy, the commitments of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032 as well as the work of our partners in promoting the Welsh language locally.

We acknowledge the limitations we have to increase the number of Welsh speakers in Neath Port Talbot but by working with local organisations, our schools and residents of our many communities we are confident that we will meet the commitments laid out in the strategy.

Although this revised Strategy has been shaped by the feedback received from and discussions with, and between, our many communities, partner organisations, elected members and our senior management team, it is not a 'done deal'. We will revisit the strategy to take into account feedback received during the consultation period to ensure its focus and content along with actions initially identified are appropriate to meet our vision and target.

Vision

The Welsh language is visible in our communities and used by an increased number of people in their daily lives.

Target

As a requirement of the promotion standards we must set a target (in terms of the percentage of speakers in our area) for increasing or maintaining the number of Welsh speakers in the area by the end of the 5 year strategy.

Our previous target of an increase of a minimum of 1% appears to not have been met, according to the Census 2021 data. However, an increase in children engaging with Welsh medium education along with the Annual Population Survey data for persons 3years+ indicates to the contrary.

In light of this it is appropriate to continue to use the target of 1% as an interim measure until further analysis of all relevant data can be undertaken.

Strategic Themes

Our approach set out in this document is structured to reflect the strategic themes outlined in the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 Welsh Language Strategy. As these themes reflect our own belief in how the Welsh language can be promoted/facilitated locally we will work toward realising of the themes of

- Increasing the number of Welsh speakers
- Increasing the use of Welsh
- Creating favourable conditions – infrastructure and context

These themes while not explicitly reflecting the wellbeing objectives in our Corporate Plan 2023-2028 they do permeate/complement each one to as indicated below:

Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2023 - 2028

Strategic Theme 1

Increasing the number of Welsh speakers

Strategic Theme 2

Increasing the use of Welsh

Strategic Theme 3

Creating favourable conditions - infrastructure and context

Corporate Plan 2023 - 2028

Wellbeing Objective1

All children get the best start in life.

Wellbeing Objective 2

All communities are thriving and sustainable.

Wellbeing Objective 3

Our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations.

Wellbeing Objective 4

Local people are skilled and access high quality, green jobs.



Welsh is more than just the language; it is part of our being, our heritage and culture. It is woven into the fabric of our lives - even if not instantly recognisable; our place names, forenames, colloquialisms, all are rooted in the Welsh language. Our Culture and Heritage Strategy, currently being developed, will further address these links. Actions identified as part of this promotion strategy will help our aim of increasing the numbers of Welsh speakers and the use of the language whilst also complementing the links between language, culture and heritage.

In order to increase the number of Welsh speakers over the life of the strategy we, both individually and with our partners, will prioritise key areas for action:

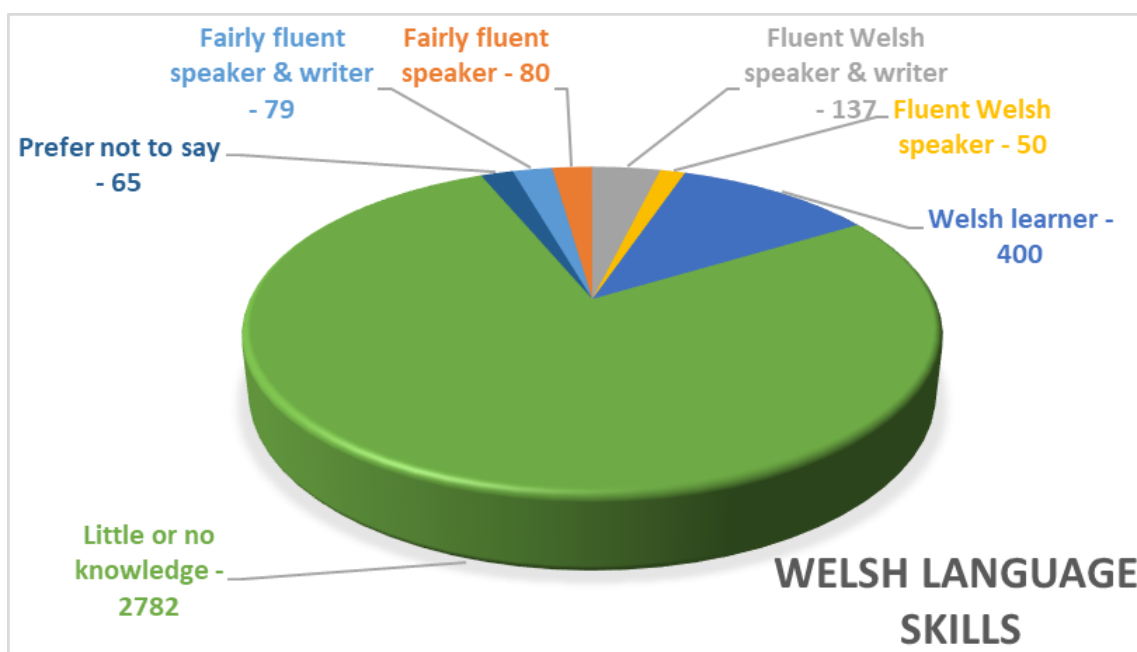
Strategic Theme 1: Increasing the numbers of Welsh speakers
Vision: More people speak Welsh
Key areas of work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the implementation of the WESP 2022-2032 • Language transmission in the home • Support people learning/speaking Welsh
Potential actions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote benefits of bilingualism/language awareness to young families and all new comers into NPT • Provide homework support to pupils of non-Welsh speaking families attending Welsh medium schools • Explore reasons for limited take up/access to Welsh language courses/education amongst specific communities • Provide language awareness and training courses for teaching and non-teaching staff
Strategic Theme 2: Increasing the use of Welsh
Vision: Welsh is an integral part of people's everyday life
Key areas of work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and promote the use of Welsh in social settings • Expand the use of Welsh in the workplace
Potential actions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the instances of using Welsh within the Council • Develop a programme of Welsh language events and activities across NPT • Increased use of Welsh in a social context • Work in partnership to identify good practice and resources to increase the number of welsh speaking staff in all our organisations
Strategic Theme 3: Creating Favourable Conditions: Infrastructure and Context
Vision: We have an environment in which the language thrives
Key areas of work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the visibility of the language across the area • Embed Welsh into all our strategies and plans
Potential actions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with partners to increase the visibility of Welsh across leisure, business and cultural locations, activities and events • Promote Welsh in all new developments • Work with services to ensure Welsh is a key element of all new strategies and plans

Neath Port Talbot Welsh Language Profile

Council

Over recent years the number of staff who identified as having Welsh language skills has remained relatively low overall. However, there has been a small increase in the number of staff identifying as fluent speakers and writers, 137 in 2021-2022 compared to 126 during 2020-2021, and the number of Welsh learners within the council has increased by 17.

Directorate/Service	Fairly Fluent Speaker & Writer	Fairly Fluent Speaker	Fluent Speaker & Writer	Fluent Speaker	Welsh Learner	Little or no knowledge	Prefer Not To Say	Total
Chief Officers	-	-	-	-	1	3	-	4
Chief Executive's Office								
Digital Services	4	1	2	-	7	90	1	105
Financial Services	3	3	2	-	10	136	1	155
Human & Organisational Development	2	4	5	1	11	77	1	101
Legal & Democratic Services	5	2	6	1	18	64	-	96
Education Leisure and Lifelong Learning								
Early Years, Inclusion & Partnerships	4	3	6	2	31	86	6	138
Education Development	5	4	12	4	38	142	4	209
Support Services & Transformation	11	4	25	10	34	469	29	582
Environment								
Engineering and Transport	4	3	6	2	13	107	1	136
Planning & Public Protection	7	9	12	1	60	146	6	241
Property and Regeneration	-	7	3	2	12	112	2	138
South Wales Trunk Road Agency	2	5	9	6	19	155	1	197
Streetcare Services	9	11	13	7	32	384	6	462
Social Service Health and Housing								
Adult Services	12	12	19	9	50	455	4	561
Business Services	-	4	2	4	9	91	2	112
Children and Young People Services	11	8	15	1	55	265	1	356
Total	79	80	137	50	400	2782	65	3593



Neath Port Talbot Locality

According to the 2011 Census, almost 21,000 (15%) of Welsh speakers live in Neath Port Talbot.

Ward	Number of people over 3 years of age	Number of people aged 3+ that can speak Welsh	% of people aged 3+ that can speak Welsh
Neath Port Talbot	135,281	20,698	15.3
Aberavon	5,232	411	7.9
Aberdulais	2,305	311	13.5
Alltwen	2,251	664	29.5
Baglan	6,627	557	8.4
Blaengwrach	1,935	287	14.8
Briton Ferry (East)	2,827	242	8.6
Briton Ferry (West)	2,896	275	9.5
Bryn and Cwmavon	6,330	1,024	16.2
Bryncoch (North)	2,139	297	13.9
Bryncoch (South)	5,706	699	12.3
Cadoxton	1,647	211	12.8
Cimla	3,835	350	9.1
Coedffranc (Central)	3,870	425	11
Coedffranc (North)	2,322	265	11.4
Coedffranc (West)	2,563	316	12.3

Ward	Number of people over 3 years of age	Number of people aged 3+ that can speak Welsh	% of people aged 3+ that can speak Welsh
Crynant	1,851	465	25.1
Cwmllynfell	1,137	669	58.8
Cymmer	2,714	186	6.9
Dyffryn	3,078	350	11.4
Glyncorrwg	1,054	65	6.2
Glynneath	3,320	689	20.8
Godre'r Graig	1,571	473	30.1
Gwaun-cae-gurwen	2,823	1,576	55.8
Gwynfi	1,314	92	7
Lower Brynamman	1,277	776	60.8
Margam	2,908	295	10.1
Neath (East)	6,137	497	8.1
Neath (North)	3,838	379	9.9
Neath (South)	4,789	440	9.2
Onllwyn	1,161	222	19.1
Pelenna	1,113	178	16
Pontardawe	5,232	1,624	31
Port Talbot	5,457	518	9.5
Resolven	3,044	341	11.2
Rhos	2,382	588	24.7
Sandfields (East)	6,692	504	7.5
Sandfields (West)	6,495	524	8.1
Seven Sisters	2,049	469	22.9
Taibach	4,634	354	7.6
Tonna	2,445	292	11.9
Trebanos	1,367	459	33.6
Ystalyfera	2,911	1,339	46

Source: 2011 Census

The vast majority of Welsh speakers were in the upper Swansea Valley and Amman Valley, with some communities such as Gwaun-Cae-Gurwen, Cwmllynfell and Lower Brynamman among the highest percentage of Welsh speakers in Wales

However, these areas along with Crynant, have seen the greatest decline in the percentage and numbers of Welsh speakers between 2001 and 2011 (table below).

Community	Number of Welsh speakers (2001)	Number of Welsh speakers (2011)	Change	% of Welsh speakers (2001)	% of Welsh speakers (2011)	Change
Cwmllynfell	741	669	-72	68.2	58.2	-9.4
Lower Brynamman	861	776	-85	68.1	60.8	-7.3
Gwaun Cae Gurwen	1,860	1,5726	-288	67.9	55.8	-12.1
Ystalyfera	1,614	1,339	-275	54.6	46	-8.6
Trebanos	580	459	-121	43.4	33.6	-8.8
Godre'r Graig	580	473	-107	41.5	30.1	-11.4
Pontardawe	1,826	1,624	-202	37.4	31	-6.4
Alltwen	800	664	-136	35.9	29.5	-6.4
Rhos	692	588	-104	28.6	24.7	-3.9
Crynant	699	465	-234	46.53	25.1	-21.43

Source: 2001 and 2011 Census

Factors that contribute historically to linguistic erosion include:

- Lack of language transmission at home
- Out-migration / Immigration
- Negative perception of the inherent value of the language
- Lack of awareness of the advantages of bilingualism
- Lack of confidence in speaking Welsh
- The spread of English into traditional Welsh language areas
- Mixed language marriages
- The power of Anglo-American influence on the interests of children and young people
- More deaths than births among Welsh-speaking families

Census 2021 data is currently only available on an authority wide basis and disappointingly indicates a decrease in the numbers of Welsh speakers locally, a picture reflected across most of Wales.

There has been a significant decrease in the number and percentage of Welsh speakers between the 2011 and 2021 Census; 20,698 (15.3%) of the local population were able to speak Welsh in the 2011 Census while only 18,662 (13.5%) indicated having this language skill in 2021:

	Number who can speak Welsh			Percentage who can speak Welsh		
	2001	2011	2021	2001	2011	2021
NPT	23,404	20,698	18,662	18	15.3	13.5
Wales	582,368	562,016	538,296	20.8	19.0	17.3

The decline in numbers across Wales has been attributed primarily to the decrease in percentage of children and young people (the group most likely to report ability) reported as being able to speak Welsh. The Census 2021 was held during the pandemic and followed periods of lockdown which necessitated remote learning for children and many people working from home. It is not known how the pandemic impacted people's reported Welsh language ability, or their perception of the Welsh language ability of others, such as their children.

In addition, mortality rates, immigration/migration and the subjective nature of language skills all are likely to contribute to the decrease in the number of people identifying as able to speak Welsh.

With Census 2021 data still being released the Plan will be reviewed in light of the additional data and insight to ensure it addresses the ongoing position.

Contrary to Census data the Annual Population Survey has historically and continues to indicate figures far above the Census data:

Neath Port Talbot						
	2011	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total Population	134,400	136,100	137,800	136,400	135,400	137,900
Can speak Welsh	27,200	30,500	34,600	27,900	31,100	31,400
% who can speak Welsh	20.7%	22.4%	25.5%	20.5%	23%	22.8%

While the Census 2021 data indicates the decrease in the percentage of children and young people reporting the ability of speak Welsh, data from our pupil level annual school census (PLASC), more consistent with the annual population survey data, indicates an increase in the numbers enrolled in Welsh medium education.

PLASC - Years N1-11			
	2011	2021	2023 (projected)
No. in Welsh medium schools	2,993	3,321	3,329
No. in NPT schools	20,399	21,149	20,535
% in Welsh medium schools	14.7%	15.7%	16.2%

Our Welsh medium schools are:

Primary

Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Blaendulais
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Castell-nedd
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Cwmnedd
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Cwmllynfell
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Gwaun Cae Gurwen
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pontardawe
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Rhosafan
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Trebannws
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Tregeles
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Tyle'r Ynn

Middle (ages 3-18)

Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera - Bro Dur

More detailed information about Welsh medium education, including an aim to create a further three Welsh medium primary schools, can be found in our [WESP 2022-2032](#).

Policy Context

Welsh Language Measure 2011

The Measure:

- gave the Welsh Language official status in Wales - meaning that Welsh should be treated no less favourably than the English language;
- established the role of the Welsh Language Commissioner who has responsibility for promoting the Welsh language and improving the opportunities people have to use it;
- created a procedure for introducing duties in the form of language standards that explain how organisations are expected to use the Welsh language and create rights for Welsh speakers;
- made provision regarding promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language and increasing its use in everyday life;
- made provision regarding investigating an interference with the freedom to use the Welsh language.

Welsh Language Standards (No1) Regulations 2015

Under the Regulations Welsh language standards have been imposed on the Council which aim to promote and facilitate the Welsh language, and ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English language.

The Standards, as applied to the Council, and contained in the compliance notice, comprises service delivery, policy making, operational, promotion and record keeping standards. As a consequence of the promotion standards the Council has developed its Welsh Language Promotion Strategy.

Cymraeg 2050 Strategy

Published originally in 2017 and more recently updated the strategy illustrates the Welsh Government's vision to see "the Welsh language thrive" by achieving a million Welsh speakers by 2050. Three key strategic themes are identified to realise this ambition:

- Increasing the number of Welsh speakers
- Increasing the use of Welsh
- Creating favourable conditions – infrastructure and context

More than just Words

The Welsh Government's strategic framework to strengthen Welsh language provision in health and social care aims to support Welsh-speakers to receive services in their first language.

Its 5 year plan 2022-2027 is based on and reflects the strategic themes of Cymraeg 2050:

- Culture and Leadership
- Welsh language planning and policies including data
- Supporting and developing the Welsh Language skills of the current and future workforce
- Sharing best practice and an enabling approach

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

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.

One of the seven Wellbeing goals contained in the Act is a 'Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language - a society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.'

Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032

Prepared under Section 84 of The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) Regulations 2019 this latest iteration, Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032 (WESP), has been developed in the firm belief that education is the vehicle that will produce Welsh speakers of the future.

We believe that all children should benefit from the opportunity to learn, appreciate and shape their lives through the medium of Welsh and so Welsh-medium education is an integral and essential part of the learning offer in Neath Port Talbot. The implementation of the WESP will enable all learners, families and carers to develop their Welsh language skills and to use the language confidently in everyday life.

Our WESP is the cornerstone for this vision and its outcomes detail how we plan to support and further develop Welsh language education in schools and in our wider communities and how we plan for future growth:

- More nursery children/3 year olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh
- More reception class children/ 5 year olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh
- More children continue to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another
- More learners study for assessed qualifications in Welsh (as a subject) and subjects through the medium of Welsh
- More opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school.
- An increase in Welsh-medium education provision for learners with additional learning needs (in accordance with duties determined by the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018)
- Increase the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and teach through the medium of Welsh.

With the outcomes and ambitious targets of the WESP relating to the complete education journey it is not appropriate to include similar actions in this revised Welsh Language Promotion Strategy. However, as both the Plan and Strategy relate to the promotion and facilitation of the Welsh language it is now appropriate for their greater alignment and potential complementary actions to be included in the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy as necessary.

Working in partnership

Partners in our journey to promote and facilitate the Welsh language come in all guises from well-established organisations to informal groups, from schools to businesses, from families with babes in arms to those who have lived full and long lives. Welsh speakers or not, young or old we all play our part on this journey. This strategy has the potential to help us make great strides but without the contribution of everyone in Neath Port Talbot it will fall short and not realise its full potential.

Our communities are our greatest partners. We are mindful that any success in this, and any other, strategy is dependent on the investment we all put into it. The investment of our time, our actions and support, finance and commitment to making a difference; for those who already use Welsh daily, who are on the first steps in learning Welsh, those who don't speak it but support the language as well as those who find it all a waste of time, we all have a part to play.

There is an array of local organisations that have the future of the language as a key principle of their work. The significant role they played in the previous strategy is consolidated in this revised iteration. While only those bodies governed by the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations (2015) are subject to promotion standards each organisation has a part to play in ensuring the promotion and the continued use of the language is facilitated in all aspects of daily life.

Local organisations, individually and as constituent members of the Iaith Fforwm Abertawe/Castell-nedd, continue to play a key role in the implementation of the strategy. With the recent restructure of the Fforwm there is greater opportunity to work together in a more structured way and in so doing will address some of the issues highlighted in the evaluation.

We remain conscious of the limitations we as council have in influencing the numbers of Welsh language speakers in the area. Consequently in developing actions we have been mindful of three discrete areas within our responsibility:

- Direct - plans, strategies and internal processes over which the council has sole control.
- Indirect - processes that the council can affect with interventions but does not have outright control
- Partnerships - working with organisations and groups to progress new and established areas of work and creating positive attitudes towards the Welsh language.

Monitoring

We will continue to use existing executive reporting structures to monitor the progress of the Strategy.

Progress will be monitored by the Cabinet and scrutinised by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee. Clear monitoring arrangements will be developed with the Language Forum to avoid duplication of effort and ensure alignment with our partners' existing reporting arrangements.

In addition regular progress reports to our internal Welsh Language Officer Group, the WESP Forum and to the Council's Equality and Community Cohesion Group.

The action plan will be reviewed annually and actions revised where appropriate.

Measures will be developed to ensure progress is measured appropriately.

Welsh Language Promotion Strategy Action Plan

This latest Action Plan builds on progress made during the period of the first strategy, 2018- 2023, while responding to the position facing the Welsh language in Neath Port Talbot today. The actions will help in developing Neath Port Talbot as an area where the language is considered an important and relevant factor in people's everyday lives.

As in our initial strategy the action plan has been developed within current budgetary constraints although opportunities for additional budget/ external funding will be pursued. A number of actions have been included which are already being delivered or currently being developed to promote and facilitate the language locally.

The following draft Action Plan includes 'potential actions' that have already been identified which we believe will help realise our vision. However, these actions are not set in stone and are included here as the beginning of what we hope will be a meaningful conversation; on the vision and strategy and as to what realistic and achievable actions should be included to help ensure a future where the Welsh language is visible and used by more people in their daily lives.

Strategic Theme 1: Increasing the numbers of Welsh speakers

Vision: More people speak Welsh

Key areas of work

- Support the implementation of the WESP 2022-2032
- Language transmission in the home
- Support people learning/speaking Welsh

Potential Actions

- Promote the 'Welsh Homework Help' Facebook group to all pupils from non-Welsh speaking families in years 5 and 6 from who attend Welsh medium schools.
- Promote the 'Welsh Homework Help' Facebook group to all pupils from non-Welsh speaking families in years 7 and 8 who attend Welsh medium schools.
- Update and promote the 'Benefits of Bilingualism' booklet.
- Promote Welsh language/Welsh-medium education among non-Welsh speaking families to increase/support language awareness
- Establish and promote Welsh language courses for parents who send their children to Welsh-medium primary schools.
- Develop appropriate courses and support for teaching and non-teaching staff learning Welsh
- Explore potential barriers to and increase the take up of Welsh medium education by children from BME communities and other underrepresented groups.
- Explore potential barriers to and increase the take up of adult Welsh language courses amongst BME communities and other underrepresented groups

Strategic Theme 2: Increasing the use of Welsh

Vision: Welsh is an integral part of people's everyday life

Key areas of work

- Support and promote the use of Welsh in social settings
- Expand the use of Welsh in the workplace

Potential Actions

- Provide opportunities for our staff to access appropriate levels of Welsh language learners/ improvement courses
- Expand the Welsh language leisure programme across Neath Port Talbot.
- Promote the leisure programme to staff and the public through targeted and more general publicity.
- Explore opportunities to increase the visibility of the Welsh language at all leisure facilities
- Promote and embed the Council's Internal use of Welsh Policy
- Explore how Welsh can be used more in a social context
- Work with partners to encourage greater use of the language in all youth clubs
- Welsh language awareness training will be promoted to all staff
- Work with partners to identify opportunities to promote the Welsh language in a variety of social settings

Strategic Theme 3: Creating Favourable Conditions: Infrastructure and Context

Vision: We have an environment in which the language thrives

Key areas of work

- Increase the visibility of the language across the area
- Embed Welsh into all our strategies and plans

Potential Actions

- Work with the BME Community Association to explore ways in which to increase awareness of the Welsh language and culture within communities
- Develop and implement a new Culture and Heritage Strategy that promotes awareness, use and visibility of the Welsh language within Neath Port Talbot
- Develop and implement our internal language skills policy across our service areas.
- Ensure the Welsh language is central to the design and application of new technologies.
- Work with the business community to explore opportunities to increase the visibility of Welsh.
- Ensure Welsh language, heritage and culture is a key component of the Destination Management Plan currently being developed.
- Ensure Welsh is taken into account during the development of the commemoration of people and events in the public realm policy.
- Include the Welsh language as a key element in all future policies and strategies