

Denbighshire County Council Welsh Language Scheme Revised 2006

This revised scheme was approved by the Welsh Language Board under Section 14 (1) and 16(3) of the Welsh Language Act on 31st March of 2006.

Denbighshire County Council has adopted the principle that in the conduct of its business with the public, it will treat the English and Welsh languages on the basis of equality. This scheme sets out how the Council will continue to develop this principle when providing services to the public.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Under the Welsh Language Act 1993 every public body providing services to the public in Wales has to prepare a scheme setting out how it will provide those services in Welsh. This is our scheme. It describes how we will give effect, so far as is both appropriate in the circumstances and reasonably practicable, to the principle established by the Welsh Language Act that, in the conduct of public business and the administration of justice in Wales, the Welsh and English languages should be treated on a basis of equality.

1.2 The scheme covers the services that Denbighshire County Council provides to the public. In this scheme, the term public means individuals, legal persons and corporate bodies. It includes the public as a whole, or a section of the public, as well as individual members of the public. The term includes voluntary organisations and charities. Directors and others representing limited companies are also within the meaning of the term 'public'. It does not, however, include persons who are acting in a capacity which is representative of the Crown, Government or the State. Consequently, persons who fulfil official functions of a public nature, even though they are legal persons, do not come within the meaning of the word public when they are fulfilling those official functions.

1.3 Further information about the scope and purpose of Welsh language schemes can be found in the Welsh Language Board's guidelines (www.welshlanguage-board.org.uk).

Any queries, comments or complaints regarding this scheme should be sent to:

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2. Background

2.1 Denbighshire is a mainly rural county with a population of 95,600¹. The main towns in the County are Ruthin; Denbigh; Rhyl and Prestatyn. The Council has main offices in each of these locations plus numerous smaller offices and depots as well as schools at locations throughout the County.

2.2 In terms of Welsh Language in 2001 26.4% of the population or 23,760 people said they could speak Welsh this was an increase of 467 from 1991, but a percentage decrease of 0.3%. In terms of percentage of population, a greater percentage of people identify as Welsh speaking in the South of the County than in the North with the highest percentages being in the electoral divisions of Llandrillo (64%); Llanrhaeadr yng

¹ Mid year estimate 2004

Nghinmeirch (59%) Gwyddelwern (53%); Efnechtyd (52 %) and Corwen (51%), whilst the lowest percentages are in the wards of Prestatyn North (12%); Rhyl West (12%); Prestatyn North West (13%); Rhyl East (13%); and Rhyl South West (15%). Because of the way population is distributed in the County, this often contrasts with the picture when looking at numbers of individuals, where the trend is reversed, with higher numbers of Welsh speakers found in the North than the South. This is clearly represented on the map showing numbers of Welsh speakers in appendix 2 and associated table giving numbers of Welsh Speakers at ward level. Further details on the levels of people identifying as Welsh Speaking in the County can be found at *appendix 1 and appendix 2*.

2.3 Denbighshire County Council is responsible for providing the majority of local government services to the people of Denbighshire. The services provided by the Council for the public are very wide-ranging. They include services which the Council is required to provide by statute and those which it has powers to provide.

These include: adult education, children and family support, special educational needs, youth services, library services, housing, public protection, support services for disabled people, residential and day care services, community safety, planning; countryside access; economic development, tourism, business support, leisure services including theatres and leisure centres, waste collection, recycling, maintenance of highways and transport, Council tax and the benefits administration. This list is not exhaustive.

2.4 The Council has responsibility for providing schools and ensuring sufficient school places, and, through regulation of the curriculum and the character of schools, for the strategic direction of Welsh language and Welsh medium education. The delivery of education is otherwise substantially through Governing Bodies of Schools, who decide their arrangements and the application of resources in staffing, supplies and administration. These aspects and the Council's policy regarding developing Welsh Medium Education are included in the Council's Education Welsh Language Scheme.

2.5 The Council provides support services for schools and delivers some services, such as student grants, directly to the public. Services provided generally to the public, by the Lifelong Learning Directorate, such as dealing with phone calls, correspondence, publishing documents etc. falls within the remit of this Scheme not the Education Welsh Language Scheme.

2.6 The Authority is structured into four Directorates covering the different services that the Council provides. These are the Directorate of Resources; the Directorate of Lifelong Learning; the Directorate of Environment; and the Directorate of Personal Services. The structure within these four directorates is shown in *appendix 4*.

3. Political Structure

3.1 Under the current constitutional arrangements the full Council agrees the policy framework and certain other decisions reserved to it. The Cabinet has the power to act to make decisions in accordance with the constitution and within the policy and budgetary frameworks. Four scrutiny committees review the decisions of Cabinet and make recommendations. They review policy and performance and are consulted on any proposals to change the policy framework. There are a number of other Committees

and panels the main ones being the Planning Committee and the Licensing Committee which deal with the granting of planning permission and licences respectively.

3.2 Denbighshire County Council aims to safeguard and promote the use of the Welsh language throughout Denbighshire through the services it provides, through the partners it works with and through its role as a major employer and contractor within the County.

3.3 The Council's Welsh Language Scheme is linked to its Integrated Equalities Policy which is designed to assist the Council in working towards:

- Fair treatment for all
- Elimination of disadvantage and
- Recognition and inclusion of previously excluded groups

3.4 The Council aims to achieve a situation where staff who come into contact with the public are bilingual and that the services it provides to the Public are available bilingually. In doing so the Council will ensure it is:

- a) Offering the public the right to choose which language to use in their dealings with the Council;
- b) Recognizing that members of the public can express their views and needs better in their preferred language;
- c) Recognizing that enabling the public to use their preferred language is a matter of good practice, not a concession;
- d) Recognizing that denying people the right to use their preferred language could place them at a real disadvantage.

3.5 The Council's Welsh Language Scheme has been reviewed in the light of developments and changes in the structure and functions of the County Council since 1997 when the first Scheme was adopted.

3.6 Following good progress towards most targets set in the original Scheme, the County Council has identified the need to set itself more challenging targets to further develop the Welsh Language within the county and meet the needs of the community.

3.7 The Welsh Language Board undertook a monitoring visit in 2004 looking at how well the Council was managing and implementing its Scheme. It judged that the Council's compliance with its scheme in relation to service delivery was fair and improving and its management of the scheme was good and improving.

3.8 Key areas identified for further improvement or development were:

- a) Ensuring bilingual availability of the Council's new Corporate Customer Service Centre as it evolves;
- b) Monitoring and maintaining awareness of the requirements of the scheme and the availability of bilingual services by staff and the public;
- c) Reviewing the translation service to ensure a high quality service is maintained;
- d) Ensuring that Council staff have the appropriate skills to ensure delivery of a bilingual service;
- e) Ensuring appropriate monitoring systems are in place to identify strengths and weaknesses in complying with the scheme;

- f) Building on work already undertaken in relation to third party service delivery to ensure external contractors deliver services in line with the requirements of the scheme.

3.9 Other areas for improvement or development addressed within this revised Scheme are directed by the Welsh Assembly Government's action plan for a bilingual Wales "Iaith Pawb" within which is the ambitious target to increase the % of those who speak Welsh to 25.8% by 2011; and linked to this, the advice from the Welsh Language Board on revising Welsh Language Schemes including the use of a number of key performance measures relating to increasing the number of Welsh speakers in the County and ensuring more services are delivered through the medium of Welsh.

3.10 The Council has prepared an action plan as part of this Scheme which can be found at *appendix 3* of this document. The plan details specific actions and targets relating to the implementation of the Scheme and to achieving progress in relation to the areas mentioned in sections 3.8 and 3.9 above. Progress against this action plan will be reported to Council annually and made available to the public. The Scheme will be formally reviewed within five years of the date of approval. The action plan will be reviewed after three years.

4. Application of the Scheme

4.1 Implementation of the Scheme will be undertaken by Council staff and elected members alike. In relation to implementing the scheme elected members will be considered to be internal to the Council as opposed to members of the public, therefore for example they may be communicated with on an individual basis as with any other members of staff in Welsh or English as appropriate for all parties concerned (see also 14.14b).

4.2 It is the responsibility of all staff to comply with the scheme and for managers at all levels to ensure its implementation. The Council has appointed a Corporate Equality Officer whose role incorporates that of Welsh Language Officer, to co-ordinate the work required to deliver this scheme. In addition, the Corporate Director Lifelong Learning's responsibilities encompass a corporate lead on bilingual policy.

4.3 Elected members have a vital role to play in promoting use of the Welsh Language and in enhancing the image of the Council as a bilingual authority. Elected members should do this by:

- a) Ensuring that the work of the Council is used as a vehicle for promoting the Welsh Language;
- b) Speaking the language of their choice at public meetings held by the Council;
- c) Forwarding complaints and suggestions to improve Welsh Language services within their local communities to the Corporate Equality Officer;
- d) Supporting work within their local communities to promote the use of Welsh.

4.4 The Leader has appointed a lead Councillor for Equal Opportunities who as part of this role will champion the Welsh Language.

4.5 Copies of the Scheme are available in Welsh and English on the Council's Website at www.denbighshire.gov.uk as are copies of the Council's Education Welsh Language

Scheme which covers delivery of education within the authority. Hard copies of the Scheme are available from the Corporate Equality Officer whose details are at the beginning of the Scheme.

5. Policies, Legislation and Initiatives

5.1 This scheme has been prepared in the context of the following national and international language policy frameworks and relevant legislation:

- a) The European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages
- b) The Assembly Governments Welsh Language Scheme
- c) The Local Government Equality Standard
- d) Iaith Pawb – The Welsh Assembly Government’s national Action Plan for a Bilingual Wales
- e) The Welsh Language Act 1993

5.2 The Council will have due regard to the principles, targets and legislative requirements of the above in its implementation of this scheme.

5.3 Denbighshire County Council will consult with the Welsh Language Board regarding any intentions that will affect the Scheme or are likely to affect the schemes of other institutions.

6. Mainstreaming

6.1 The Council will mainstream the Welsh Language within its policies and service delivery. This means we will consider the Welsh Language in all aspects of the Council’s work and in everything that the Council does. The Council will aim to ensure that every opportunity is taken to promote and support the Welsh Language and a bilingual Wales and to plan, provide and evaluate services in Welsh and English.

6.2 The Council will do this through incorporating Welsh Language and Bilingual issues within its developing impact assessment methodology; through its performance management systems, the Bilingual Forum and through the work of its Customer Care and e-Quality group (CCeG).

6.3 In particular the Council will ensure that matters concerning the Welsh Language are included as relevant elements when developing and implementing policies or services. We will discuss with our partners how we can further develop and improve Welsh Language usage over the next three years in relation to policies and services for Children and Young People and will also give particular attention to Welsh Language issues in relation to two of the main access channels to information, our website and our new customer call centre. We will work towards answering an increasing number of telephone queries via the customer call centre and providing an increasing volume of information via the web thus ensuring an increase in our ability to deliver services in Welsh.

7. Service Planning and Delivery

7.1 Our policies, initiatives and services will be consistent with this scheme. They will support the use of Welsh and will, whenever possible, help the public in Denbighshire to

use Welsh as part of their day to day lives. When we contribute to the development or delivery of policies, initiatives, services or new legislation led by other organisations, we will do so in a way which is consistent with the aims and objectives of this scheme.

7.2 We will continue to support community work in relation to promoting the use of the Welsh Language in Denbighshire through the vehicle of Menter Iaith and through sponsorship and support of events like the Urdd National Eisteddfod which will be held in Ruthin in 2006.

7.3 Our policies, initiatives and services will, help develop use of the Welsh language.

7.4 Both Welsh and English are currently used by staff in the internal administration of the Council. The Council will encourage and support staff to use both languages as appropriate in their day to day work and will reinforce and develop a positive environment for Welsh speakers and learners to use Welsh in the workplace.

8. Delivering Services

8.1 Our normal practice will be to ensure that our services are available to the public in Welsh and English. We will let the public know when services are available in Welsh. This will be done through publicity materials e.g. notices at reception; leaflets; posters and County Voice as well as by encouraging staff to indicate their ability to speak Welsh through the Welsh Language Board's "Iaith Gwaith" scheme.

8.2 The way in which a service is delivered to the public varies according to its nature and size. Some are provided from the Council's main office centres, whilst others operate through centres, depots, homes and other workplaces. Additionally, in Denbighshire, delivery of services takes place through the One Stop Shops and via other outlets afforded by e-government.

9. Our regulatory functions – and services undertaken on our behalf by third parties

9.1 Any agreements or arrangements which we make with third parties will be consistent with the relevant parts of this scheme, when those agreements or arrangements relate to the provision of services to the public in Wales. This will include services which are contracted out, granting licences and granting other permissions. Sections 28.1 and 28.2 of our current standard contract for contracts over £100,000 relate to the requirements on our contractors in relation to the Council's Welsh Language Scheme.

9.2 Provision will be made to monitor compliance with the relevant parts of this Scheme by contractors, agents and other third parties within the standard monitoring arrangements, including a contractual requirement to provide regular performance reports from contractors and agents. It will be the responsibility of the contract manager to ensure these monitoring requirements are met.

9.3 All third party service providers will be provided with a copy of this scheme as part of the tendering and contracting process. We will develop a means of monitoring

compliance with regard to the Welsh Language aspects of contracts and will provide guidance on this as part of the tendering and contracting process.

9.4 This Scheme applies to any outside agency, company, or voluntary body, which provides a service on the Council's behalf as it does to the Council itself.

9.5 Where services are delivered to the public by other organizations, such as schools and Community Councils, the Council will, encourage, facilitate and support the use of Welsh by promoting its Scheme and offering advice and assistance.

10. Awarding grants and loans

10.1 When administering funding, loans and grants for organisations, the Council will consider:

- a) Including Welsh language criteria on application forms together with recommendations as to what activities could be provided bilingually;
- b) Ensuring that organisations consider the need to assist and promote the use of the Welsh language.
- c) If organisations hold public events or activities for the public, they must ensure they are bilingual as far as is practicable.
- d) Ensuring that the grant scheme complies with the Council's Language Scheme.

In awarding grants and funding, particularly to smaller voluntary organisations, we will have regard to the Welsh Language Board's guidelines on awarding grants and loans.

11. Regulatory Functions

11.1 These functions encompass such matters as the grant of licenses and permissions for entertainment, street collections and lotteries, street trading and markets and planting on highway verges. They also include building regulations, planning applications and consents.

11.2 In relation to these functions the Council will:

- a) encourage third party organisations who provide services to the public to use the Welsh language in their service delivery;
- b) refer the organization to the Council's Language Scheme and good practice established in it, including measures in relation to using the Welsh Language in service agreements, service licenses or in other regulatory documentation;
- c) offer guidance and support to organisations.

12. Partnerships (Formal and Informal) with Public, Voluntary and Private Sectors in the Provision of Public Services

12.1 The Council works in partnership with public bodies, organizations from the voluntary sector and other agencies. The Council works on many levels when working with others and accepts it has responsibility to bring linguistic considerations to the attention of all partners. When forming partnerships the Council will ensure the issue of how the partnership will operate with regard to the Welsh Language is discussed and agreed as part of the Terms of Reference and/ or constitution of the partnership.

12.2 When the Council is the strategic and financial leader within a partnership, it will ensure that the public service provision is compliant with the Welsh Language Scheme.

12.3 When the Council joins a partnership in which another body is leading, the Council's input to the partnership will comply with the Welsh Language Scheme and the Council will encourage other parties to comply giving priority to services provided to the general public.

12.4 When the Council is a partner in a consortium, it will encourage the consortium to adopt a bilingual policy. When acting publicly in the name of the consortium, the Council will act in accordance with its Welsh Language Scheme.

12.5 When the Council joins or forms a partnership, it will ask prospective partners about their Welsh Language Schemes, Language Policies or the means by which they will operate bilingually. With any partnership the Council will offer advice and support to other partner organisations.

12.6 The Council will prepare staff guidelines explaining to them their responsibilities under section 12 of the Scheme.

13. Quality Standards

13.1 Services provided in Welsh and English will be of equal quality and will be provided within the same timescale.

13.2 The Council will monitor the standard and consistency of Welsh Language service delivery through the use of sample surveys and through the Council's corporate complaints procedure.

13.3 Welsh Language Translators employed or contracted by the Council will be members of Cymdeithas Cyfieithwyr Cymru (Association of Welsh Translators and Interpreters) or be able to evidence equivalent experience.

13.4 Staff working through the medium of Welsh will be supported to do so to a high standard through the provision of support materials and appropriate technology such as Welsh Spellcheckers, dictionaries and language guides as well as through appropriate training.

13.5 The Council will try to ensure that the form and style of its public material in Welsh and English is understood by the public and is clear to read and to reply to.

14. Dealing with the Welsh speaking public

14.1 Written Correspondence. Our normal practice will be as follows:

When someone writes to us in Welsh we will issue a reply in Welsh (if a reply is required). Our target time for replying will be the same as for replying to letters written in English.

14.2 When we initiate correspondence with an individual, group or organisation, we will do so bilingually unless we know that they would prefer to correspond in Welsh or English only when it may be sent in that language only or bilingually.

14.3 When we send standard or circular correspondence to several recipients, it will be bilingual unless we know that all recipients would prefer to receive it in Welsh or English only when it may be sent in that language only or bilingually.

14.4 Information will be provided in the following hierarchy of options:

- a) bilingually - the format will be that the Welsh will be above the English or to the left for letters, forms, e-mails, bilingual letters and longer documents where we seek to promote language equality e.g. County Voice.
- b) Bilingual – back to back format for longer documents over 5000 words.
- c) Separate language documents - acceptable only in exceptional circumstances e.g. very large documents 10000 words +; Council papers (not agendas) and the web site.

14.5 For very large documents or where there are justifiable reasons for producing separate Welsh and English versions e.g. complicated forms aimed at audiences with low literacy levels then the following point (14.6) will apply:

14.6 If the Welsh and English versions of any correspondence or document have to be published separately, our normal practice will be to ensure that both versions are available at the same time. Both documents will state that copies are available in the other language and how to obtain them.

14.7 Enclosures sent with bilingual letters will be bilingual, except where they are annexes to Council papers; or where they are produced by another agency, when they will be provided bilingually if available but not otherwise.

14.8 Enclosures sent with Welsh letters will be Welsh or bilingual, when available except where they are annexes to Council papers; or where they are produced by another agency when they will be provided bilingually if available but not otherwise.

14.9 The above will apply to electronic correspondence as well as paper Correspondence.

14.10 All hard-copy Welsh correspondence that we issue will be signed, in the case of standard or circular mailings a photocopied signature is appropriate for both Welsh and English correspondence.

14.11 In services where it is appropriate, we will develop a system to record the language preference of those who wish to correspond with us in Welsh or English.

14.12 The Council produces a wide range of hard copy and electronic documents including documents that:

- provide information on the Council's services.
- explain and give guidance on the Council's policies, initiatives, developments and new services including those resulting from new legislation.

- seek general consultation on issues and matters on which the Council wishes to know the public's view.
- issue specific information to the general public on aspects of the services provided for the public e.g. complaints procedure, and
- may be recurring annual or periodical publications, or single-issue documents.

14.13 These may include pamphlets, booklets and circulars, e-mails, bye-laws, regulations, certificates and posters as well as major documents such as Council Committee papers, the improvement plan; Policy documents; and newsletters. They will also include such printed items as licenses, cards, passes, tokens and tickets.

14.14 The following criteria will be used to decide whether any particular document; standard or circular correspondence or electronic communication need not be produced in Welsh, English or bilingually. The following will normally apply:

- a) If the intended audience is the public as defined in the Welsh Language Act then the document or correspondence must be available in the language of choice of the recipient or bilingually;
- b) If the intended audience is internal to the Council then it need not be in Welsh other than where it is specifically aimed at Authority Schools; where it is communication sent to all Councillors or a specific group of Councillors e.g. a committee; or if it relates to performance, benefits, pay and conditions of staff when it should be available bilingually - Where staff wish to use Welsh in internal communications with colleagues they will be encouraged and supported to do so;
- c) Where a document conveys detailed administrative, legal and / or technical information and is likely to have a restricted readership the member of staff responsible for the document must make a decision based on all the factors concerned as to the appropriateness of providing the document bilingually. Where the conclusion is reached not to provide such a document bilingually then this decision and the reasons for it must be conveyed to the Corporate Equality Officer.
- d) Where a member of the public requests a document under the Freedom of Information Act the letter or e-mail of response will be in the language of the request whilst the document containing the information requested will be provided in the language in which it is available. If a translation of the document is required this can be arranged and an appropriate fee can be charged. Further information relating to the Council's FOI Publication Scheme can be found on the Council's web site at www.denbighshire.gov.uk
- e) The Council will have regard to the Welsh Language Board's guidance on the Freedom of Information Act.
- f) English need not be used for items produced by the Council for the purposes of promoting Welsh Language events such as the Urdd and/or National Eisteddfod.

15. Telephone communications

15.1 Our normal practice is to ensure that the public can speak in Welsh or English when dealing with us by telephone. Our switchboard staff will answer with a bilingual greeting. Our main switchboard will use a bilingual message on its answer phone. The rest of our staff and officers will answer the telephone with a bilingual greeting and use

bilingual messages on their individual answer phones, as detailed in the Council's Corporate Telephone answering policy.

15.2 Where a non Council answering service is in place e.g. British Telecom we will encourage the supplier to provide a bilingual message.

15.3 If the caller wishes to speak Welsh, our switchboard will connect the call to a Welsh speaker qualified to deal with the enquiry – we will monitor the levels at which we are able to do this and implement actions 1c and 2 in the Scheme's action plan to measure and improve performance in this area. If a caller rings one of our direct lines and wishes to speak Welsh, but the person taking the call cannot do so, they will try to transfer the call to a Welsh speaking colleague qualified to deal with the enquiry.

15.4 If no Welsh speaker qualified to deal with the enquiry is available, the caller will be given the choice, as appropriate, of having a Welsh speaker phone back as soon as possible, continuing the call in English or submitting their query in Welsh, by letter or e-mail.

15.5 If the preferred choice is to have a Welsh speaker call back later a timescale must be agreed with the member of the public which should be either an agreed time slot e.g. someone will call you back between 10 and 10:30 or should be a time limit of within 8 working hours of the initial call.

15.6 The Council intends to move to operating a call centre approach to dealing with common queries. Our automated telephone systems and customer call centre will give callers the choice of conducting their phone call in Welsh or English. This service will be available to customers whose telephones are linked to a digital telephone exchange and to those who have not withheld their telephone numbers.

15.7 When we set up our customer call centre we will provide a Welsh language service. This will be advertised alongside the English language service. Both services will share the same telephone number initially and then move to separate numbers for Welsh language and English Language calls.

15.8 Helplines – Where helplines are set up in regard to specific issues we will aim to ensure these are available in Welsh and English.

16. Public meetings

16.1 The Council will ensure that all meetings with the public are fully bilingual. We will provide simultaneous translation from Welsh into English at our public and Council meetings unless we have established that all participants are likely to use the same language e.g. invitation only meetings.

16.2 Invitations and advertisements for public meetings will be bilingual and either note that translation facilities will be available or invite the public to let us know in advance in which language they wish to speak.

16.3 We will let those attending public meetings know when translation facilities are available – and encourage contributions in Welsh. Staff and elected members

attending training on Chairing Meetings will be provided with guidelines on how to Chair Bilingual meetings effectively and in such a way as to encourage the use of Welsh. Guidelines will be provided to staff arranging meetings and booking rooms with regard to provision of translation support.

16.4 For meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Scrutiny, Planning and Licensing committees and public meetings we will ensure that agendas, papers and minutes are issued bilingually and simultaneously with the exception of Planning Committee reports for which data is provided by members of the public in the language in which they have submitted their planning application forms. Where annexes to papers are produced by the Council, these will be provided bilingually where they are short in length (up to 4 sides). When annexes are produced by other organisations bilingual versions will be requested from the originating organisation or individual.

16.5 Correspondence or reports from outside organisations need not be bilingual, but their substance will be summarised in bilingual form in presenting papers to the Council or its Committees and bilingual copies should be circulated if they are available.

16.6 For internal meetings, agendas, papers and minutes need not be produced bilingually and may be produced in Welsh, English or bilingually as appropriate to members of the relevant group.

16.7 When selecting staff to attend public meetings or events, our normal practice will be to ensure that suitably qualified Welsh speakers attend, as necessary and to ensure that the public attending the meeting are greeted bilingually.

16.8 The Council will promote the additional guidance on arranging bilingual events available on the Welsh Language Board's website at www.welsh-language-board.org.uk to staff.

17. Other meetings with the public

17.1 When we arrange or attend face-to-face meetings with members of the public, we will establish their language preference at the earliest opportunity and, whenever possible, ensure that a suitably qualified Welsh speaking member of staff deals with those whose preferred language is Welsh.

17.2 If no suitably qualified Welsh speaker is available, we will offer the choice of continuing the meeting in English, arranging a meeting with an interpreter or dealing with the subject by corresponding in Welsh. The above will also apply to meetings held using videoconferencing and similar equipment.

17.3 We recognize that in some circumstances in particular, where customers may be vulnerable or under stress an inability to provide a suitably qualified Welsh speaking member of staff means that the quality of service received will be reduced. Where such situations exist we will prioritise recruitment and training to address the identified gaps.

18. Other dealings with the public

18.1 When we undertake public surveys, our normal practice will be to ensure that all aspects of communication with the public will be bilingual. Whenever practicable, respondents will be asked if they wish to respond to the survey in Welsh or English and given the opportunity to do so.

18.2 When we arrange seminars, training courses or similar events for the public, we will assess the need to provide them in Welsh. Our normal practice will be to ensure that announcements made over public address systems are made in Welsh and English. Any audio-visual displays, audio tours or interactive media that we prepare will be bilingual or provide a language choice. Wherever practical, presentations to the public using PowerPoint or similar equipment will be bilingual.

18.3 Messages in the lifts in our offices will be in Welsh and English.

19. Our public face

19.1 Publicity campaigns, exhibitions and advertising. All of the publicity, public information, exhibition and advertising material we use in Wales will be produced bilingually, or as separate Welsh and English versions. If the Welsh and English versions have to be published separately, both versions will be equal with regard to size, prominence and quality – and both versions will be available simultaneously and will be equally accessible.

19.2 The Council's main recruitment channel is County Voice which is fully bilingual.

19.3 Any advertisements placed in English language newspapers (or similar material) distributed mainly or wholly in Wales will be bilingual. In Welsh language publications advertisements will be in Welsh only with a brief summary in English.

19.4 Television, cinema and radio advertising will be conducted in Welsh and English. Television campaigns which appear on S4C during Welsh programming hours will be in Welsh. Radio campaigns broadcast on Radio Cymru or during Welsh language programmes on commercial radio stations will be in Welsh.

19.5 Our normal practice will be to avoid using Welsh language subtitles other than for Deaf or hard of hearing people, or dubbing adverts into Welsh. Telephone response lines and other ways of responding to campaigns in Wales will be bilingual or will include a Welsh response service.

19.6 When staffing exhibitions stands and displays, our normal practice will be to ensure that suitably qualified Welsh speakers attend, as necessary.

20. Publications

20.1 Our normal practice will be to publish material made available to the public bilingually, with the Welsh and English versions together in one document and with the Welsh above or to the left of the English. If this is impractical then the next option will be to publish the document bilingually in back to back format.

20.2 If the Welsh and English versions have to be published separately (for instance, where a single document would be too lengthy or bulky), both versions will be of equal size and quality – and our normal practice will be to ensure that both versions are available at the same time and are equally accessible. Each version will note clearly that the material is available in the other language.

20.3 The criteria identified in *section 14* will be used to identify objectively when material should be published as separate Welsh and English versions or as bilingual documents.

20.4 If not available free of charge, the price of a bilingual document will not be greater than that of a single language publication - and the price of separate, Welsh and English versions will be the same.

20.5 The above will also apply to material made available electronically on our website, on CD Rom or otherwise. All information produced bilingually whether separately or together should be produced and published simultaneously.

21. Websites

21.1 Our websites will include pages in both Welsh and English. Our normal practice will be to provide Welsh versions of the interactive pages on our websites. When designing new websites, or redeveloping our existing websites, we will take into account the Welsh Language Board's guidelines on website design.

21.2 Whenever we post publications on our websites, the Welsh and English versions will be posted at the same time, except where they are produced by another organisation and not available bilingually. In emergency situations where people's health, safety and/or welfare are at risk, urgent communications may be published in English only, with the Welsh version posted as soon as is reasonably practicable.

22. Forms and associated explanatory material

22.1 Our normal practice will be to ensure that all forms and associated explanatory material for use by the public in Wales will be fully bilingual, with the Welsh and English versions together in one document. This will include interactive forms published on our websites.

22.2 If the Welsh and English versions have to be published separately, both versions will be of equal size and quality - and we will ensure that both versions are available at the same time and are equally accessible. Each version will note clearly that the material is available in the other language.

22.3 We will use a scoring system, to be agreed with the Board, to identify objectively when forms should be published as separate Welsh and English versions or as bilingual documents and will include this as an appendix to this Scheme once agreed.

22.4 When we enter information on Welsh versions of forms that are sent to the public, we will do so in Welsh. When we enter information on bilingual forms that are sent to

the public, we will do so bilingually unless we know that the recipients would prefer to receive the information in Welsh or English only. When other organisations distribute forms on our behalf, we will ensure that they do so in accordance with the above.

23. Corporate identity

23.1 The Council believes that its image and public face should reflect the fact that it uses two languages in the community within which it delivers services. The Council has therefore adopted a bilingual corporate identity. Our name, contact details, logo, slogans and other standard information appear in Welsh and English on all material which displays our corporate identity. This includes our stationery - and material such as business cards, identity badges, passes, tickets, invitations and vehicles.

23.2 Where we use items supplied by other organisations such as Royal Mail franking services or Business Reply services we will encourage the supplier to supply these services bilingually.

23.3 We may use Welsh only branding for some initiatives such as the Urdd.

24. Signs

24.1 Our normal practice will be to ensure that all of our permanent and temporary signs, which give information to the public using text, will be bilingual with the Welsh and English text being treated equally with regard to size, legibility and prominence. As with written correspondence the Welsh will be to the left of or above the English. We will adhere to this practice whenever signs are being installed for the first time, or whenever we are replacing signs unless prohibited from doing so by other legislation.

24.2 Signs which have been defaced by having either the Welsh or English aspects obliterated will be cleaned in line with the traffic and transportation department's graffiti removal policy. The Council will develop a system to monitor such incidents.

24.3 In accordance with the Street Naming and Numbering Policy, the Council encourages developers to choose Welsh names for new housing estates and other developments as and when they submit planning applications, taking into consideration the local character of the area and in consultation with local Town and Community Councils, Local Members and the Emergency Services.

24.4 Where a query arises over a place name, the Council will consult the Welsh Language Board's place name consultation service for advice on the standardised forms of place names.

24.5 The above will apply to all types of signs, including electronic signs.

24.6 Notices - Official notices, public notices and staff recruitment notices. Official notices, public notices and staff recruitment notices placed in English language newspapers (or similar media) distributed mainly or wholly in Wales, will be bilingual. Notices will be in Welsh in Welsh language publications with a brief summary in English.

24.7 The Welsh and English versions will be equal in terms of format, size, quality and prominence with the Welsh above or to the left of the English. In the English language media, posts where the ability to speak Welsh is essential may be advertised bilingually or in Welsh only, with a brief description in English.

24.8 Recruitment notices placed in English language journals (and other publications) with a UK-wide distribution may be in English, unless the post is one where the ability to speak Welsh is essential, in which case the notice may be fully bilingual, or in Welsh with a brief explanation in English. Any official notices, public notices or staff recruitment notices placed elsewhere in Wales will be bilingual.

24.9 Recruitment notices are usually advertised locally through the Council's own paper "County Voice" which is fully bilingual.

25. Press releases and contact with the media

25.1 Press releases to the press and broadcasting media in Wales are issued in Welsh and English when initiated by the Council - or according to the language preference of the recipient media organisation or publication when produced in response to specific requests. Where possible, we will ensure that Welsh speakers are available to undertake interviews with the Welsh language press and broadcasting media.

26. Implementing the scheme

26.1 **Staffing.** All of our workplaces need access to sufficient and appropriately skilled Welsh speaking staff to fully deliver this scheme. The following procedures will be implemented accordingly:

26.2 All posts in the Council are designated either Welsh desirable or Welsh essential. Heads of Service in conjunction with the Head of Personnel will identify which workplaces and jobs are designated Welsh desirable and which Welsh essential. This requirement may be defined as a component of a workplace or team, or it may be attached to a particular post.

26.3 The Council uses the following criteria to assess whether a post; workplace or team is designated as Welsh essential or Welsh desirable:

- a) the linguistic makeup of the geographical area (based on %) where the service is delivered – i.e. Prestatyn v Corwen or whole county
- b) the frequency of contact with the public
- c) the current ability of the service to provide a bilingual service
- d) the type of contact required e.g. written; face to face; telephone
- e) the impact on the customer of not being able to provide a Welsh language service
- f) posts already identified as Welsh essential have the Welsh requirement written into the Job Description and the person spec, which is reviewed periodically.

26.4 We will develop a scoring or audit system linked to these criteria to ensure consistency in the designation of posts across the Council. (ref action 4 in the action plan).

26.5 We will use information provided through our Human Resources system to regularly establish the number, ability, level and location of staff that can understand, speak, read and write Welsh (including staff that are learning Welsh) within the constraints of other relevant legislation such as the Data Protection Act.

26.6 We will also identify staff who wish to learn Welsh through our Personal Development Review (PDR) system. The results of these two exercises will be compared to identify workplaces where there is a shortage of Welsh speaking staff. Services which have a high level of contact with the public or where the inability to deliver the service in Welsh will have a high impact on the quality of service delivered will be prioritised for training and recruitment of Welsh Speakers.

26.7 We will respond to any shortages through our recruitment and training activities. In consultation with unions and staff we will also consider transferring Welsh speaking staff to specific workplaces or posts and reorganising duties and responsibilities to meet service delivery needs particularly in any identified high impact areas. Our normal practice will be to ensure that our main reception areas, one stop shops, main switchboards and customer call centre are always able to offer a service in Welsh.

26.8 Our main reception areas are County Hall, Ruthin; Caledfryn, Denbigh; Ty Nant, Prestatyn; and Russell House, Rhyl.

26.9 We will develop further our linguistic skills strategy to identify exactly how we will meet our staffing needs in regard to bilingual skills and to provide detailed guidance to staff.

27. Recruitment

27.1 When recruiting staff we will be guided by the information gathered by the procedures described under Staffing above. All job advertisements state that Welsh is desirable except those where fluency in Welsh is considered to be essential where this is stated in job competencies and advertisements.

27.2 All staff are encouraged to learn or improve their Welsh with support being prioritised for those whose posts are Welsh essential or who have greatest contact with the public.

27.3 A candidate unable to speak Welsh or whose level of Welsh needs improving may be appointed to a post for which Welsh is considered essential, but where time can be allowed to learn the language. In these cases, learning the language to the required level of competence, within a reasonable agreed period, to be tested, will be a condition of employment.

27.4 When no suitable Welsh speaking candidates can be found for a post where Welsh is essential (or whilst a candidate unable to speak Welsh has been appointed and is learning the language) we will make temporary arrangements under which the Welsh language service can be provided (by using, for example, translation services or Welsh speaking staff from elsewhere in our organisation to deliver parts of the service).

27.5 If a suitable Welsh speaking candidate can not be appointed to a post then we may leave the post vacant and re-advertise at a later date or fill the post on a temporary basis and review the situation at the end of the temporary appointment.

27.5 Information packs and application forms will be provided in Welsh and English for all of our jobs.

28. Language training

28.1 Our staff will be encouraged to learn or improve their Welsh – and we will support those who wish to do so in line with our linguistic skills strategy. We will fund this training and allow staff to attend courses during work hours.

We will also deliver Welsh Language Awareness training to new staff within 6 months of joining the authority and to all existing staff who have not already received such training.

29. Vocational training

29.1 We will develop the ability of our Welsh speaking staff to operate in Welsh by providing vocational training in Welsh, whenever practicable.

30. Information and Communications Technology

30.1 The need to provide information and services in Welsh, and operate in accordance with this scheme, will be catered for as we develop, design and purchase information and communications technology products and services.

30.2 Whenever reasonably possible, we will modify our existing information and communications technology systems to ensure that they enable us to provide information and services in Welsh - and operate in accordance with this scheme.

31. Internal arrangements

31.1 The measures in this scheme carry the full authority, support and approval of our organisation. Managers will have the responsibility of implementing those aspects of the scheme relevant to their work.

31.2 Heads of Service will be required to ensure implementation of this Scheme within their service and to provide relevant monitoring information to the Corporate Equality Officer on a regular basis.

31.3 The Council has prepared and will continuously update, a detailed action plan setting out how we will ensure that we operate in accordance with this scheme (*appendix 3*). The action plan will come into effect on the date on which the Scheme comes into effect. And will be for a period of 3 years when it will be reviewed. The plan includes targets, performance indicators, and deadlines. A report on progress against the plan will be presented to Full Council annually.

31.4 The scheme will be publicised to our staff, elected members and to the public in Wales. It will be published on our website in a prominent place.

31.4 Existing guidance used by our staff, will be amended to reflect the measures contained in this revised scheme. We will arrange briefing and training, sessions for our staff and elected members to increase awareness of this scheme - and to explain how it will affect their day to day work.

31.5 Any form of contact with the public in Wales, which is not specifically dealt with by this scheme, will be undertaken in a manner which is consistent with the general principles enshrined in this scheme.

32. Complaints

32.1 The corporate complaints procedure states that:

When a complaint is received a letter of acknowledgement will be sent to the complainant within five working days, with the intention of fully resolving the complaint within 15 working days.

32.2 Where it is known by the Council that it will not be possible to resolve the complaint within 15 days a letter will be sent within five working days explaining why it is not possible and what the complainant can expect.

32.3 Complaints relating to the implementation of this scheme should be sent to the Corporate Equality Officer whose details are at the beginning of this document.

33. Monitoring

33.1 We will monitor our progress in delivering this scheme against the targets set out in its accompanying action plan (*appendix 3*). Our existing Quarterly Performance Management monitoring and reporting procedures will include reference to progress in delivering this scheme, as appropriate.

33.2 We will send an annual monitoring report to the Welsh Language Board, outlining progress in delivering this scheme.

33.3 The annual Monitoring Report to the Board will seek to achieve the following aims:

*(i) To assess whether the Council is conforming to the Scheme - in performing against the set **timetable***

*(ii) To measure the **quality** of frontline services through the medium of Welsh*

- data; (WLI 2 & 6)
- assessment by the Board on face to face service.

*(iii) To measure whether the **management / administration** of the Scheme is adequate*

- evaluation by the Board;
- Focus report on services provided on behalf of the Council by third parties (WLI 1)

*(iv) To measure the adequacy of its **language skills** by comparing need and resource*

- language skills data - personnel (WLI 4 & 5)

(v) Chapter on **mainstreaming**

- proven examples of mainstreaming in action including:
- corporate steps or measures taken by services to promote Welsh medium **services**;
- use of Welsh in the community
- increase in the number of Welsh speakers in the County

(vi) Analysis of the Council's performance according to priority/**target**;

- role of scrutiny
- is the Council accomplishing what it seeks to do?

33.4 The Council will summarise its findings in the form of a brief narrative (with evidence) to be submitted to the Board and will identify any fundamental weaknesses/risks, and draw up an action plan of corrective measures, together with a timetable to be agreed with the Board. The Council will also draw attention to progress, good practice and compliance levels.

33.5 The monitoring officer for the scheme will be the Corporate Equality Officer whose details can found at the beginning of this scheme.

33.6 Investigations under Section 17. If the Board is required to carry out an Investigation under Section 17 of the Act, the Council will be prepared to fully cooperate by providing information – reports, documents or clarification - to the Welsh Language Board.

33.7 The Council will be prepared to do this in both written and verbal forms and the Board will be able to have discussions with:

- a) Elected members;
- b) Local Authority employees;
- c) Contracted service providers and their employees;

33.8 The Council will also co-operate with any inspections carried out by other statutory inspection bodies and implement any agreed recommendations from such inspections (subject to 5.3).

34. Publishing Information regarding Performance

The Council will publish the following information regarding performance against its Welsh Language Scheme

A) Availability and quality of frontline face to face and telephone services through Welsh e.g.

- Information relating to the bilingual availability of the Council's new Corporate Customer Service Centre;
- Results of mystery shopper or other sample surveys which relate to the Council's delivery of services in Welsh;
- The number of complaints and compliments received regarding the Council's compliance with the Scheme.

B) Standard of administration and management of the scheme e.g.

- Levels of awareness of the scheme amongst staff;
- Welsh awareness training delivered;
- Results of any Welsh Language Board assessments.

C) Capacity of staff to deliver services through Welsh as required e.g.

- Information relating to the adequacy of Welsh language skills in relation to the need for these skills;
- Welsh language training delivered.

D) Evidence of Welsh being supported, promoted and incorporated in the Council's policies, processes and procedures e.g.

- Information about whether the Council is achieving what it sets out to do in the scheme;
- Results of impact assessments on key policies and strategies;
- Progress against each of the actions and targets outlined in the Scheme's action plan (appendix 3).

35. Reviewing and amending the scheme

35.1 The Council will review this scheme within five years of its coming into effect. The action plan (appendix 3) will be reviewed and revised after three years. Also, from time to time, we may need to review this scheme, or propose amendments to this scheme, because of changes to our functions, or to the circumstances in which we undertake those functions, or for any other reason. No changes will be made to this scheme without the Welsh Language Board's approval.

36. Publicity

36.1 The Council will publicise this Scheme to the Public; staff and Councillors via the Web site; County Voice, the Intranet, Headlines (staff magazine) and through its networks with partner organisations. We will also ensure that copies are available in key locations including One Stop Shops and libraries. We will let the public know about services available in Welsh as described in section 8.1 of this Scheme.

36.2 Copies of the annual report to Council regarding progress against the actions and targets outlined in the Scheme's action plan (appendix 3) will be published on the website and made available in hard copy on request.