



DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

WELSH LANGUAGE SCHEME

ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT TO THE

WELSH LANGUAGE BOARD

June 2009

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Denbighshire County Council's revised Welsh Language Scheme was approved on the 31 March 2006 and this is the third Annual Monitoring Report to be presented to the Welsh Language Board. All three Reports can be found on the County Council's website under 'Welsh Language Scheme'.
- 1.2 The purpose of this Monitoring Report is to outline the progress made by the Council during the period 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009 in delivering public services in accordance with our Scheme and identify areas of improvement. It also reflects the comments made by the Board in response to the 2008 Annual Report and also seeks to build upon some of the best practices identified in the Board's Overview Report on all of the Local Authorities in Wales.

2 Compliance with the Welsh Language Scheme

2.1 Monitoring of the Welsh Language Scheme

Corporate responsibility for the Council's Scheme and monitoring Welsh Language matters rests with the Strategic Policy Unit. Monitoring of the Scheme and liaison with the Welsh Language Board and external groups in respect of Welsh Language issues is the responsibility of the Strategic Policy Manager.

- 2.2 Executive responsibility for the Welsh Language Scheme has strategically rested directly with the Chief Executive who has taken an active and robust interest in our delivery of services through the Welsh language.

Following the Council elections in May 2008 the Leader of the Council has taken specific responsibility for the Welsh Language in his portfolio.

The proactive role of the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council underpins the importance attached to our Welsh Language Scheme and the championing of the Welsh Language within the Authority.

The Bilingual Members Forum consisting of Councillors and Officers has been established in 2007 to specifically monitor the Scheme and promote the Welsh Language in all aspects of the Council's services. Reports on specific issues will also go through our Scrutiny Committees.

- 2.3 The Councils' Welsh Language Scheme will be reviewed and revised

in 2009 in order that it reflects the changes to corporate and legislative policies.

3 Translation Services

- 3.1 Although the Council has one internal translator, due to the increasing amount of translation work required a substantial amount of work is done by external translators all of whom are members of Cymdeithas Cyfiethwyr Cymru (Association of Welsh Translators and Interpreters)
- 3.2 All public meetings have the services of a simultaneous translation service from the Welsh into the English.
- 3.3 The Council did not complete a review of our translation service in order to quantify its cost and efficiency. The review will continue to look at all aspects of our translation service, both internally and externally with a view to recommendations being made to ensure we provide a professional service in a cost effective manner. We will ensure compliance with procurement requirements whilst meeting the demands of tight deadlines and commitments already enshrined in our Welsh Language Scheme.
The outcome of the review will be shared with our Members' Bilingual Forum before recommendations go to our Cabinet.

4 The quality of front line services

4.1 Self Assessment – Denbighshire Children and Young People's Partnership. Progress Report.

The Self Assessment took place during the spring of 2007 and was reported in detail in our Monitoring Report in September of that year followed by an extensive progress report in our 2007/08 Monitoring Report.

The Self Assessment proved a valuable exercise which raised several areas which the Partnership felt it could improve upon. In this Report we are reporting on progress and initiatives undertaken between April 2008 and March 2009.

The Partnership has made significant strides during 2008/9, most notably with the publication of the Children and Young People's Plan. The Plan sets out the Partnership's commitment to promoting the Welsh language in Denbighshire under Core Aim 4, to ensure children and young people have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities through the medium of Welsh

Menter Iaith Sir Ddinbych is a key partner and a member of the Strategic Partnership and Extending Entitlement Group. Menter Iaith also has representation on the Culture sub group of the Play Leisure &

Enrichment Group and the Training & Workforce Development Group. An exciting new initiative through Cymorth funding is the establishment by Menter Iaith of a new post of Development Officer to take forward a project to further develop the social use of Welsh, particularly in the North of the County.

The Partnership self-assessment of strengths and weaknesses, carried out in 2008/9, highlighted that many partners provide activities bilingually and some arrange Welsh cultural events and trips for young people, eg to the Eisteddfod, visits to Snowdonia, Millennium Stadium, St Fagan's in Cardiff. However, the self-assessment indicated that organisations' ability to meet the language needs of young people could be further strengthened by recruiting more staff with Welsh language skills or by promoting the use of the language by young people with those skills.

The Partnership, jointly with Menter Iaith, conducted a survey in October 2008 to gather research about Partners' use of the Welsh language, accreditation opportunities for children and young people and children and young people's participation. 38 questionnaires were returned, many from Partners who did not participate in the self-assessment, and most were from the north of the county. Of the Partners that responded, it was apparent that the number of activities or groups available to young people through the medium of Welsh was limited. Interestingly, some of those groups with no activities in Welsh, also cited they had bilingual staff. It should be noted though that these findings are not authoritative for the whole Partnership.

The Partnership Support Team, the Strategic Policy Unit and Menter Iaith met with the Welsh Language Board to discuss this progress and some new developments for the Partnership to take forward during 2009/10 were agreed.

Key projects for 2009/10

- Partnership 'health check' (an element of the Partnership's performance management framework, which explores how Partners 'feel' as Partners and at meetings) will encompass exercises to determine whether Partners feel their language needs are met
- The Partnership Support Team will be recruiting Partners to act as Welsh language champions at the meetings they attend
- Menter Iaith with the Partnership Support Team will provide support and training for Partners to use their Welsh language skills
- Hold an awareness-raising event to encourage staff to use the Welsh they have in the workplace, and highlight courses available to progress these skills if so desired
- The questionnaire about Welsh language needs and provision of activities in Welsh will be repeated, to ensure a better coverage of responses across the county.
- The Partnership's Iaith Pawb statement is on the website and within the CYP Plan. During 2009/10, all partners will be expected to meet the

laith Pawb Partnership statement and be supported to produce leaflets and information bilingually. This is also being reinforced in new Service Level Agreements for Cymorth-funded projects

The key projects above will form the basis of our next Annual Monitoring Report.

**4.2 Welsh Language Indicator WLI 2 - Front Line Services
'An ability to guarantee a Welsh Language service at main receptions, contact centres or one stop shops'.**

The Council operates many buildings which provide services to the public. For the purposes of this report we have identified our main reception areas in buildings which provide a variety of services and are our principal Council Offices in the various towns in Denbighshire.

Service	No. of Staff	No. Bilingual	%	Comment
One Stop Shops	14	12	85%	Post now classed as Welsh Speaker Essential. One of the English speakers is currently learning Welsh.
Main switchboard	3	3	100%	Staff alternate between switchboard and main reception at County Hall
CCSC Advisors	7	5	71%	CCSC (Customer Call Service Centre)
Supervisor	1	1	100%	
Manager	1	1	100%	
Main Reception Areas	5	4	80%	Five main sites namely Russell House, Caledfryn, Trem Clwyd, County Hall, Brighton Road (Ty Nant reception has been included under OSS figures)

The Council's Corporate Customer Services Centre has a dedicated Welsh Language contact number for all enquiries in accordance with Denbighshire's commitment to bilingualism. For all calls relating to Highways, Environmental Services, Council House maintenance, job application forms, etc calls can be made to a dedicated number with a Welsh speaking advisor. Both Welsh and English contact numbers are used in all our promotional material.

We do monitor the number of calls received by both contact numbers. The periods in the table below are from April 2008 to March 2009.

	2008
Dedicated Welsh telephone contact number	5,306 (3.98%)
Dedicated English telephone contact number	128,037(96.02%)

4.3 **The Council's Complaints Procedure**

The Council readily took part in a Welsh Language Board survey of local authority complaints procedures in December 2008. The process involved the completion of a detailed questionnaire followed by an in-depth interview with a consultant engaged by the Board. The aims of the survey were to:

- Collate evidence on the efficiency in implementing public organisations' complaints arrangements in relation to their Welsh Language Schemes.
- Prepare reports and conclusions on individual organisations to the Board to enable it to apply the risk assessment procedure and offer general and specific recommendations to organisations on a needs basis; and arm the Board with the necessary evidence and information to enable it to verify compliance with Welsh Language Schemes.

We have referred in previous Annual Monitoring Reports to a weakness in our recording of complaints generally and that it is envisaged we will see a marked improvement upon the introduction of a new Complaints Procedure in 2009. The assessment was based on our current system and we were candid in acknowledging its weaknesses. The new system will be launched in September 2009.

The subsequent report on our current procedures identified that we were 'complying to a large degree' with the requirements of the Welsh Language Board. We welcomed the assessment and are confident our new complaints system will make a substantial difference to our reporting procedures. The action plan below outlines the measures we will take to meet the recommendations in the Welsh Language Board report.

Recommendation 1

Any system or software for recording complaints should include mandatory information on

- (i) the complainant's preferred language and
- (ii) adopt a code to identify complaints about the Welsh service – to ensure a corporate overview and improve service to customers.

ACTION:

- (i) it is our policy to respond in the language of choice of the complainant and this requirement is being reinforced with Directorate Complaints Officers.
- (ii) any complaint relating to the delivery of services through the medium of Welsh will be recorded as such in the new system

Recommendation 2

Any complaints training for staff should refer to

- (i) the public's ability to submit a complaint in either Welsh or English, and
- (ii) that a lack of service in Welsh or lack of continuity of service in Welsh is a 'type' of valid complaint.

ACTION:

- (i) all staff using the new complaints system will be made aware in the training sessions that complaints can be made in Welsh or English (or indeed any other language).
- (ii) the training sessions will include a case-study relating to a complaint in respect of the Welsh Language.

Recommendation 3

Any public information about complaints that will be launched in April 2009 should

- (i) appear bilingually, and
- (ii) state that the public are welcome to present their complaint in either Welsh or English. This should also appear as standard information on the County Council's website.

ACTION:

- (i) all promotional material relating to the new complaints system will be bilingual.
- (ii) it will be clear complaints can be made in the language of choice of the complainant and information will appear on the Councils website.

4.4 Welsh Language Indicator WLI 6 - Complaints

'Number of complaints received about the implementation of the Welsh Language scheme and the % of complaints dealt with in line with the organisations corporate standards'.

In previous Annual Reports we have acknowledged that our reporting and recording of complaints by each Service is erratic and a new robust corporate complaints system was a key priority for the Council to meet its responsibilities to the community it serves. A review took place last year and a new corporate complaints procedure has been adopted and will be launched in late 2009 following a series of trials and training sessions. An important aspect of the new policy will be the robust recording of complaints in respect of the Welsh Language and other equality strands.

The information below relates to complaints in respect of our Welsh language services which have been documented by the Service involved. For the purposes of this Monitoring Report only external complaints have been recorded and do not include informal complaints raised by colleagues or Members (these complaints generally refer to errors in translation spotted internally and raised in order to improve our delivery of services in Welsh).

We have had two specific complaints in relation to our delivery of services through the Welsh Language which has highlighted the need for changes in some current procedures.

4.5 **Street Signage**

Our attention was drawn by a member of the public to several errors in street names within the County. Further investigation identified several weaknesses in our procedures for replacing old street signage and in particular the lack of a system for checking grammar.

A new procedure is now in place to ensure :

- When a street name sign is being replaced the proposed Welsh Language sign is proofed for grammatical errors by our internal translator or an external translator prior to it going to the Sign Shop.
- Before leaving The Sign Shop the sign will be checked to ensure it matches the agreed translation as part of its proofing procedures.
- Any highways or street sign which it is found has a grammatical error will be replaced as soon as practical.

4.6 **Planning Applications submitted in Welsh**

A complaint was received relating to a planning application submitted in Welsh which was not translated into English prior to being sent to external bodies as part of the consultation process. Our practice has been to send a bilingual letter of consultation to consultees with a copy of the application forms, related documents and plans in their original state, i.e. the language in which they were submitted.

Following discussions with the Welsh Language Board we will in future ensure that any planning application submitted in Welsh will be translated prior to it being sent for consultation in order that the applicant is not prejudiced against by their application not being understood.

4.7 The following table identifies the nature of the complaint received during the period April 08 – March 09 and the action taken. All of the complaints were dealt with in accordance with our policies for responding to correspondence.

Service	Nature of Complaint	Action taken
Social Services	A complaint from a client's brother in law relating to correspondence being sent in English rather than Welsh	The original complaint was compounded by confusion in relation to Social Services' policy in sharing information about a client to a third party. A letter of apology was sent to the aggrieved party and a training issue was identified.
Environmental Services	Temporary Signage on	Signage replaced with

	the A55 with grammatical error	correct grammar
Planning Services	Complaint that a Welsh planning application was not translated into English	See 4.6 for a change in our policy
Highways Services	Grammatical errors in street signage	See 4.5 for a change in our policy
Education Services	Correspondence to a teacher in English rather than Welsh (similar complaints in respect of English only correspondence to Schools)	Apology given and correspondence sent in Welsh. All Heads of Service reminded of our bilingual policy in relation to schools
Planning & Public Protection	A survey form was reprinted and the Welsh version did not correspond to the English.	Forms reprinted.
Housing Services, Public Protection	Two complaints of a similar nature. A third party had produced flyers which were not bilingual. The flyers did not originate within the Council however did incorporate the Council logo.	The third parties were reminded of our policies and if using our logos should comply with our Welsh Language Scheme.
Social Services	A grammatical error in the Welsh version of a flyer	Flyer reproduced.
Education	A third party organisation placed an English only advert which had our logo on	The organisation was informed of our Welsh Language Policy
Countryside Services	A letter sent to local voluntary groups and organisations was sent in English only	An apology was sent to the complainant and a bilingual version was produced.
Social Services	A Job Finding Service leaflet contained grammatical errors in the Welsh version and the letter head was not bilingual	Leaflet was updated and reprinted and old leaflets were withdrawn.
Highways & Infrastructure	Grammatical error on the web page	Error corrected

5 **Management and administration of the Language Scheme**

5.1 **Bilingual Skills Risk Assessment.**

The Welsh Language Board undertook a Risk Assessment of the Council's management of bilingual skills in April and June 2007. Our Annual Report last year dealt extensively with the results of the assessment which identified good practice and areas for improvement.

A detailed Action Plan in our 2007/08 Report outlined a framework for mainstreaming our recording of the language skills of staff. An update on progress under various headings are as follows :

Workforce Planning - following the introduction of the Workforce Planning System managers now have the tools to effectively monitor the language skills of staff.

TRENT HR System - following initial teething problems experienced by all local authorities using this new system it is now fully operational with all training records and language ability of employees where known are now being placed electronically on the TRENT System.

Vacancy Control Form – the initial process of filling vacancies is managed through this form with a specific section relating to managers reviewing the Welsh Language requirements of the post.

Recording and review of complaints. The Council is in the final stages of introducing a new Corporate Complaints Policy which is elaborated upon in Section 4.3 of this Report.

Canvassing the views of Welsh speakers. The Council introduced a Citizens Panel and a 'mystery shopper' exercise during 2008. Both initiatives are detailed elsewhere in this report. (Section 7.10 & 7.11)

5.2 **Welsh Language Indicator WLI 1 - Contracted Out Services 'That contracts made by the Council with 3rd parties to provide services on its behalf ensure services are provided in accordance with the requirements of our Welsh Language Scheme'.**

Denbighshire's Scheme makes specific reference to third party contracts and states that any agreement or arrangement will be consistent with our Scheme if they relate to the provision of services to the public in Wales.

In the 2006/07 Annual Report we identified areas of weakness in our monitoring of third party contracts and in order to improve our procedures we introduced and reported upon a detailed compliance plan in our Report last year. It was pleasing to note that the compliance plan was highlighted by the Welsh Language Board as good practice. All of the actions identified in the compliance plan have all now been completed.

5.2.1 Contracts in Youth Service

In last year's report we commented on the 'Memorandum of Understanding' with third parties and the fact it did not specifically include provision for delivering services through the Welsh Language and that this would be addressed when the new contract template was being revised.

The new template is now in circulation and has a specific section relating to the Welsh Language.

The Welsh Language Act 1993

The Partner shall comply with the provisions of the Welsh Language Act 1993 as if it were a public body as defined in the Welsh Language Act 1993 as appropriate to the Project. The Partner will also comply with the provisions of Denbighshire County Council's Welsh Language Scheme or their own Scheme if there is one in place.

The Youth Service have also identified the following action in their Business Plan.

INCREASE BILINGUALISM	To increase young people's satisfaction of the social use of Welsh from 32% to 50% in 2009/10, 60% 2010/11 65% 2011/12	Train staff on the use of incidental Welsh (possible corporate approach).	December 09	Senior Development Officer
		Highlight the use of Welsh as part of the Children's University accreditation.	March 10	Personal Support Youth Officer
		Monitor use of Welsh through peer assessments and unannounced PYO visits Evaluate through annual survey.	December 09	Principal Youth Officer

5.2.2 **Contracts in Adult Services**

Following the Compliance Plan produced last year we can confirm that any new contract / agreement for Older People Service now have the following clause:

WELSH LANGUAGE POLICY

The Service Provider shall comply with the requirements of the Welsh Language Act 1993 and with the Service Purchaser's Welsh Language Scheme and any updates to it. Details of the Service Purchaser's Welsh language Scheme, its requirements and guidelines as to its implementation, and any updates to the scheme, will be provided by the Service Purchaser.

The Provider shall make every effort to ensure that the service is provided in the language choice of the Service User. The Provider shall ensure that their employees are able to speak English and/or Welsh.

The Provider must operate and keep up to date a Welsh language policy.

Contract Monitoring of Older People Domiciliary Care Providers was reviewed and currently does not have the above clause as it was an existing contract dating back to 2006. Social Services are currently devising a new pan North Wales Domiciliary Contract and discussions have taken place with partners and agreed a Welsh Language clause similar to the above will be included.

5.2.3 **Contracts in children and family services**

During 2008 – 2009 we have contracted for new services and now have in place 6 contracts for the provision of services to Children and Families.

Where services were tendered potential providers were asked to explain how they would deliver services bilingually and how they intend to meet the requirements of the Authority's Welsh Language Policy. We also asked for a copy of their Welsh Language policy which was provided by all who tendered.

We also monitor provision of Welsh language through the contract monitoring process. We are very pleased with the organisations we contract with who have at least one Welsh speaker involved in delivering the services.

Other services for which tendering was not required are signed up to the standard contract, this includes a statement as follows:

Welsh Language

You will ensure that the Service provided promotes language choice to those who come in to contact with Your service.

You will comply with Our Welsh Language Scheme

*There is also a requirement for all providers to comply with the Welsh Language Act 1993.
Providers produce leaflets, posters, newsletters and correspondence which are all bilingual.*

5.2.4 General Contracts within Social Services

General contracts are monitored in relation to the promotional material they produce to ensure that in Wales they are bilingual. Also monitored are communications sent out to our services users.

Examples are:

- a newsletter sent by NYAS (National Youth Advocacy Service) to our children and young people is bilingual.
- CWLWM which is part of the Cartref Bontnewydd group provides a Family Group Conferencing service to the Council. The Family Group has been monitored recently and it has been found that the majority of their staff are bilingual, leaflets, agendas and minutes are all produced bilingually.

5.2.5 Agreements with Voluntary Organisations

We have voluntary organisations that provide a purely Welsh service to pre school children through Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin and the All Wales Pre School Playgroups.

In respect of the allocation of Voluntary Organisation Grants we ensure that the Service provided promotes language of choice to those who come into contact with it and complies with the Council’s Welsh Language Scheme. Language choice is monitored and included in the annual report for all organisations that we have contracts with.

The Children and Family Services recently tendered for services and have required that the service provide a copy of their Welsh language scheme or direct Officers to where a copy is available.

5.2.6 Corporate Contracts

We have also undertaken some more general ‘sampling’ of corporate contracts to ascertain if the contracts make reference to our Welsh Language Policy. In 2007/08 we reported on our Corporate Print Tender Contract and Tourist Information Centre Tender. In 2008/09 we have sampled the following contracts.

Provision of ICT support for schools

A tender document for the provision of ICT support and maintenance within schools in the County. One of the requirements of the successful company is that support engineers must be able to communicate through the medium of Welsh.

B24	Would your company be able to offer a bilingual service to Schools?	Yes/No
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New Schools e-mail System

A tender document for the purchase of a new email system for use in schools. This will replace the current Ti – a – Fi system and would be a fully bilingual web based system available to staff and pupils.

Denbigh and Corwen Flood alleviation schemes

The successful tender for the above scheme will be expected to consult widely with the local community and the capability of communicating in Welsh would be an important criteria.

6 The Adequacy of Welsh Language Skills

6.1 Staff, recruitment and bilingual skills

Our Central Personnel Department provides the necessary arrangements for providing and assessing the language requirements of staff and Elected Members. This responsibility also includes the organisation of Welsh Language Courses and the monitoring of staff bilingual skills.

Workforce Planning

We have recently introduced a 'Workforce Planning' process which will greatly assist Managers in ensuring that we manage our bilingual skills. Workforce Development Planning is about analysing our current workforce, and then extending that analysis to identify the future numbers, skills and competencies needed to deliver improved services. Any gaps in the current work force, which prevent achieving the aspired future service delivery, can then be identified and a plan put in place to fill the workforce deficiencies.

The Workforce Planning process specifically looks at the needs of each Service in relation to the language skills of their staff. Managers follow the template below:

Welsh Language Profile - What is the Welsh language competency within the service area? What and how many job posts are Welsh essential? Will this change in the future?

Welsh Language Ability	Speak	Listen	Read	Write
No. of staff who can > (fluent or moderate skill)				

No. of Welsh Essential Posts

No. of Welsh Speakers in Team
Job Titles of Welsh Essential Posts

Senior Management regularly assess the need for posts to be designated 'Welsh Essential' if a vacancy arises or a new post is created. Managers will also assess the balance of bilingual staff within their Service and give preference to a Welsh speaker if an imbalance needs addressing. The Workforce Planning process has already proved beneficial in identifying 'teams' which require a Welsh speaker in a particular geographic area.

The HR TRENT system is now operational and provides detailed information about the training records and language abilities of staff. Personnel Officers are currently working with other Authorities and specialist HR software companies to ensure that the software procured is compatible to be used bilingually in order that on-line documentation can be accessed through the medium of Welsh i.e. on-line job application forms.

Staff are encouraged to undertake an e-gov learning module for various equality strands including the Welsh Language. The e-gov modules allow staff to undertake training at their own desk at a time suited to them. The e-gov learning modules are also being used by groups of employees.

The Council continues the initiative of having an employee 'Welsh Learner of the Year' Award. This year there were unusually two joint winners.

6.2 Welsh Language Indicator WLI 4 – Human resources – skills

a) 'The number of staff who have received training in Welsh to a specific qualification level?'

The numbers below relate to staff who are undertaking courses during the period September 2008 – June 2009.

Level	Number of staff
Level 1	14
Pellach Course	9
Llanllawen 3	14
Llanllawen 4	12
Written Welsh Course	10
Residential School	1

b) 'The number of staff who have received language awareness training?'

All new members of staff undertake an induction course which highlights the Council's commitment to the Welsh Language through its Welsh Language Scheme and Policies.

The Council also encourages staff to undertake e-gov learning modules in various equality strands. One of the hour long modules is in the Welsh Language and to date 191 members of staff have completed it.

Our frontline staff in Social Services also undertake in-house Welsh Awareness Courses.

**Welsh Language Indicator WLI 5 – Human Resources
'The number and % of staff within the Council's services who are able to speak Welsh (excluding school teachers and school based staff)**

The table below gives a breakdown of staff within each Directorate and their Welsh Language ability.

It should be borne in mind that these figures reflect the individual's perception of their language ability and it is likely that many Welsh speaking staff have classified themselves as 'moderate' rather than 'fluent'. A significant number of Welsh speakers may also have not responded to the questionnaire.

Our system cannot yet give a breakdown in relation to the salary grades of staff, although this should be achievable when our payroll goes live with the HR TRENT system in 2009 /10.

Directorate	Welsh Speaking Skills	Number of Employees	Percentage
Chief Executive's and County Clerks	1. Not at all	17.00	30.91%
	2. Moderately - a little	13.00	23.64%
	3. Fluently - quite well	18.00	32.73%
	Not Known	7.00	12.73%
	Sum:	55.00	
Directorate	Welsh Speaking Skills	Number of Employees	Percentage
Environment	1. Not at all	290.00	27.75%
	2. Moderately - a little	198.00	18.95%
	3. Fluently - quite well	119.00	11.39%
	Not Known	438.00	41.91%
	Sum:	1,045.00	
Directorate	Welsh Speaking Skills	Number of Employees	Percentage
Lifelong Learning	1. Not at all	94.00	23.68%
	2. Moderately - a little	100.00	25.19%
	3. Fluently - quite well	103.00	25.94%
	Not Known	100.00	25.19%
	Sum:	397.00	

Directorate	Welsh Speaking Skills	Number of Employees	Percentage
Resources	1. Not at all	134.00	42.95%
	2. Moderately - a little	82.00	26.28%
	3. Fluently - quite well	61.00	19.55%
	Not Known	35.00	11.22%
	Sum:	312.00	
Directorate	Welsh Speaking Skills	Number of Employees	Percentage
Social Services & Housing	1. Not at all	324.00	41.70%
	2. Moderately - a little	103.00	13.26%
	3. Fluently - quite well	93.00	11.97%
	Not Known	257.00	33.08%
	Sum:	777.00	

7 Mainstreaming the Welsh Language

- 7.1 The Council has an Integrated Impact Assessment Tool for screening new strategies and revising existing ones. The Tool has a specific question relating to the Welsh Language namely 'Does your Strategy or Plan support the Welsh Language'. Language matters in respect of risks and opportunities are identified at an early stage of a plan's development and addressed accordingly.

The Welsh Language Board's guidance on 'Mainstreaming the Welsh Language' has provided a basis for introducing measures to ensure that our strategic plans in particular are assessed and monitored. Following a successful seminar arranged nationally by the Board in 2007 and attended by Economic Regeneration Officers we have undertaken an assessment of new procedures governing mainstreaming arrangements for grant schemes and the introduction of information technology.

- 7.2 **Community Revenue Project Application Form.** Application forms for the 2008/09 financial year was revised and has a new specific section on the Welsh Language. The section asks prospective applicants questions such as : Will the services, activities, printed material, signs or website pages be available in Welsh? Responses to the questions relating to the Welsh Language are taken into consideration when evaluating the application. Monitoring of the successful applications have seen:
- an increase in community groups who are producing documents or are proposing to do so bilingually. These include Denbigh Business Group,

Prestatyn & District Festival of Walking and Meliden Residents Action Group.

- Prestatyn & Meliden Neighbourhood Watch have chosen to include Welsh lessons

7.3 **Voluntary Organisation Grants.** This application form is currently being revised and will have similar questions relating to the applicants use of the Welsh Language.

Our mainstreaming of the Welsh Language has resulted in many of our Directorates now having specific details in respect of the individual's preferred choice of language. For example on the first occasion members of the public communicate with our Council Tax Team or Social Services First Contact Team they are asked their preferred choice of language.

7.5 In order to monitor the number of Welsh Speakers who use our services we have developed an Equalities Monitoring Form with specific questions relating to the service users ability to communicate through the medium of Welsh. This Form is currently being trialled within specific areas of the Council.

7.6 As we are using more internet based services this obviously creates more challenges to ensure our services are all accessible through the Welsh language. We have specific policies in place to ensure our website is totally bilingual and on-line services are available through the medium of Welsh.

TextHelp Systems a company who developed BrowseAloud which is software to speech enable web sites have released a new Welsh voice and this is currently being trialled.

Our Internet Electoral Registration Service is accessible in Welsh and English and a new Text Service has been developed bilingually. The relatively new Automated Registration is promoted as a bilingual service and the number of responses in Welsh and English are monitored. The number of users through the medium of Welsh in 2008 was as follows (English equivalent numbers in brackets).

Automated Registration in Welsh by phone	93 (8463)
through the internet	116 (3297)
by SMS Text	8 (1155)

We will actively identify areas of 'good practice' within Services. Social Services have developed a Welsh Champions Group and hold a regular informal lunch club 'Cinio Sgwrs' primarily for Welsh learners. Several members of staff from various Directorates attend a Mock Job Interview session at Ysgol Glan Clwyd where students are interviewed through the medium of Welsh and English.

7.7 **Promotion of the Welsh Language**

Over a two week period in November 2008 we undertook sample equalities monitoring of our service users. The services involved included our reception areas, Customer Service Centre and Cash Offices. Two questions asked related to the person's national identity and their preferred language of communication.

Equality and Diversity Monitoring Form – What do you consider your national identity to be?	No	%
Welsh	82	41.8%
British	64	32.7%
English	39	19.09%
Scottish	2	1.00%
Irish	6	3.10%
Northern Irish	0	0.00%
other	3	1.50%

Equality and Diversity Monitoring Form – What is your preferred language for communication?	No	%
English	175	89.30%
Welsh	17	8.7%
Other	3	1.50%

7.8 We are in the process of introducing bilingual 'business cards' to our frontline services to distribute to the public who have service issues e.g. our refuse collection service. The 'business' card will have a bilingual message highlighting the existence of the Corporate Customer Services Centre and the availability of a dedicated Welsh language telephone line, website and e-mail address.

New members of staff and Elected Members are given induction training which incorporates an introduction to our Welsh Language Scheme and the importance of providing a bilingual service to the public.

All members of staff are encouraged to participate in Welsh classes which are open to all staff regardless of their role within the Authority. Following representation from staff who felt an hour's lesson once a week was insufficient and lacked momentum a new intensive course has now been established (a 3 hour course, twice a week for 10 weeks) subject to demand.

- 7.9 The Council recognizes the important role Menter Iaith Sir Ddinbych plays in promoting the Welsh Language in the local community and it is our intention to develop further our partnership work with Menter Iaith. The Council makes an annual financial contribution to Menter Iaith of £10k which is used to fund the work of a Menter Iaith Development Officer post. Following representation from Menter Iaith it has been agreed that the annual sum will be guaranteed for three years and then subject to further three yearly renewals. This change in the funding arrangement allows Menter Iaith to programme its work beyond the current 12 months and allows security of post to the Development Worker.
- The Council has also agreed to the £10k being subject to an annual inflationary increase.

The Council also makes a financial contribution to the North Wales Bilingual Forum in the sum of £2,500 per annum. The Forum's primary objective is to promote bilingualism in every part of society across North Wales. During 2008 Menter Iaith Mon who administer the Forum gave a presentation to the Council's Members Bilingual Forum on its objectives and programme of events and speakers. Members decided to renew membership for 2008/09 but to review the benefits to the Council of a North Wales Forum.

7.10 **'Mystery Shopper' Exercise**

During the course of 2008 Menter Iaith undertook on our behalf a 'mystery shopper' exercise. The monitoring involved phone calls, letters, e-mails and personal visits to a random selection of Services.

Phone calls

- all key reception staff responded to calls bilingually, however not all Services were able to provide a Welsh speaker to respond to a query. **ACTION** : Heads of Service to be reminded of the importance of reviewing the language ability of their team in order to provide where possible a genuine bilingual service
- Several Services also failed to offer the caller the opportunity to speak to an Officer in Welsh. **ACTION** : This has identified a training issue and will form part of the internal Communications Group action plan.
- It was noted that the answering machine of some outlying facilities did not have a bilingual message. **ACTION** : Instructions have been given to rectify this anomaly and a follow up series of out of hours calls will

be made to monitor the situation.

E-mails

- The majority of e-mails sent in Welsh received a reply in Welsh although it was noted that not all of the automated responses were in Welsh. **ACTION** : All Services to ensure that generic Welsh e-mail addresses have a Welsh automated response message.

Letters

- An unacceptable number of Services did not respond to a letter sent in Welsh within the required timescale. **ACTION:** This requires further investigation with a follow up 'mystery shopping' exercise to address a weakness in our response times.

Visits to reception areas

- Key reception areas had bilingual speaking staff but outlying centres were not able to provide Welsh speakers at reception. **ACTION:** Heads of Service to be reminded of the importance of reviewing the language ability of their team in order to provide where possible a genuine bilingual service
- It was noted a building had some signs in English only. **ACTION:** the signs are now bilingual.

The exercise has highlighted a number of issues and proved to be a valuable tool in monitoring compliance with our Welsh Language Scheme. The actions identified above will be taken up with the Heads of Service concerned with the aim of improving our bilingual service. It is envisaged a similar 'mystery shopping' exercise will be undertaken in 2009 /2010.

- 7.11 The council has established in 2008 a Citizens Panel and recruitment is still ongoing. An analysis of the membership will be undertaken and Welsh speaking members of the Panel will be asked questions relating to our services through the medium of Welsh.

8 Analysis of performance according to priority / target

- 8.1 Update on the areas for improvement identified in our Report 2008 – 2009

- **Implement a new complaints monitoring procedure corporately.**
A new comprehensive complaints procedure will be in place in 2009
- **Review our third party contractual arrangements to ensure compliance with our Welsh Language Policy and undertake further sampling of contracts.**
This has been achieved with progress reports on the improvements undertaken.

- **Undertake awareness training of staff in relation to the Welsh Language Policy and its implications.**
Although awareness training does take place as part of our induction courses we do recognise that more could be achieved. The ‘mystery shopper’ exercise has highlighted Services that require additional awareness training.
- **Prepare an action plan in relation to the Self Assessment of Denbighshire’s Children and Young People’s Partnership.**
An agreed action plan has been implemented and forms regular reports to Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee.
- **Mainstreaming and promoting the Welsh Language through the utilisation of the Integrated Impact Assessment Tool and making the most of the newly formed Bilingual Members Forum and the services offered by Menter Iaith Sir Ddinbych.**
These ‘mainstreaming opportunities ‘ are ongoing and have been referred to in this Report.
- **Ensure the new HR system encompasses monitoring requirements in respect of the Welsh language skills of staff and can provide Welsh language online services.**
This year has seen the introduction of both the Workforce Planning process and the Language Skills Strategy.
- **Promote awareness of Welsh language courses and the e-gov modules.**
This is ongoing with a healthy number of staff undertaking courses at various levels.

8.2 **Future actions identified in this Report which we will report upon in 2009 – 2010**

- Introduce a new complaints procedure as identified in this Report.
- Conclude our review of the Translation Service with recommendations to the Members Bilingual forum and Cabinet
- We will undertake a follow up of the ‘mystery shopper’ exercise to monitor the actions identified in this Annual Report.
- We will assess the work of the North Wales Bilingual Forum to ensure Denbighshire benefits from the service the Forum provides.
- We will monitor how effectively the new TRENT HR system captures information relating to the Welsh Language Skills of our workforce.
- We will use the Citizen’s Panel to canvass the views of Welsh speakers.

- We will revise the Council's Welsh Language Scheme in accordance with the Welsh Language Act and Welsh Language Board guidelines
- We will produce an internal working guide to the Welsh Language Scheme.

9 Publication of Information on Performance

The Report will be:

- approved by the Lead Member prior to publication and submission to the WLB
- considered by the Bilingual Forum
- Senior Officers will continue to have productive meetings with colleagues from the Welsh Language Board.

A copy will be made available on our website and a hard copy can be obtained from the Strategic Policy Unit of the Council.