

# Review

## Ceredigion Welsh Language Strategy

### 2018-23



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## **Introduction:**

I hereby present my report reviewing Ceredigion's Welsh Language Strategy 2018-2023 and assessing the extent to which the Council has satisfied the requirements of Welsh Language Standards 145 and 146.

Ceredigion's Welsh Language Strategy was developed in response to one of the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards, in accordance with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, which gives the Welsh language statutory status, and establishes the following principles:

- In Wales, Welsh should not be treated less favourably than English
- People in Wales should be able to live their lives through the medium of Welsh should they wish to do so.

### Welsh Language Standards requirements for Ceredigion County Council

Welsh Language Standards 145 and 146 place a duty on local authorities to develop a Welsh Language Strategy. The requirements are as follows:

#### **Standard 145:**

You must produce, and publish on your website, a 5-year strategy that sets out how you propose to promote the Welsh language and to facilitate the use of the Welsh language more widely in your area; and the strategy must include (amongst other matters) —

- (a) a target (in terms of the percentage of speakers in your area) for increasing or maintaining the number of Welsh speakers in your area by the end of the 5 year period concerned, and
  - (b) a statement setting out how you intend to reach that target;
- and you must review the strategy and publish a revised version on your website within 5 years of publishing a strategy (or of publishing a revised strategy).

#### **Standard 146**

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

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

The aim of this review is to assess to what extent the Council has met the requirements of Welsh Language Standards 145 and 146.

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This document is also available in Welsh, and in other languages and formats on request.

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg, ac mewn ieithoedd a fformatau eraill ar gais.

# SECTION 1

## Summary

Ceredigion's Welsh Language Strategy was published in early 2018, following a series of focus groups and a public consultation. To implement the Strategy, the membership of Ceredigion's Welsh language partnership group was revised, expanding the membership, and strengthening Ceredigion's Bilingual Futures Forum. The Forum has met regularly since the publication of the Strategy to address its requirements.

The Forum is chaired by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Culture, Leisure and Customer Services, who also chairs the Council's Language Committee. The Group includes Council officers, representatives from public organisations operating in the county, as well as organisations working to promote the use of the Welsh language across the county. Each organisation has committed to implement the action plan.

The principal aims of Ceredigion's Welsh Language Strategy 2018-23 were to expand the use of the Welsh language in all aspects of life in the county, and to seek to increase the number of Welsh speakers once again. The strategy would address three strategic areas:

- Increase the language skills of the people of Ceredigion
- Maintain and increase opportunities to use the Welsh language in Ceredigion in a range of contexts
- Create the social conditions that enable the Welsh language to thrive in Ceredigion

To achieve these strategic aims, the Council, alongside partner organisations, has been working to implement an action plan. The actions are reviewed regularly by the Bilingual Futures Forum, and summary reports are provided as part of the Annual Monitoring Report on the Welsh Language Standards submitted to the Welsh Language Commissioner.

The report is presented in two parts:

- Review Welsh Language Strategy Report: which reports on our approaches, as well as the methods of measuring outcomes.
- APPENDIX 1: Achievement Report Welsh Language Strategy: which reports on all activities organised to promote the use of Welsh language

The report provides clarity on the implementation of the Language Strategy in the context of National and Local Policies, see **Section 2**. In **Section 3**, a summary report regarding the achievement of the Language Strategy is presented, with a full report on all scheduled activities at **Appendix 1**.

Also, part of this report, we have gathered the available data to seek to analyse the position of the Welsh language in Ceredigion. Early reports on the 2021 Census results regarding the numbers of Welsh speakers across Wales were released on 5th December 2022. A report on the position of the Welsh language in Ceredigion can be found in **Section 4**.

To review the achievements of the Strategy, as well as the remit of the Bilingual Futures Forum, we have also undertaken a desktop audit amongst all our partners. This has helped us to assess the extent to which the Welsh Language Strategy has succeeded, to strengthen the procedures of the Bilingual Futures Forum as a means of leading this work, and to plan for the next Welsh Language Strategy that will cover the next five-year period. A summary of this work can be found in **Section 5**.

## SECTION 2

### Legislative and policy context

Ceredigion County Council's Welsh Language Strategy was produced in response to a specific statutory requirement set out in Welsh Language Standards Regulations and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, but it also exists in a broader policy and legislative context, both nationally and locally.

The current guidance document in relation to Welsh language policy and planning is *Cymraeg 2050: Welsh Language Strategy*, published by the Welsh Government. Ceredigion's Welsh Language Strategy recognises the links between it and the objectives of the Welsh Government's strategy, *Cymraeg 2050*, as well as its implementation. It also operates in parallel with Ceredigion County Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

### Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 established a legal framework that requires public organisations to comply with a set of standards (Welsh Language Standards (No. 1) Regulations 2015), which set out how to deliver, organise and facilitate the use of the Welsh language. Standards 145 and 146 state that local authorities, including Ceredigion County Council, must implement a Welsh Language Strategy to promote wider use of the Welsh language.

### The Welsh Government's vision: Cymraeg 2050: a million Welsh speakers

The implementation of Ceredigion's Welsh Language Strategy contributes to the Welsh Government's long-term vision set out in its Welsh language strategy, *Cymraeg 2050*.

The Welsh Government has published a Welsh Language Strategy to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language in all aspects of everyday life. The Welsh Government's vision is to see the Welsh language thriving in Wales. The *Cymraeg 2050* strategy includes two main targets:

- to reach a million Welsh speakers by 2050
- to increase the percentage of the population who speak Welsh every day, and who are able to speak more than a few words in Welsh, from 10% (in 2013-15) to 20% by 2050

It must be acknowledged that the world has changed significantly since the publication of *Cymraeg 2050*; the UK has left the European Union, COVID-19 remains an issue, and there is no doubt that the impact of the pandemic can be seen within our communities. All these factors present a range of challenges for the Welsh language.

When announcing a new *Cymraeg 2050* work programme for the period from 2021 to 2026, Jeremy Miles MS, the Minister for the Welsh Language and Education stated:

*"Our vision is outward-looking and inclusive. We want to create bilingual citizens who are confident to use Welsh in all aspects of everyday life. Put simply, we want everyone in Wales to feel like the language belongs to us all. [...] Planning is a core element of this Programme. We must plan carefully and decisively to increase the number of children and adults learning Welsh. We must increase opportunities for people to use their skills, and we must create contexts which allow people to use the language together, whether in geographical or virtual communities, workplaces, social spaces or within networks."*

The actions contained within Ceredigion's Welsh Language Strategy seek to increase the number of Welsh speakers and the number of people using the Welsh language in Ceredigion. This, in turn, will assist in making a local contribution towards the Welsh Government's vision of reaching a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

### **The Welsh Government's response to the impact of COVID-19 on the Welsh language**

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a far-reaching impact on our lives and has forced us to do things differently; it has also had an impact on the use of the Welsh language in the workplace and within our communities. The Bilingual Futures Forum produced a report entitled *Opportunities to use the Welsh language during lockdown* (September 2020), and it was found that lockdown, social distancing, and the lack of cultural socialising had impacted on our use of the Welsh language. During this period, a large number of people had not seen, heard or spoken Welsh for very long periods, and this had had a detrimental effect on the use of the Welsh language.

Following the pandemic, the Minister for the Welsh Language, and International Relations (at the time) established a sub-group to focus on the impact of COVID-19 on various aspects of the *Cymraeg 2050* strategy. The foreword states:

*"The coronavirus pandemic has had a colossal impact on how we relate to each other in the community. It has also made us think about how the pandemic might affect Welsh-speaking community groups, which play a key role in enabling people to speak Welsh with each other."*

The Welsh Government published its response to the impact of COVID-19 on the Welsh language in July 2021, and a number of the recommendations related to local authorities' promotion strategies:

*"Local Authorities should give Welsh-speaking community organisations a strong voice in planning and implementing their language promotion strategies. Welsh Language Promotion Strategies, Welsh in Education Strategic Plans and Mentrau Iaith County Forums should be interwoven with the Welsh-speaking community organisations."*

### **Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022–2032**

Ceredigion's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) complies with the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) Regulations 2019. The regulations state that local authorities should plan strategically for key areas in order to develop and strengthen the Welsh language, such as providing more opportunities for learners to use the Welsh language in a range of contexts at school.

During the Cabinet's virtual meeting on 22nd February 2022, Cabinet members approved the contents of the 2022–32 WESP. The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Schools, Lifelong Learning and Skills, Support and Intervention at that time stated:

*"Today's approval of the plan is an important milestone in helping us set out an excellent foundation for our pupils in speaking and communicating in Welsh. It will increase the pupil's choice to follow a fully bilingual path throughout the rest of his or her educational career and in facing the future world of work and social life. At the same time, the communities that surround our pupils and schools will benefit from this increased effort to strengthen the Welsh language in Ceredigion as a community language."*

The Council recognises that the education system and the WESP will play a key role in ensuring that the language grows within the county. The 2022–32 WESP outlines the key objectives to achieve this. By September 2032, Ceredigion County Council's aspiration is that every pupil in the authority's schools will receive Welsh-medium immersion education until the age of seven. In September 2020, 72.9% of Year 1 pupils in Ceredigion schools were receiving Welsh-medium education. By 2032, Ceredigion County Council's aspiration is that the target of 87% (Upper Range) suggested by the Welsh Government be further exceeded to 100%.

### **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**

The implementation of the Welsh Language Strategy also contributes to the achievement in Ceredigion of one of the well-being objectives of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, namely *“a Wales of vibrant culture and flourishing Welsh language”*.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 also sets out an important policy context for the Welsh language. Under the Act, a Public Services Board (PSB) has been established in Ceredigion and is charged with producing Public Service Plans across the county. The plans adhere to the Act and are based on six themes to promote:

- a prosperous Wales,
- a resilient Wales,
- a healthier Wales,
- a more equal Wales,
- a Wales of cohesive communities,
- a Wales of vibrant culture and flourishing Welsh language,

The latter theme involves creating *“[a] society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.”*

The Welsh Language Strategy has made a constructive contribution to delivering this theme in Ceredigion.

### **Ceredigion's Local Well-being Assessment 2022**

Under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, every PSB is required to produce a Local Well-being Assessment once every five years. Its purpose is to gain a comprehensive overview of the well-being of people and communities across Ceredigion, having considered all four well-being pillars – economic, environmental, social, and cultural.

What have we learnt from the Assessment with regard to the Welsh language in Ceredigion?

#### **A new start**

- There is a demand for childcare provision in Ceredigion, especially in the north, the middle and the south of the county, and particularly for Welsh-medium provision.
- Ensuring that Welsh speakers transmit the language from generation to generation, and that children have opportunities to socialise in Welsh in their area, is essential to the well-being and survival of the Welsh language.

#### **Childhood**

- Ceredigion's education system is one of the strongest in Wales and is one of the county's fundamental assets. The additional life skill offered by Welsh-medium education influences every aspect of well-being

## Young people

- Although there are concerns around the decline in the numbers who speak Welsh in their everyday lives outside educational settings, our review demonstrated that our young people feel a deep affinity with the Welsh language and Welsh culture, together with a desire to safeguard these for future generations.

## Adults

- The number of people attending or participating in arts, culture or heritage activities is decreasing in Ceredigion. Despite this, our well-being review demonstrates that people value the role that the arts and culture play in their lives.
- The decline in the number of Welsh speakers is one of the biggest challenges to the social and economic fabric of Ceredigion. Providing opportunities for people to learn Welsh or to improve their Welsh language skills is essential, alongside existing initiatives to promote the use of the Welsh language.
- The people of Ceredigion have a strong desire to support local businesses and to buy local produce.
- The economy needs to be strengthened to attract new businesses and grow existing businesses, to create more employment opportunities with better pay, to provide opportunities for young people to remain in the county, and to increase average earnings in the county in comparison with all Wales figures.

## Older people

- Ceredigion has an aging population. It is likely that this will put a significant strain on our public services (specifically on our local health service) and our local labour market.

The Welsh Government's Strategic Framework for Welsh language services in health, social services and social care, *More than just words*, notes that "many people can only communicate their care needs effectively through the medium of Welsh. For many Welsh speakers being able to use your own language has to be seen as a core component of care, not an optional extra. Many service users are very vulnerable; therefore, it is not fair to give them the responsibility for requesting Welsh language services. It is the responsibility of the service provider to meet these care needs."

The results of the Ceredigion well-being survey demonstrate that many young people feel a strong affinity with the Welsh language and Welsh culture, and an equally strong desire to preserve these for future generations. To realise this desire and to ensure that Ceredigion has a vibrant culture where the Welsh language is thriving, we must provide opportunities for them to use the language whenever they desire. For example, precisely 50% said that the ability to speak Welsh was the most important factor in relation to having a vibrant community where the Welsh language is thriving, a percentage that is higher than the overall response to this question. More than half (54%) also identified 'loss of traditions' as their main concern with regard to the Welsh language and culture, with 32% identifying 'a lack of Welsh language education in schools and colleges', and a further 25% identifying 'inability to use their preferred language'. In all questions on language and culture, the options related to the Welsh language scored higher across the survey results in general (Ceredigion's Local Well-being Assessment 2022, page 95).



## SECTION 3

### Implementing Ceredigion's Welsh Language Strategy Action Plan

A comprehensive report on the implementation of the Welsh Language Strategy action plan can be found in **Annex 1**. For the purposes of Standard 146, it includes a table detailing a full list of activities, as well as a record of their implementation.

During the period covered by the Strategy, regular reports on the implementation of the actions were received as part of the work programme of the Bilingual Futures Forum, with each partner organisation committing to deliver the identified actions.

Where possible, reports on performance indicators are given alongside the actions; however, we found that it was a consistently challenging and unfamiliar task to gather data on the use of the Welsh language; repeatedly, we found that existing IT systems were unable to gather the required data, or that the data did not tell the full story. The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on the use of the Welsh language, and it has been difficult to reach the original targets in some areas of provision.

We have highlighted that some performance indicators have been difficult to measure. The Welsh Language Commissioner's advice document, *Promotion standards: assessing the achievement of the 5-year strategies* states:

*"The success of the promotion strategies will depend heavily on the attitudes, linguistic practices, opinions and social situations of individuals and groups within the target audiences. These are difficult factors to measure with numbers and statistics. In this regard, as the public body wishes to influence the attitudes and linguistic behaviour of the general public and the organisations in its locality, it could be useful to supplement the findings of the quantitative evidence by undertaking qualitative research as well."* (Page 15).

In response, we have produced a desktop audit amongst members of the Bilingual Futures Forum; see **Section 5**.

However, officers have emphasised that the positive lessons learned from the implementation of this Strategy provide a solid foundation for the next five-year period.

This report demonstrates clearly that significant work has taken place through the implementation of the Strategy. The Council believes that the publication of the Welsh Government's *Cymraeg 2050* strategy, alongside the implementation of the Welsh Language Strategy at a local level in Ceredigion, has instigated some change in attitudes towards the Welsh language, and as a result, the number of people wishing to learn and speak the language in Ceredigion has increased.

#### **A summary of the main achievements of implementing the Language Strategy in numbers:**

- Analysed the 2021 Census data, as regards its implications on language use in Ceredigion: the report published on the Council's corporate website, and results shared widely with partners.
- CAVO was one of the first county voluntary councils in Wales to earn recognition via the Welsh Language Commissioner's Welsh Offer scheme
- Natural Resources Wales won the Work Welsh Employer of the Year Award in 2022
- Hywel Dda Health Board has signed up to the Work Welsh scheme to provide confidence building courses for 100 of their staff

- Coleg Ceredigion has put a policy in place, requiring all staff to follow an internal training programme to create bilingual classes, 'Basic, Better, Best'
- Aberystwyth University has been investing in large-scale developments that support the use of the Welsh language:
  - Reopening Neuadd Pantycelyn (September 2020) following a £16.5m investment, offering high quality accommodation for up to 200 students and a community space
  - In September 2021, Wales's first Veterinary Science School was opened at Aberystwyth University. The course provides students with an opportunity to study aspects of veterinary science through the medium of Welsh
  - In September 2022, the University welcomed its first nursing students who will receive training to become Adult and Mental Health nurses. Students will also be able to study half the course through the medium of Welsh
  - Work has also begun on an ambitious project to redevelop the Old College, creating a flagship centre for learning, heritage, culture and enterprise for the University, for the community, and for Wales by 2024

In implementing the Welsh Language Strategy, the Council set three strategic aims:

- Strategic aim 1: To maintain and increase the language skills of the people of Ceredigion
- Strategic aim 2: To maintain and increase opportunities to use the Welsh language
- Strategic aim 3: To create the social conditions that enable the Welsh language to thrive

The following summarises the activities undertaken in relation to all three strategic aims. A full report can be found in Annex 1.

### **Strategic aim 1: To maintain and increase the language skills of the people of Ceredigion**

In relation to this strategic aim, we recognise that language is a skill, and that everyone has the potential to increase their linguistic skills, no matter where they begin. Including everyone in the desire to increase the linguistic skills of the people of Ceredigion is a crucial factor.

Welsh language transmission and the use of the Welsh language within households are key to the survival of the language. Providing children with an opportunity to learn Welsh at a young age fosters a desire in them to use the language confidently as adults, and this, in turn, gives them an additional tool to use in their working lives. The Ceredigion Childcare Unit, alongside Mudiad Meithrin, is promoting the advantages of raising children bilingually, leading projects to promote the use of the Welsh language in childcare settings.

#### **Good news:**

- A childminder from Llandysul, who provides a Welsh language childminding service, won a We Care Wales award in 2021 for excellence in the provision of care for young children.
- A member of staff at Aberporth Nursery won the Early Years Wales **Welsh Learner of the Year** award in 2021 through the 'Camau' scheme for her exceptional attitude towards and commitment to her journey to learn Welsh (through the 'Camau' scheme).

The number of pupils in years 1 to 11 receiving their education in Welsh as a first language has increased. Every one of our primary schools has prioritised the implementation of the Welsh Language Charter framework within their development plans, with three schools achieving the gold standard, and the commitment of most of our secondary schools has also improved.

The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan for 2022-32 has been approved by the Welsh Government, and it aims to improve the process of planning the provision of Welsh-medium education in the county; as well as to improve the standards of Welsh-medium education and Welsh teaching standards in Ceredigion. To support the work the Education Service has created resources to encourage parents and pupils to pursue Welsh-medium education.

- 'Byw a Bod: One life, 2 languages' Guide and video widely shared  
**Guide:** [llyfryn-byw-a-bod-booklet.pdf \(ceredigion.gov.uk\)](https://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/~/media/115866/115866.pdf)  
**Video:** <https://youtu.be/-5-YpvvL2vg>
- Useful Welsh phrases booklet for parents and guardians. Every School in the County has received a stock of books:  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kxAPNcce\\_SPrKX4gK4vt-41RGzdc1bx/view?usp=share\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kxAPNcce_SPrKX4gK4vt-41RGzdc1bx/view?usp=share_link)

**Case study:** A family moved to Ceredigion from England. Despite initial concerns, they chose Welsh-medium education for their children:

“Our advice to you is to go for it. When we started, there was so much talk of how difficult it would be for our children to fit in and whether you would send them to school at a young age... and the problem is if you don't send your child to receive a Welsh-medium education, then they will be surrounded by a whole community that they won't be a part of, therefore it wasn't as difficult as people had told us it would be. Go for it. That is the answer. My advice to anyone who is considering it is to go for it. Be brave and they will gain so much and so will you... it's not just the children, but us too. We have become part of a wider community since our children received a Welsh-medium education. They are part of the community now and it doesn't mean that their English suffers... you do not lose out. There is a perception that you will lose something by sending them to a Welsh-medium school, but you don't, you gain so much, and that is it in a nutshell.”

All public organisations that are members of the Bilingual Futures Forum now offer Welsh lessons for their workforce. The Council has formed a partnership with the National Centre for Learning Welsh to employ a Work Welsh Tutor, leading to an increase in the number of Council staff learning Welsh, with 65 members of staff enrolled on various courses to learn Welsh, including 21 members of staff enrolled on the Advanced level course.

Case study: **Ceredigion County Council's Work Welsh Learner of the Year.** Melisa Elek, originally from Canada, with Croatian heritage, has been studying Welsh as part of the Council's Work Welsh programme for three years. Her commitment culminated in success in the Advanced exam in the Summer 2022, demonstrating that she truly is one of the new speakers of Welsh in Ceredigion. She now uses Welsh regularly in a personal and professional capacity. She is happy to speak Welsh with neighbours and friends. At work, she uses Welsh regularly with colleagues, and with students in her class.

The Bilingual Futures Forum believes that attitudes towards the Welsh language have changed, and that more people wish to learn and speak the language. We have been supporting Learn Welsh Ceredigion, Powys and Carmarthenshire, and an increasing number of people are enrolled on community-based courses to develop their Welsh language skills. There are **670** learners enrolled on community-based Welsh language courses, with **151 (22%)** enrolled on Advanced or Proficiency level courses. Learn Welsh Ceredigion, Powys and Carmarthenshire was rated as excellent by Estyn in 2022.

Case study: **Ceredigion, Powys and Carmarthenshire Welsh Learner of the Year**. Having spent more than 30 years living and working in England, Lynne Blanchfield and her husband decided to retire to the Aberystwyth area. She has made a wholehearted commitment to learn the Welsh language, has succeeded in the WJEC Learn Welsh examinations up to Advanced level, and is now working towards Proficiency level. She is eager to encourage other learners to persevere with their efforts to learn Welsh. She says that it is worth scaling the mountain to be able to use the language to contribute to the life and culture of Ceredigion, our special and unique county.

## **Strategic aim 2: to maintain and increase opportunities to use the Welsh language**

It is recognised that the sustainability of the Welsh language depends on the process of strengthening Welsh language communities by providing sufficient educational, cultural, and social opportunities to use the language on a daily basis. The purpose of this aim was to seek to facilitate the broadest possible opportunities for the people of Ceredigion to be able to use the Welsh language in all aspects of their lives in the county.

As part of this aim, Cered, the county's Welsh language initiative, has been working diligently to influence and develop the use of the Welsh language in the county. Cered has had success with projects that deliver specific activities, whilst growing the Welsh language; for example, the Ar Gered scheme is focussed on walking, with Welsh speakers, Welsh learners, and non-Welsh speakers all able to join, but the Welsh language is used throughout to give instructions and to explain place names and the surrounding environment (a mailing list of 70, with around 25 participants at each activity). The community-based project, Yr Ardd, is focussed on a community garden, as well as a gardening club that hosts talks and presentations, craft workshops, and a lantern parade (400 participants during the reporting year to date). The ukulele orchestra, Cerddorfa Iwcadwli, is similarly an inclusive activity that ultimately promotes and facilitates the use of the Welsh language (30 members rehearse once a week). A range of coffee mornings and coffee and chat events are held, both in person and online, across the county (with around 63 participants).

As part of these activities, the Cered officers have got to know a large number of non-Welsh speakers who have moved to Ceredigion, as well as dozens of new Welsh speakers in the area, and they have succeeded in having a positive influence on their lives and their confidence to use and improve their Welsh language skills.

**Case study:** Two years ago, a couple from Essex moved to the Aberystwyth area. Having spent years driving across Britain to visit their daughter at Aberystwyth University, they fell in love with the town and decided to move there. Having seen the Welsh language everywhere and heard so much Welsh being spoken, the couple realised that they would have to learn the language to make the most of their new home, and they enrolled on Say Something in Welsh courses. After learning for 18 months, they discovered Cered's Welsh Coffee Morning in Penparcau, where they met other Welsh speakers, including many learners in a similar situation to themselves. By attending these sessions, they became aware of the Ar Gered and Iwcadwli projects, and both have been regular attendees at both activities. Following the linguistic intervention of Cered officers, one of them has joined the local Welsh band, Bwca, as a bass guitarist, and has been performing with them on the area's biggest stages, enjoying every second.

**Case study:** A couple has moved from Sussex to the Aberystwyth area in the last few months. They decided to move to the area due to its beauty, the lower house prices, and the opportunity to start a hospitality business from their home. They joined the Penparcau Coffee Morning group because they wanted to learn more about the area and the Welsh language. They have now learnt some Welsh and have joined the Ar Gered project. As a consequence of this, one of the Cered officers was able to get to know the couple better and has been able to influence them in terms of using the Welsh language within their holiday cottage business in order to create a Welsh sense of place. They now have some Welsh on their website, and they are lobbying the national company responsible for their website to raise awareness of the importance of the visibility of the Welsh language. The couple are regular attendees at Ar Gered sessions in order to discover places to walk, and they intend to share some of the culture of the area with visitors staying at their holiday cottage.

Cered also supported the Welsh Government with the Cymraeg Byd Busnes scheme, and then with the Helo Blod scheme (1st August 2017 – 22nd April 2022), a scheme to provide advice locally to businesses to encourage them to use the Welsh language. Taking small steps, such as erecting bilingual signage or encouraging Welsh-speaking staff to wear a badge to show that they can speak Welsh, can make a big difference, i.e., placing small visual cues in terms of language use can give people confidence to use the Welsh language. In Ceredigion, 32 businesses have improved their use of the Welsh language following intensive engagement with Cered, under the Helo Blod scheme, and 52 businesses have made contact.

**Case study:** Gelert Behaviour is a company offering training for dogs and other pets. The owner moved from England to the Pontrhydfendigaid area shortly before lockdown. Following intervention by the Helo Blod officer, the company has made use of the Welsh language, creating a bilingual website, creating a Welsh e-mail auto-response, and producing bilingual marketing material. She has joined a Learn Welsh class and is volunteering at a nursery to practise her Welsh. Although she did not speak any Welsh before moving to Ceredigion, she can now hold a basic conversation in Welsh.

The Welsh Government's *Helo Blod* project ended in April 2022, a development that is disappointing to us in Ceredigion. We believe that business owners require support to use the Welsh language, especially those who are unable to speak Welsh themselves.

To meet businesses' needs in full and effectively, familiarity with the local community and the unique context in which the businesses operate is required. Delivering a central translation service only will not ensure that action is taken at grassroots level. We will work with the Welsh Government to support any successor project.

Theatr Felin-fach offers creative and artistic opportunities, by developing participation programs in the Welsh language. The theatre's vision is to provide opportunities that contribute to well-being, social cohesion, promote and facilitate cultural identity along with the sense of belonging. The *Gorwel a Gwreiddiau* project is run jointly by Theatr Felin-fach and Cered to gather memories and to work with young people to change their attitudes to local career opportunities. The project held 100 engagement sessions and provided 400 opportunities for young people and adults. Theatr Felin-fach Performance School (aged 7-18) has collaborated with Felin-fach Actors Company to stage an annual pantomime, along with the Maes G Show, with 55 Ceredigion Young Farmers members presenting an original musical in the Pavilion. Hwyl a Hamdden is a Welsh-medium cultural social group for the county's older people. The Club meets weekly, and provides entertainment or activity, along with opportunities for this age group to chat and socialise in their mother tongue.

Ensuring that there are opportunities for children and young people to use the Welsh language outside the formal setting of school is crucial to build pupils' confidence to use the Welsh language naturally. To this end, the Council has supported opportunities for children and young people to join groups such as Young Farmers' Clubs and the Urdd, and to attend activities at Theatr Felin-fach, Theatr Troedryhiw, Radio Beca and Theatr Arad Goch.

However, the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic have had a significant impact on the momentum of the work during the last two years of the strategy. Many of the social activities that created valuable opportunities for children, young people and adults to hear and to use the Welsh language together in our communities ceased. Despite the pandemic and its consequences, organisations such as the Young Farmers' Clubs and the Urdd have been working hard to restore the good work that was taking place prior to COVID, and although the ways of doing things have changed significantly, the Urdd has recovered its membership, with 2,967 children from Ceredigion becoming members (October 2022). Although the pandemic forced many clubs to close temporarily, the county now hosts nine adranau/aelwydydd, with a new adran having opened in Brynhoffnant (Adran Crannog) and another due to open in the New Year in New Quay.

Ceredigion's Young Farmers' Clubs provide a unique opportunity for some 713 members across 18 clubs in Ceredigion, with each club operating through the medium of Welsh.

At the 2022 Urdd Eisteddfod, Ceredigion came 4<sup>th</sup> across the whole of Wales, which is a significant achievement in view of the strict guidance in place at the time due to the COVID pandemic. Ceredigion's Young Farmers' Clubs also came 1<sup>st</sup> across Wales, competing at the Royal Welsh Show in Builth Wells. This demonstrates that there is a strong link between language and culture in Ceredigion, and that providing sufficient cultural opportunities and initiatives to facilitate the use of the Welsh language is essential to keep the language alive for future generations.

This is the view of a senior member of Ceredigion Young Farmers' Club about the organisation: *"As my time as a member comes to an end, this is an opportunity for me to thank the organisation from the bottom of my heart. We are very privileged in terms of what we have inherited. Although I'm not someone who has won much in competition terms, I have gained so much through the friendships I have forged, not only by being part of the family, but also of the extraordinary rural community of Ceredigion."*

A member of the Urdd in Ceredigion said: *“The Urdd has offered me unforgettable and unbelievable experiences since I joined the movement in the early years of primary school. Without doubt, the Urdd is one of the most important organisations in Wales, and even globally, as it highlights the talent, the culture and the sense of enjoyment that the young people of Wales have to offer. One of my recent memorable experiences through being a member of the Urdd was the opportunity to compete on the National Urdd Eisteddfod stage in Denbigh this year!”*

A very successful National Eisteddfod was held in Ceredigion during the Summer 2022, and it had far-reaching influence in terms of enhancing the status and standing of the Welsh language in the county. The Eisteddfod offered around 1,500 children and young people from Ceredigion an opportunity to take part in a range of activities on the Maes.

As part of the Eisteddfod, the Council created a Ceredigion Village to promote the county as an attractive place to live, to learn, to belong and to succeed. Countless opportunities were provided for attendees to experience and enjoy the Welsh language, by hosting specific spaces for each of the four themes, a demonstration kitchen with guest chefs from local restaurants, receptions, a seating area, a play area, an events stage, an outdoor area that included a gypsy caravan (with daily storytelling sessions), and huts to promote local businesses. This all served to promote Ceredigion as a county with a rich culture and heritage.

One of the success stories was the engagement and collaboration between the Council and other partners in the county to ensure that the utility infrastructure was installed and tested in good time before the event. Dyfed Powys Police described it as “[t]he best partnership work we have experienced during an Eisteddfod.” This work has enhanced partnership working within the county.

Some 25,000 visitors were welcomed to the Ceredigion Village, with the highest numbers visiting on the Wednesday and Thursday. One visitor’s view served to reinforce the Council’s desire to increase the number of opportunities to learn and use the Welsh language:

*“Our family is learning to speak Welsh, having moved to Ceredigion from Liverpool. We weren’t sure that we would come to the Eisteddfod because we had heard that we wouldn’t feel included if we weren’t able to speak Welsh. I’m so glad that we took the opportunity to come to Tregaron. We received a warm welcome at the Ceredigion Village. The children loved the ceramics workshop, playing the giant ‘Connect Four, and the opportunity to be creative. We were also able to have a cup of tea or cold drink. I felt that the Council had thought of the best ways to be inclusive. It has made us even more eager to learn Welsh. Diolch.”*

The main aim of the Eisteddfod is to encourage and promote the Welsh language, and it certainly succeeded in raising the profile of the language across Ceredigion. In reality, the Eisteddfod turned out to be a three-year community project, culminating in a festival. The excitement surrounding the fundraising efforts in preparation for the Eisteddfod’s visit to Ceredigion has also provided an important legacy. It was confirmed that the county had set a record by raising a total of £463,671 through community involvement. The festival itself and the activities that took place in communities contributed towards realising Ceredigion’s Welsh Language Strategy, by strengthening the position of the Welsh language in communities across the county. In the run-up to the Eisteddfod week, a project was launched to challenge local areas to tidy up and decorate their communities in order to welcome the Eisteddfod. The project was a golden opportunity to bring whole communities together. Across the length and breadth of Ceredigion, towns and villages were decorated with banners and other creative endeavours, from the red dragon in Lledrod to the Gorsedd in Llanddewi Brefi. Hosting the National Eisteddfod provided special opportunities to build bridges between Welsh-speaking and non-Welsh-speaking communities, providing opportunities to use the Welsh language and to attract learners to Welsh-medium activities.

During the run-up to the Eisteddfod, we gathered some of Ceredigion's most salient sayings; and these were placed as attractive attractions around the field. The sayings have been a great topic of discussion; and by this means we have ensured their survival for future generations. In addition, they were published in *Cleber y Cardi* magazine, which was widely distributed across all Ceredigion schools.

This legacy continues as Ceredigion provides further opportunities for new speakers of the Welsh language. Another important aspect of the National Eisteddfod was the countless opportunities for children and young people to take part in a range of events throughout the week. This, in turn, encouraged parents to embrace the Eisteddfod's activities and the Welsh language, and we hope that this legacy will continue.

A permanent memorial was erected by Tregaron Town Council to mark the National Eisteddfod's visit to the town. For several years, the Gorsedd has used fake stones to hold its ceremonies on the Maes, instead of erecting real stones in the host town. However, the Gorsedd approved Tregaron Town Council's request to name the memorial Cerrig yr Orsedd. As a result of the National Eisteddfod's visit, a number of projects have taken place, a number of new choirs have been established, and a number of new businesses have started. Gwenllian Spikes was commissioned to create a bench that has been placed in Cors Caron, and the Garth Newydd project has commenced in Lampeter to create a centre to hold Welsh Language Weekends to increase people's confidence to use the language. It is also intended to provide opportunities to socialise with those who speak Welsh as a first language, introducing new Welsh speakers to Welsh culture.

Following the National Eisteddfod's visit, the Council wishes to continue to hold some events, for example, an annual Talwrn y Beirdd (poetry competition) for young people, the Camu 'Mlaen awards ceremony, staging performances by ALN pupils at Theatr Felinfach or in the Music Proms, gathering and recording local idioms and promoting them widely, and establishing an education magazine, *Cleber y Cardi*. Such events and activities will make an extremely important contribution towards the viability of the Welsh language in the county.

The Eisteddfod was an investment that succeeded in introducing the Welsh language to a new audience in Ceredigion, and it is an excellent tool to change attitudes and to encourage people to learn and to use the Welsh language in all aspects of life. Essentially, it has demonstrated to the people of Ceredigion that Welsh is a dynamic, natural, and relevant language.

A successful application to the Cynnal y Cardi Fund has been approved, this to enable the creation of the Ceredigion Welcome Pack, to assimilate immigrants to Ceredigion. The project aims to maintain the viability of Welsh speaking communities, by highlighting the opportunities available to contribute and support locally, and to help persons understand how the Welsh language weaves into the cultural and social life of the County. The project will be inclusive, bringing together Welsh speakers, those who are shy speakers, Welsh learners and those who are completely new to Welsh. The project will aim to ensure community ownership, by equipping the community itself to address the challenges associated with immigrants. The Project Group is currently designing a Postcard which will direct persons to the Welcome to Ceredigion e-book.



### **Strategic aim 3: To create the social conditions that enable the Welsh language to thrive**

A language is a social medium and, for a language to thrive, the society in which it is a medium for expression also needs to thrive. It requires vibrancy, energy, and creativity. Communities need to be attractive and pleasant places in which to live. The population must perceive the social and economic value of their language and be willing to celebrate it.

One of the main challenges faced by Ceredigion is to ensure that the younger population and future generations have a good start to their lives as adults. The Council aspires to ensure that Ceredigion is an attractive place, full of opportunities for young people to stay and build their careers.

The trend in Ceredigion is for an increasing number of young Welsh-speaking people to leave the county after receiving their formal education, in order to pursue career opportunities, social opportunities and higher salaries. More and more organisations across Wales are seeking Welsh speakers, and we are losing our local talent pool. This is having an impact in terms of the depopulation of Welsh speakers from rural communities in Ceredigion. Today's young people are essential to fill key roles in the community tomorrow.

Interventions are already being put in place to reverse this trend. Ceredigion's Economic Strategy (2020-35) outlines the actions that must take place to tackle key challenges, focussing on developing the local economy to create better employment opportunities and to attract better paid jobs, alongside investment and plans to improve connectivity, both physically and digitally. The Strategy recognises the importance of the Welsh language: "Another important underlying principle is the need to protect and enhance our cultural uniqueness and identity and help to boost the resilience and growth of the Welsh language."

Essentially, aligning the Economic Strategy with the Welsh Language Strategy is achieved by ensuring that Welsh speakers have the confidence, the skills, and the opportunities to develop businesses, to work in higher value jobs, and to view Ceredigion as a thriving and energetic place in which to live and work.

The implementation of the Arfor 1 programme contributed partially to the creation of more and better jobs to prevent outward migration and the related loss of Welsh speakers from the area. The aim of the Arfor 1 programme was to develop economic interventions that would have a positive impact on the number of Welsh speakers and the viability of the Welsh language. The Arfor 1 programme has successfully trialled small-scale business support schemes and demonstrated that they have the potential to increase the use of Welsh within the workplace, to create favourable conditions to develop capacity and services further, as well as to increase the number of Welsh speakers within the business community.

According to research company, Wavehill, who evaluated the Arfor project: *"The programme has had the most visible and direct impact through direct business grants to small and micro firms in the area. These businesses frequently noted how difficult it was to access alternative sources of finance, investment, and capital. In this sense, the grants have proved particularly valuable for these businesses and have enabled expansion and diversification... Whilst securing this economic impact, the direct grants have also embedded plans to develop language capacity within the businesses' plans for the coming years."*

The Arfor programme has supported 31 applications in Ceredigion, with the main objective of promoting the use of the Welsh language within businesses. These businesses, in turn, have created 61.7 jobs and safeguarded 40.5 FTE jobs, increasing their revenue. As these are local businesses, they are more likely to recycle revenue locally. The Council is pleased that the Welsh Government has confirmed that further funding will be made available for Arfor 2, until the end of March 2025, and the Council is currently putting arrangements in place.

The provision of affordable housing also impacts on young people's decision to remain in the county or to move elsewhere. Ensuring that a stock of suitable and affordable houses is available in Ceredigion is a priority. The growth in demand and the limited stock has kept house prices and rental prices high in the county. Although housing affordability impacts on every local authority in Wales, the problem is particularly grave in Ceredigion due to the consistently high demand, the limited stock, and the fact that earnings are lower than the national average.

To tackle some of these issues, a paper was presented to the Cabinet (22<sup>nd</sup> February 2022) and the Council (3<sup>rd</sup> March 2022) regarding community housing, with the aim of supporting local people to access housing through a shared equity model. A task and finish group has been established to consider the implementation of such a model, alongside other housing options. This work is ongoing.

The process of reviewing the Local Development Plan (LDP) has been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and because the phosphates issue has not been resolved. However, a topic paper on the Welsh language was produced, outlining that the whole county should be classified as linguistically sensitive, thereby requiring all development proposals to be impact assessed regarding their potential impact on the use of the Welsh language in the relevant area.

However, the actions outlined above are longer-term ambitions, and it will not be possible to resolve the issues during the five-year period covered by the Welsh Language Strategy. They will need to be included in the next strategy and monitored over a period of decades rather than years.

As one of the county's main employers, the Council is aware of its duty in terms of workforce planning, and in terms of ensuring that the rights of Welsh speakers are met in the provision of services in Ceredigion. The Council aims to ensure that it has enough workers who are competent in terms of speaking and writing Welsh. It does this by assessing the Welsh language skills required for every new or vacant post. Over the period of the Strategy, the Council has succeeded in maintaining the number of staff who are able to speak Welsh, and fluent speakers remain the largest cohort of Welsh speakers.

Technology has transformed the way in which we live, and it is possible that changes will accelerate in future. The Welsh Government's strategy for the Welsh language, *Cymraeg 2050*, recognises that such changes create challenges for the Welsh language, but they also bring opportunities. The Welsh Government has published a Welsh language technology action plan: [WG34015 \(gov.wales\)](#) to inform the work of ensuring that technology facilitates opportunities to work and to provide services in Welsh. The Council's IT Service ensures that any software developed internally can operate simultaneously in English and in Welsh; and if digital software needs to be procured externally, it ensures that the provider also adheres to this bilingual policy.

Naturally, the progress made during 2020-22 has been limited in many areas due to the impact of COVID-19, as people focussed on adapting to new models of service provision. However, in reporting on the delivery of the Welsh Language Strategy, it is clear that Ceredigion continues to be rich and vibrant in terms of Welsh-medium community-based activities; nonetheless, it is essential that purposeful language planning takes place to maximise the status and strengthen the use of the language in order to ensure that the people of Ceredigion perceive the value in being able to speak Welsh and use the language on a daily basis in their everyday lives.

DRAFT

## SECTION 4

### Target and performance measurement

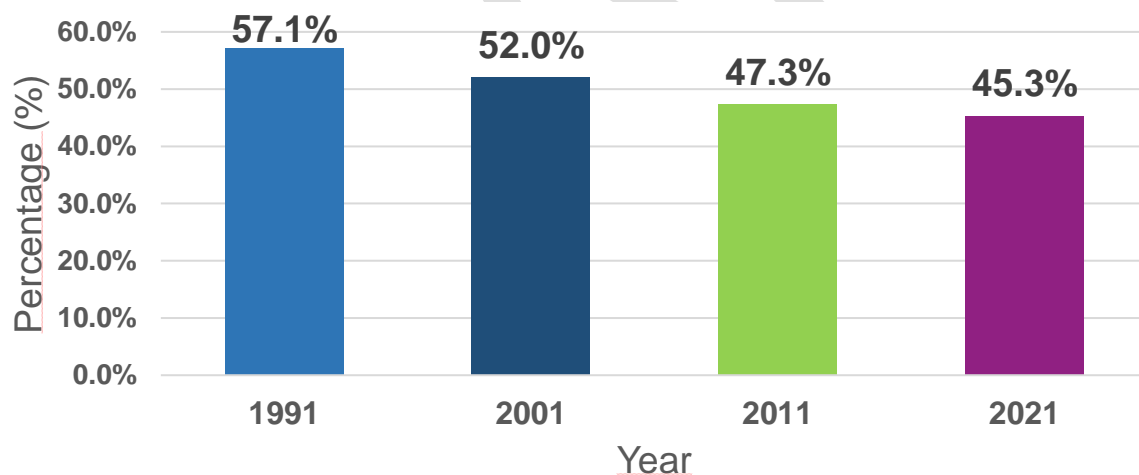
Every local authority is required to set a target in its Welsh Language Strategy (Standard 145): *Set a target (in terms of the percentage of speakers in your area) for increasing or maintaining the number of Welsh speakers in your area by the end of the 5-year period concerned.*

In its Welsh Language Strategy, Ceredigion set a target to increase the percentage of Welsh speakers in Ceredigion to 48.5%, which would represent an increase of around 1,500 Welsh speakers by 2023. This target was based on the anticipated Welsh language abilities of the population by 2023, and the number of Welsh speakers leaving Welsh-medium education.

According to the Welsh Language Commissioner, the Census is the main source of data on the Welsh language in Wales, and it is used by the Welsh Government to assess progress against the target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

Data from the 2021 Census were released on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2022, reporting that the number of Welsh speakers had decreased across Wales, from 19% to 18%. Ceredigion also saw a decrease of -2.0 percentage points, or 3,286 fewer speakers. According to the Census data, the number of Welsh speakers in Ceredigion has been declining over the last decades.

Figure \*: The percentage of Welsh speakers in Ceredigion 1991 – 2021.



Source: Office for National Statistics, 1991, 2021, 2011 and 2021.

However, we need to exercise caution in interpreting the data, and look at the bigger picture; for example, the Census data were recorded at a time when the population of Ceredigion was decreasing. The Welsh language is also covered in other surveys, which have much more positive results for Ceredigion. These are discussed below.

It is important to note that the Welsh Government uses a number of different methods to measure the number of Welsh speakers, and these methods inevitably vary in terms of the presentation of the data. This creates quite a complex picture and reinforces how difficult it is to measure language use.

The Welsh Government has stated that it will examine the Census data carefully, stressing that it is “one of many important pieces of data used to consider what changes need to be made in future to ensure that our language thrives”. The First Minister has written to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) “to ask it to examine how and why different surveys about the Welsh language produce different results”.

The Welsh Language Commissioner has published an Advice Document on Assessing the Achievements of the Local Authorities’ Five-year Strategies. It states that measuring progress against their targets is a matter for the organisations themselves; however, the document provides current information about a methodology and data sources that could be used to assess the extent to which the Strategy has succeeded in meeting the targets set. These data sources are discussed below.

The Council’s main data sources in terms of the number of Welsh speakers are its **education** data, as well as its **workforce** data, which enable the Council to examine trends.

### Census 2021 data

Caution needs to be exercised in interpreting Census data, because the picture is a complex one; language is more than a means of communication, it is part of people’s make-up and their interaction with one another. Dr Rhian Hodges, Senior Lecturer in Sociology at Bangor University, said in her interview with BBC Radio Cymru on 9 December 2022:

*“The Census is valuable in giving us a snapshot of what is happening, but at the same time, it is also important to look at elements, such as confidence, fluency and feelings in terms of language use and in terms of a sense of belonging to the Welsh language.”*

In interpreting the Census data on 6th December 2022, the Minister for Education and the Welsh Language, Jeremy Miles MS, said:

*“I have mentioned before that the Welsh language is more than just something I speak – it is something I feel. And I feel that more and more people feel that the Welsh language belongs to them. The challenge lies in turning those feelings into language use.”*

In the 2021 Census, people were asked to assess their ability to do the following:

- Understand spoken Welsh
- Speak Welsh
- Read Welsh
- Write Welsh

The Census data does not measure different levels of confidence in using the language nor the frequency of use of the Welsh language. Neither does it measure any sense that the Welsh language belongs to the respondents. The information about Welsh language skills in the Census is based on the respondent’s self-assessment of their ability. Therefore, Welsh speakers were not given an opportunity to explain their feelings towards the Welsh language. It is quite possible that more people are able to speak some Welsh, but in self-assessing their own Welsh language skills, they may have felt too shy and reticent to record that. In some cases, especially in the case of children, Welsh language skills were recorded by another person, such as a parent or guardian.

Furthermore, in considering these figures, it is important to note that the 2021 Census was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic (21<sup>st</sup> March 2021). This followed periods of lockdown, remote schooling, and working from home for many people. It is not known how the pandemic may have affected people's response to the question about their Welsh language ability (or their perception of others' Welsh language skills).

#### Census 2021 data: Ceredigion results

Percentage of usual residents aged three and over in Wales and Ceredigion: 2011 Census and 2021 Census

	2011 Census		2021 Census		Percentage point difference
<b>Wales</b>	<b>562,016</b>	<b>19.0%</b>	<b>538,300</b>	<b>17.8%</b>	<b>-1.2</b>
<b>Ceredigion</b>	<b>34,964</b>	<b>47.3%</b>	<b>31,678</b>	<b>45.3%</b>	<b>-2.0</b>

- On Census Day (21<sup>st</sup> March 2021), 45.3% (31,678) of Ceredigion's usual residents, aged three and over, reported that they were able to speak Welsh. This represents a decrease of 3,286 people since 2011, or a 2.0 percentage point decrease since 2011.
- Ceredigion had the fifth largest decrease in the percentage of Welsh speakers between 2011 and 2021 (2.0 percentage points). The greatest decline was seen in:
  - Carmarthenshire (4.1 percentage points)
  - Powys (2.1 percentage points)
  - Denbighshire (2.1 percentage points)
  - Pembrokeshire (2.1 percentage points)

The main factors that contributed to the overall decline in the percentage of people who said that they were able to speak Welsh in Ceredigion between 2011 and 2021 were as follows:

- These results were recorded at a time when Ceredigion's population was in decline, having decreased from 75,900 in 2011 to 71,500 by 2021. This means that there were 4,400 fewer people living in the county
- A reduction in the number of children and young people aged between 3 and 15 who recorded that they were able to speak Welsh (a reduction of 6.6 percentage points)
- A reduction in the 65+ age group who recorded that they were able to speak Welsh (a reduction of 6.5 percentage points)

However, amidst the negative headlines generated by the Census results, there are some flickers of light, as well as a result that is to be welcomed.

- There was a percentage increase in the 16–19 age group, from 40.9% in 2011 to 46.9% in 2021.
- There was a percentage increase (albeit small) in the 20–44 age group, from 41.7% in 2011 to 43.1% in 2021.
- The highest number of Welsh speakers are to be found in the 20–44 age group, which is an important statistic for the next Welsh Language Strategy.
- As an authority, Ceredigion continued to have the third highest proportion of Welsh speakers, aged 3 and over, nationally (45.3% of residents), behind Gwynedd (64.4%) and Ynys Môn (55.8%).

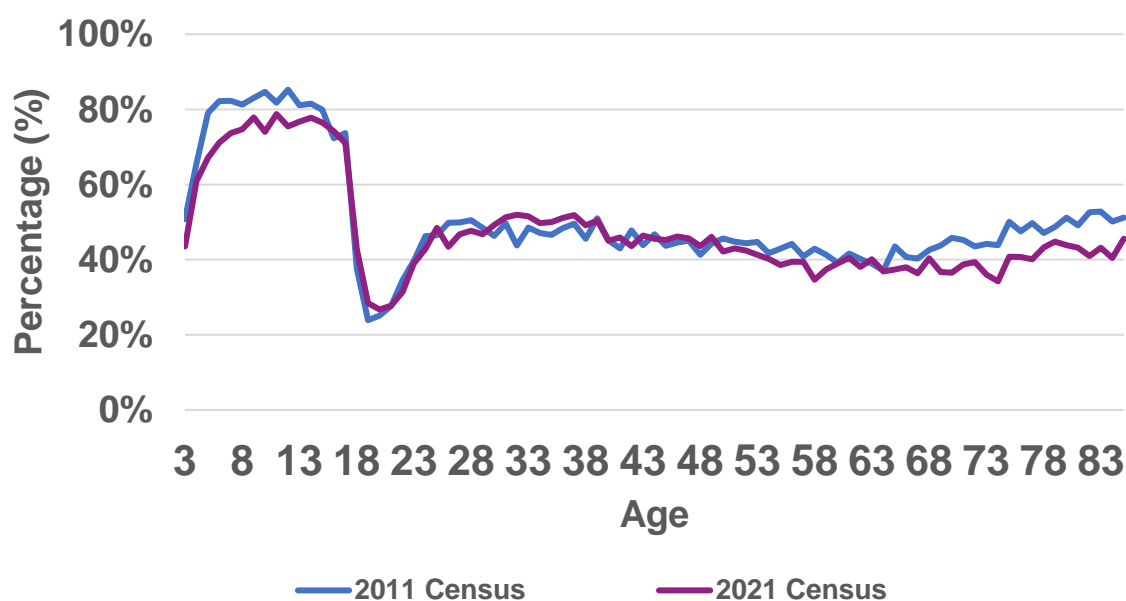
- Ceredigion is still considered one of the Welsh language heartlands, and the county is key in terms of planning for the language’s growth and prosperity. Welsh and bilingual communities form the basis of its culture and daily life. The Welsh language is used extensively in the workplace, in education, and in the home. The language is also an essential part of local communities, organisations, clubs, and associations in the county.

Figure \*: The percentage of Welsh speakers by age group in Ceredigion.

	3–15 years	16–64 years	65+ years	Everyone over 3 years
<b>2011</b>	78.4% (7,175)	41.9% (20,503)	46.4% (7,286)	47.3% (34,964)
<b>2021</b>	71.8% (6,123)	42.4% (18,219)	39.9% (7,347)	45.3% (31,678)
<b>Difference</b>	-6.6 percentage points (-1,052)	+0.5 percentage points (-2,284)	-6.5 percentage points (+61)	-2.0 percentage points (-2,284) (-3,286)

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2011 and 2021.

Figure \*: The percentage of Welsh speakers by age group in Ceredigion.



A note on including students in Ceredigion’s data:

The Census was held during college and university term time. Ceredigion has a significant student population, with around 6,500 – 8,050 students normally (HESAA, 2021 and ONS, 2021 Census).

As in previous Censuses, students were recorded as living in their usual term-time addresses, in order to help to gain an accurate measure of the normal resident population. Considering the pandemic, the lockdown restrictions, and the fact that many students may not have been resident at their term-time addresses, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) set out to review and improve the guidance to students on how to complete the Census survey. The ONS also established methods of estimating and adjusting for the lack of response from students or the possibility of students being over counted.

The Welsh language in Wales (2021 Census), Welsh Government, 6th December 2022.

It must be borne in mind that the Census is only one source of data, and that survey responses are often subjective. The Welsh Language Commissioner’s advice document on assessing the achievements of the five-year strategies refers to alternative methods of tracking patterns or trends that could give an useful insight into the achievements of the Welsh Language Strategy in Ceredigion.

<https://www.welshlanguagecommissioner.wales/media/tsmnvkfc/20210407-dg-s-cyngor-ar-asesu-cyrhaeddiad-y-strategaethau-hybu.pdf>

### What other evidence is available?

#### Annual Population Survey

<https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Welsh-Language/Annual-Population-Survey-Welsh-Language>

According to the Welsh Language Commissioner’s advice document, the Annual Population Survey provides figures on the number of people who are able to speak Welsh every quarter. The survey provides useful data at local authority level to consider Welsh language trends between censuses, but the results of the Annual Population Survey should not be used to measure progress towards the target of a million Welsh speakers.

This survey also provides results according to broad age groups. Although the Welsh Government does not consider its results to be as reliable as the Census results in order to count the number of speakers, the advantage of using this survey lies in the fact that it generates results more frequently.

Historically, the estimates produced by the Annual Population Survey of people’s Welsh language ability have been higher than those produced by the Census. According to the Annual Population Survey in 2022, **57.45%** were able to speak Welsh in Ceredigion, compared with 45.3% according to the 2021 Census.

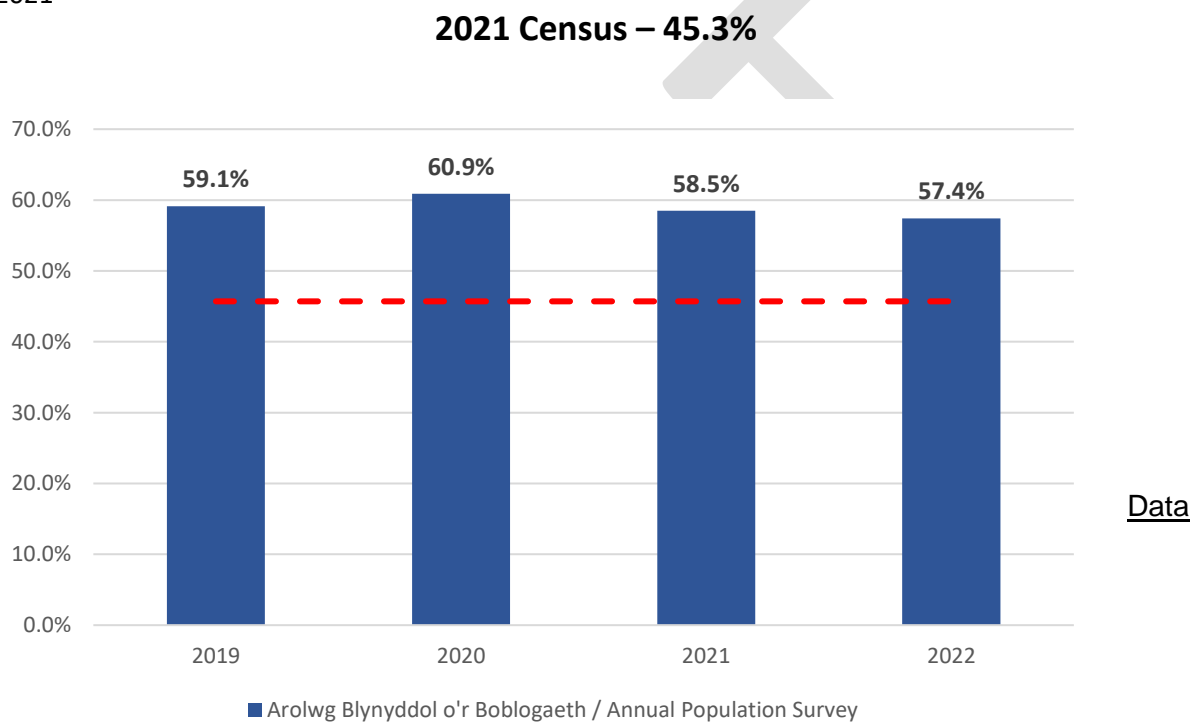
Number of Welsh speakers:	
2022 Annual Population Survey	2021 Census
57.45%	45.3%



Further information and studies relating to the Welsh language in the Annual Population Survey demonstrate that the percentage of Welsh speakers in Ceredigion has been rising. For example, the Annual Population Survey revealed that 52.7% of Ceredigion’s population were able to speak Welsh in 2014, rising to 60.9% by 2020. As demonstrated by the graph below, according to these data, the number of Welsh speakers decreased slightly in 2021 and 2022, and this could be attributed to the decline in Ceredigion’s population in recent years. However, it must be noted that the numbers of Welsh speakers remain higher than the percentage recorded in the 2021 Census.

Although Census data are the most scientific and reliable data, a Census is only held once every decade, therefore it is also important to consider alternative data.

Figure\*: Percentage of Welsh speakers according to the Annual Population Survey and the Census, 2021



Source: Office for National Statistics, 2021.

National Survey for Wales

<https://statscymru.llyw.cymru/Catalogue/National-Survey-for-Wales/Culture-and-Welsh-Language>

The National Survey for Wales is another indicator that gathers information on the ability of adults aged 16 and over to speak Welsh, as well as their fluency and how frequently they speak the language. Similar to the Annual Population Survey, the National Survey’s estimates of the number of Welsh speakers have historically been higher than those produced by the Census.

These data are also used as a source for the Well-being of Future Generations national indicator 36, namely ‘The percentage of people who speak Welsh on a daily basis and are able to speak more than a few words of Welsh (for adults aged 16 and over)’.

Year		% of adults who speak Welsh	% of adults with some ability to speak Welsh
2016-17	Wales	20%	9%
	Ceredigion	49%	6%
2017-18	Wales	19%	12%
	Ceredigion	44%	16%
2018-19	Wales	18%	15%
	Ceredigion	42%	18%
2019-20	Wales	16%	8%
	Ceredigion	40%	16%
2021-22	Wales	19%	17%
	Ceredigion	41%	19%

In this Survey (2021-22), when people in Ceredigion were asked if they were able to speak Welsh, 41% had responded 'yes', while a further 19% responded 'no, but I am able to speak some Welsh'. These data appear to show an increase in the number of people able to speak some Welsh (9%: 2016-17; 19%: 2021-22). According to this survey, the factors that are related to speaking Welsh on a daily basis, and the ability to speak more than just a few words of Welsh, are:

- Having children in the household
- A sense that people in the local community treat each other with respect and consideration
- A high level of educational qualifications
- Being employed
- Living in a rural area
- Living in Gwynedd, Ynys Môn or Ceredigion
- A sense of belonging to the local community

Thirty-five percent of the adults who speak Welsh noted that they were likely to speak Welsh on a daily basis.

#### Language Use Surveys:

<https://www.gov.wales/welsh-language-use-survey>

Language use surveys do not gather information on the number of people who are able to speak Welsh. They gather more detailed information about the fluency of Welsh speakers, and their use of the language in a range of settings in everyday life.

These surveys are normally conducted every 5–10 years (1992, 2004–06, 2013–15, 2019–21), and they usually provide data at local authority level. Due to the pandemic and the impact of COVID-19, the 2019–21 Language Use Survey unfortunately had to be concluded early.

The previous Language Use Survey, conducted in 2013–15, demonstrated that the highest concentration of Welsh speakers who speak the language on a daily basis could be found in local authority areas in west Wales, with the highest concentration in Gwynedd, Ynys Môn, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire. These are the areas with the highest percentages of Welsh speakers; therefore, it is likely that there are more opportunities for Welsh speakers to use the language frequently.

### Language transmission data

Ensuring that Welsh speakers transmit the language from generation to generation, as well as providing opportunities to socialise children so that they use the language within local communities, are essential to the survival of the Welsh language. Measuring language transmission rates is problematic, without detailed research. The Welsh Government commissioned a piece of work in 2015 to consider figures from the Census tables on the ability of 3–4-year-olds to speak Welsh, according to the linguistic make-up of the family. It remains to be seen whether similar research will be conducted following the 2021 Census.

During the period of the next Welsh Language Strategy, we will continue to work with partners in the Childcare Unit and with Mudiad Meithrin to raise awareness of the importance of language transmission within households.

### Ceredigion County Council’s Education Service data

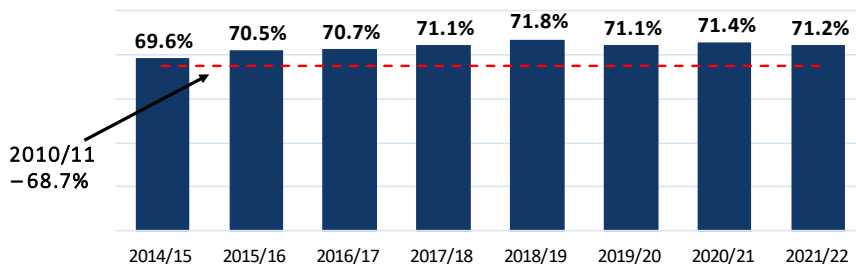
The Welsh language is a central part of education in Ceredigion – 37 of the county’s 43 schools are either Welsh-medium or bilingual schools. Recently, the linguistic categories of Ceredigion schools were changed successfully, following Welsh Government recommendations.

The number of pupils in years 1 to 11 who are educated in Welsh as a first language has increased in recent years, reaching a peak of 5,483 in 2018/19. The numbers were slightly lower in 2020/21, reflecting the fact that there were fewer pupils in that academic year.



## Plentyndod / Childhood

% y disgyblion a astudiodd y Gymraeg fel iaith gyntaf mewn ysgolion cynradd, canol ac uwchradd ym mlynnyddoedd 1-11  
 % of pupils that studied Welsh as a first language in primary, middle and secondary schools in years 1-11



The Welsh Government has approved Ceredigion’s Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) for 2022-32, which outlines the authority’s vision for Welsh-medium education over the next ten years, and its main strategic aims over that period. By September 2032, Ceredigion County Council’s aspiration is that every pupil in the authority’s schools will receive Welsh-medium immersion education until they are seven years old. Providing an excellent foundation in speaking and communicating in Welsh will increase the choices available to pupils and their confidence in following a fully bilingual pathway throughout the remainder of their education, as well as in their employment and social lives in the future.

This work will benefit individuals, as well as the position of the Welsh language in Ceredigion as a community language. Implementing the WESP will also make a very positive contribution towards the implementation of the Welsh Language Strategy over the next five-year period, working to increase the number of Welsh speakers and those using the language across the county.

#### Ceredigion County Council’s workforce data

In accordance with the Welsh Language Standards regime, the Council is required to increase the use of the Welsh language internally by implementing a set of Operational Standards. This set of standards (alongside a large number of other tasks) has placed a duty on the Council to measure the number of Welsh speakers in its workforce. The Council has reported annually on the linguistic skills of its workforce, using the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) Framework. The linguistic skills of the workforce have remained relatively stable over the last four years. It is encouraging that the largest number of Welsh speakers belong to the level 5 linguistic skills cohort, which is the proficiency level. In the 2021-22 reporting year, 32% of the Council’s staff had linguistic skills at proficiency level, and only 4% had no Welsh language skills.

#### Council staff linguistic levels: Listening and speaking skills

Level	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
No skills	4%	4%	4%	4%
1	18%	19%	20%	20%
2	15%	15%	14%	14%
3	15%	15%	15%	15%
4	14%	14%	14%	15%
5	34%	33%	33%	32%

## SECTION 5

### **Feedback from partners on the implementation of the Welsh Language Strategy 2018-23**

To assist with the process of reviewing the implementation of the current Welsh Language Strategy, and of evaluating the Bilingual Futures Forum as a platform to steer the work, a review was conducted in January 2022 to gather the views of stakeholders.

The questionnaire was shared with all members of the Bilingual Futures Forum, which includes some of the Council's external partners, as well as key officers who work in a range of services within the Council that are relevant to the implementation of the Strategy. This elicited nine responses. The responses have provided an useful insight into the strengths of the Strategy, as well as possible opportunities to strengthen and develop the new strategy over the next five years.

The questionnaire included sections under the following headings:

- Vision
- Effectiveness
- Coordination
- Outcome
- Strengths / Weaknesses / Opportunities / Threats

#### **Vision**

Stakeholders were asked to state how clear the Welsh Language Strategy's vision, as well as its three strategic aims, were. Each of the Forum partners who responded stated that the vision and aims were very clear. This reflects the commitment that these stakeholders have made from the outset in terms of planning and developing the Strategy. One respondent stated that it was clear that many aspects of the vision also dovetailed with other Council strategies, and that this served to strengthen collaboration.

However, one respondent felt that the vision was clear at operational level, but that deeper engagement may be required to ensure that this is reflected across every organisation at leadership level and within corporate strategies.

#### **Effectiveness**

This question sought views on the effectiveness of the actions identified as part of the Strategy's action plan. Every respondent felt that the actions were realistic, however, there was a sense that language planning is something that needs to be developed over time, and that some actions required more than the five years covered by the current Strategy to implement. Furthermore, there was a strong feeling that it is difficult to measure progress in terms of the number of people who use the Welsh language.

Most respondents stated that there was no doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic had had an impact on the language, and on the actions of the Strategy in terms of providing opportunities for people to use the Welsh language naturally as part of their day to day lives, at work or socially. With social activities having been curtailed, there had been fewer opportunities for people to see, to hear and to use the Welsh language. It may also be the case that the increase in the number of people able to work from home has created a new wave of inward migration to this rural area, which may also have impacted on the use of the Welsh language, and on the number of people able to speak the language in the county.

The pandemic has forced us to change our lifestyles, with the effect that it has undermined the use of the Welsh language. Only time will tell whether it will recover or adapt to circumstances after the pandemic. Due to this change, more time is needed to realise the success of actions that are already being implemented to deliver the vision of the Strategy. More creative ways of promoting language use will need to be found, for example, making greater use of technology, such as Tick Tock, Instagram, etc.

On the other hand, we must not forget some of the beneficial developments that took place during lockdown, such as holding public events online, which may have opened the door to new audiences, and which provides inclusive access. Furthermore, the number of people who started to learn Welsh increased during lockdown, which bodes well for the future. The infrastructure already put in place as part of the Strategy will assist learners to perceive the value in learning the language, enabling them to integrate naturally into the vibrant and rich life of the county.

### **Coordination**

The majority agreed that the Bilingual Futures Forum is an effective vehicle in which to discuss the implementation of the Strategy; the Forum is an effective platform to bring partners together and plays a key role in seeking to raise the awareness and confidence of our voluntary partners.

It was noted that it can be difficult at times to try to persuade partner organisations to implement the Strategy's vision, especially those who are not covered by the Welsh Language Standards. Some also expressed concern as to whether the Council has the appropriate support structure and resources in place to assist in implementing the Strategy fully.

Some comments were also made on reinforcing the work in future:

- The forum is an effective platform to share information, but we need to consider more carefully how we can demonstrate that change is happening, i.e., language use increasing, number of Welsh speakers growing.
- It may be that a structure of sub-groups should be established to provide opportunities to discuss specific issues, before reporting back to the main group.
- We believe that the monitoring of activity at operational level is effective, but it is debatable whether there is sufficient engagement at corporate level, e.g., through the Public Services Board and/or another means of confirming strategic adherence.
- It should be considered whether partners could collaborate as a group on a specific project as part of the next strategy.

It was noted that the Council has included partners effectively at operational level, but that it should seek the commitment of the Public Services Board, or strategic adherence via another means, such as a Memorandum of Understanding or a partnership agreement between partner organisations at leadership level.

### **Outcome**

The questionnaire asked stakeholders for their views on the outcome of the implementation of the Strategy. Most respondents from within the Council, as well as external partners, agreed that they had seen a positive change in attitude in terms of promoting the Welsh language in service provision, but that it was much more difficult to provide evidence of a positive change in behaviour in terms of the use of the Welsh language by service users.

During the period covered by the Strategy, positive developments have taken place within our organisations in terms of increasing opportunities to use the Welsh language within services, learning opportunities, and cultural activities.

However, one respondent suggested that legislation and national measures (the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, the *Cymraeg 2050* Strategy) had had much more influence on the linguistic shift, and that although it is wholly appropriate that a county-wide Welsh Language Strategy should be in place in Ceredigion, the positive change in this regard should not be attributed to the 2017-23 Welsh Language Strategy.

On a positive note, several respondents noted that they believed that their service areas could do more to ensure the success of the Strategy, but that further leadership and encouragement are needed to enable this. This bodes well for the development of the new strategy for the next five-year period.

SWOT model analysis: Feedback from partners:

All stakeholders were asked for their views on the strengths and weaknesses of Ceredigion's 2018-23 Welsh Language Strategy, and the opportunities and threats that exist in relation to the development of a new strategy for the next five-year period. The result is as follows:

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ceredigion remains one of the Welsh language heartlands</li> <li>• The Welsh Government is providing more support for the Welsh language via the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, as well as the Cymraeg 2050 Strategic Framework</li> <li>• A Language Strategy sets a framework that outlines how Ceredigion will support the Welsh Government's Welsh Language Strategy: Cymraeg 2050</li> <li>• The Bilingual Futures Forum provides a platform to share information and to understand the work of other services and organisations in the county</li> <li>• It is an useful forum to bring together all aspects of the promotion and facilitation of language use in one place</li> <li>• The Strategy dovetails with a significant number of other Council strategies</li> <li>• There is a strong will to develop the use of the language within communities</li> <li>• Ceredigion's Economic Strategy recognises that the Welsh language is an important skill in the workplace</li> <li>• More people are learning Welsh</li> <li>• Welsh-medium education is an asset for Ceredigion pupils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is very difficult to measure the real progress made under the Strategy, and its impact</li> <li>• National data sources on the situation of the Welsh language provide different reports on the state of the language – it is a complex issue</li> <li>• There are insufficient resources and funding to ensure that the Strategy has a real impact</li> <li>• The strategic adherence of some partners at leadership level, as well as collaboration at corporate level, is low</li> <li>• Full commitment to the vision is lacking from some external partners and services</li> <li>• The Bilingual Futures Forum is too large to enable discussion of specific elements of the Welsh Language Strategy</li> <li>• Affordable housing prices – pricing local people out of the housing market</li> <li>• A weak economy, with many young people leaving the county to find more prosperous jobs elsewhere</li> <li>• Low average wages</li> <li>• A lack of community leaders and succession</li> <li>• Welsh speakers lack confidence to use the Welsh language in public settings</li> <li>• A lack of Welsh language digital technologies</li> </ul>

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Welsh Government's commitment to deliver the Cymraeg 2050 Strategy</li> <li>• The implementation of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan over the next 10 years will have a positive influence, with the aim of producing more fluent Welsh speakers during the period covered by the plan</li> <li>• A clearer accountability structure is required</li> <li>• Opportunities should be sought to strengthen collaboration between partners when implementing the strategy</li> <li>• Review the Bilingual Futures Forum and the scope to establish sub-groups to focus on specific areas</li> <li>• The New Curriculum – new opportunities to strengthen awareness of the Welsh language. Provide Welsh language awareness courses, including awareness of the history of the language and its place in the culture of Wales and Ceredigion. An understanding of the opportunities to use the Welsh language</li> <li>• More jobs that require Welsh language skills as essential</li> <li>• Promote the rights of Welsh speakers to use the Welsh language</li> <li>• Develop and increase the technologies available in Welsh to make the Welsh language more accessible</li> <li>• Propose legislation in relation to second homes</li> <li>• Regional economic programmes, such as Grow Mid and West Wales</li> <li>• Arfor 2 Project: a new programme to be delivered by Ceredigion to assist in strengthening the economic resilience of the Welsh language</li> <li>• Potential to improve the local economy, Grow Mid Wales / Levelling Up funding</li> <li>• The implications of the Welsh Language Standards for public organisations in terms of action to benefit the Welsh language</li> <li>• It should be considered whether partners could collaborate as a group on a specific project as part of the next strategy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The numbers of Welsh speakers are decreasing according to the 2021 Census reports</li> <li>• Young people are leaving the county at the end of their formal education to seek better employment opportunities</li> <li>• A lack of affordable housing</li> <li>• Parents are failing to transmit the Welsh language to their children</li> <li>• Insufficient resources and funding to implement the Strategy in full</li> <li>• COVID-19 and its legacy are having a detrimental impact on the use of the Welsh language</li> <li>• The unwillingness of partners to change in order to secure new Welsh language provision and opportunities</li> <li>• A lack of digital resources in Welsh (smart phones, apps)</li> <li>• Challenges in relation to integrating newcomers into Welsh communities</li> <li>• Negative attitudes towards the Welsh language and its heritage</li> <li>• Census data on the number of Welsh speakers, and the decline in Ceredigion's population</li> </ul>



## SECTION 6

### Conclusions

To address the Council's compliance with the relevant Standards, Ceredigion County Council has satisfied the requirements of Standard 145 in full by setting a target in relation to the percentage and number of Welsh speakers in its area, as well as outlining in the Strategy how it would aim to meet that target by producing an action plan and targets.

This review addresses the requirement of Standard 146 to assess the extent to which the Council has followed the Strategy and reached the target set. The report in Annex 1 provides a comprehensive overview of the steps taken to deliver the actions, and reports on performance indicators where possible.

This report demonstrates clearly that significant work has been undertaken as a result of the implementation of the Strategy. Furthermore, the feedback from internal and external partners provides useful considerations in terms of the delivery of the revised five-year strategy for 2024-2029, which will be produced in due course.

Ceredigion is still considered one of the Welsh language heartlands, and the county is key in terms of planning for the language's growth and prosperity. At first glance, the results of the Census were disappointing for Ceredigion. The increase in the number of Welsh speakers that Ceredigion's Welsh Language Strategy had hoped to realise had not materialised. However, Census results are only produced once every decade and, in the meantime, further information and studies in relation to the Welsh language are available. These studies tend to provide a more optimistic assessment of the state of the Welsh language than Census results; for example, in September 2020, the percentage of Welsh speakers in Ceredigion had increased to 60.9%, according to the Annual Population Survey. The Welsh Government urges caution in considering these figures because the Annual Population Survey is based on self-assessment and, for that reason, the Welsh Government does not use these figures to measure progress towards its target of a million Welsh speakers. However, these surveys can highlight very useful trends.

In considering the Census figures, it is also important to look at positive aspects: for example, there was a percentage increase (albeit small) in the 16–19 and the 20–44 age groups. These groups are important, and it may demonstrate that more people are using their Welsh language skills after leaving formal education. Ceredigion had the third highest percentage of Welsh speakers across all Welsh local authorities, after Gwynedd and Ynys Môn. The percentage of residents who use the Welsh language on a daily basis in Ceredigion has also increased over recent years, from 43% in 2016 to 45% in 2021 (2021 Annual Population Survey). It could be argued that increasing the use of the Welsh language on a daily basis could be far more influential in terms of the growth of the language than the number of speakers.

The Council believes that the publication of the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 Strategy, alongside the implementation of the Welsh Language Strategy at a local level in Ceredigion, has changed attitudes towards the Welsh language, and as a result, the number of people wishing to learn and speak the language in Ceredigion has increased.

The 2021 Census results have set a number of new challenges for Ceredigion. Responding to those challenges, mitigating the risks to the Welsh language, and ensuring its viability as a community language will involve detailed language planning.

In revising the Strategy for the next five-year period, Council services and key partners will need to commit to working together, harder than ever before, to promote and encourage the use of the Welsh language in all aspects of the social and economic life of the county, to prevent any further decline in the number of Welsh speakers. In reviewing the achievements of the current Welsh Language Strategy, it is important to recognise that language planning is a long process that takes time to develop. However, the Council is confident that this Welsh Language Strategy has laid the foundations required to move forward to the next five-year period.

**Considerations for the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy for the next five-year period:**

The challenges facing the Welsh language community in Ceredigion remain, and include:

- increasing language transmission rates and linguistic socialisation in the county.
- increasing the confidence and fluency of Welsh speakers, both in terms of linguistic skills and adherence to the Welsh language.
- maintaining and increasing the social and economic use of the Welsh language – especially opportunities for young people to use their Welsh language skills in employment; and
- ensuring that robust social and economic infrastructure is in place to support Welsh language networks and communities in the county into the future.