

Welsh Language Impact Assessment

Does the proposal align with Welsh Government strategy for the Welsh language - Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh Speakers

The Cymraeg 2050 strategy provides a focus for the Welsh Language and sets out the Welsh Government's vision to achieve a million Welsh Speakers by 2050. A thriving Welsh language is also one of the 7 main goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The ambitious target in the strategy requires action and intervention from across all sectors. The strategy includes a specific theme to create 'favourable conditions – infrastructure and context', this includes community and economy, culture and media, and digital technology; all of which the Growth Deal will contribute towards. The NWEAB have adopted a vision to develop "a confident, cohesive region with sustainable economic growth, capitalising on the success of high value economic sectors and our connection to the economies of the Northern Powerhouse & Ireland." This Vision was founded on three key principles for a smart, connected and resilient North Wales.

The Welsh language strengthens our communities, culture and heritage here in North Wales. The Growth Deal will promote the relevance and value of bilingualism to our economy to support the Welsh language within our communities and within workplaces.

Describe the impact of the proposal on the Welsh Language?

According to the Annual Population Survey in the year ending June 2018, North Wales had 286,400 Welsh speakers in the region. Gwynedd was the authority with the highest proportion of Welsh speakers both in North Wales and in Wales as a whole, with 76.4 per cent of residents aged three and over saying they could speak Welsh. Flintshire had the lowest rate of Welsh-speaking in North Wales at approximately 23.3 per cent. On a regional level, North Wales had the highest proportion of Welsh speakers in Wales, at an estimated 42.7 per cent in the year ending June 2018.

The economy is integral to creating the social conditions for Welsh speakers to remain in the area in Welsh speaking communities or return to those communities. The Growth Deal portfolio aims to create between 3,400 and 4,200 new jobs by 2036. It will also support a net additional GVA uplift of between £1.4billion and £1.7billion for the North Wales economy; to deliver a total investment of upto £1.1billion in the North Wales economy. The programmes and projects within the portfolio will deliver benefits that will have a positive impact on as many communities as possible across the region; enable economic growth; and attract investment.

Employment opportunities are key to the future of the Welsh language, the language is a valuable skill for employment in the region. The programmes and projects will enable job creation; this will provide opportunities for Welsh speakers to work in North Wales. Historically North Wales has seen the outward migration of young people, the delivery of the Growth Deal will support to retain young people in the region. This will protect and promote the Welsh language and culture, and contribute towards scalable and dispersed growth in the region. Having a bilingual workforce in North Wales, both current and future, enables us to promote the diversity of language skills. This will ultimately lead to retention and development of the Welsh language across all sectors adding value and strength to our economy.

The Welsh language can be seen as an economic driver boosting business and tourism within the region for the community and visitors to experience the culture and strong sense of community within the region.

The Growth Deal will proactively seek opportunities to promote and support good practice with regard to the language. The North Wales Economic Ambition Board promotes and facilitates the use of the Welsh language within new regional ways of working.

How will you mitigate any negative impact on the Welsh language or promote the positive impact on the language?

The North Wales Growth Deal aims to create between 3,400 and 4,200 new jobs to benefit the region's residents. Leakage of economic benefits through jobs created being filled by residents from the outside North Wales could be a risk, this will be managed on a project by project basis.

The North Wales Economic Ambition Board is a partnership that operates bilingually; all documentation and Board meetings are bilingual.

The Programme Office team is a bilingual team, our key public facing roles have Welsh language skills as an essential requirement in order for people to engage with us through their language of choice. The team promote the use of the Welsh language, and in time will develop a Welsh language Policy.

The Welsh language will be embedded in our procurement processes. Our Procurement Strategy includes a series of procurement principles, as part of the community resilience and well-being principles. The NWEAB will 'engage with new partnerships such as museums, theatres and arts to support developing our cultural and Welsh language considerations in contract opportunities.'

The North Wales Growth Deal will proactively support, facilitate and seek opportunities to promote the Welsh language across the portfolio, programmes and projects. We will encourage the integration of the Welsh language across our projects. It is key that we recognise the importance of the Welsh and English languages here in North Wales. All Growth Deal projects will undertake a Welsh language Impact Assessment and a Future Generations Impact Assessment as part of the decision making process.

Promotion of the Welsh language in the delivery and outcomes of the Growth Deal enables the NWEAB to be context specific and holistic in tackling economic challenges and sustainable economic growth.