



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

WELSH LANGUAGE CABINET STEERING GROUP

10 OCTOBER 2018

LIST OF STANDARDISED WELSH PLACE NAMES

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION, AND
COMMUNITY SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO
HOLDER CLLR G. HOPKINS**

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Welsh Language Steering Group with information relating to the [List of Standardised Welsh Place-names](#) as published by the Welsh Language Commissioner in July 2018 (RCT is attached at Appendix 1), and the Council's responsibilities in relation to this.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group:

- 2.1 Note the content of the report;
- 2.2 Agree to recommend for Cabinet approval, the adoption of the place-names relevant to Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough as published in the Welsh Language Commissioner's List of Standardised Welsh Place-names;
- 2.3 Subject to Cabinet approval, instruct officers to implement the standardised Welsh place-names in the administration of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council business in alignment with the Revised Policy and Procedures for Street Naming and House Numbering as adopted by the Council in November, 2015;
- 2.4 Agree that officers continue to collaborate with the Welsh Language Commissioner's office on any recommendations offered by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council with regards to the List of Standardised Welsh Place-names.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Welsh Language Commissioner is responsible for providing advice on the standard forms of Welsh place-names to individuals and organisations of all kinds and emphasise the importance of adopting standard forms for public administration, maps signage and online search engines.
- 3.2 Although Local authorities are ultimately responsible for deciding on the forms they use, the Commissioner aims to ensure orthographic consistency and accuracy throughout Wales and the List of Standardised Welsh Place-names has been produced to support this.
- 3.3 The Welsh Language Commissioner wrote to the Chief Executive of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council in July drawing attention to the List of Standardised Welsh Place-names as published on the Welsh Language Commissioner's website, expressing the wish that the Council adopt this list.
- 3.4 As the Welsh Government is responsible for signage on trunk roads and motorways it is important that Local Authorities agree on the standard forms of Welsh place-names to avoid confusion.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Following campaigns in the 1960s, a report was commissioned on bilingual road signs. In August 1972, the Bilingual Road Signs report was published by an Official Committee that was designed by the Secretary of State for Wales at the time. As a result of the report, central Government accepted the Committee's recommendation that bilingual road signs should be erected in Wales, and that a procedure should be established specifically to decide upon matters pertaining to place-names.
- 4.2 A system was established within the Welsh Office to advise Local Authorities, the Post Office, the Ordnance Survey and other organisations on standard place-name forms in Welsh. Indeed, a permanent committee was established to this effect – The Place-names Advisory Committee.
- 4.3 The National Assembly for Wales was established in 1999. The Welsh Assembly Government, as it was, inherited the Place-names Advisory Committee from the Welsh Office. In October 2001, the Welsh Assembly Government decided to hand over the Committee's work to Bwrdd yr Iaith Gymraeg / The Welsh Language Board. The Board was tasked, therefore, with ensuring that expert, reliable advice on the correct forms of Welsh place-names was still available to those who needed it.
- 4.4 The Board established a Place-names Standardisation Team, whose purpose was to offer advice on place-name forms in Wales and other matters related to place-names.

- 4.5 When the Welsh Language Board was abolished, its responsibility regarding place-names was transferred to the Welsh Language Commissioner, whose Office continue this work through the Place-names Standardisation Panel. This arrangement is broadly acknowledged in the Welsh Government's 'A living language, a language for living: Welsh language strategy 2012-2017' (p. 49), and in its programme of work for '[Cymraeg 2050](#)', its vision for reaching a million Welsh speakers (p.37).
- 4.6 The Place-names Standardisation Panel gave consideration to the meaning, history and etymology of the place-names, as well as their current usage. The Panel also followed specific guidelines to form its recommendations. The Panel consisted (and continues to consist of) Dr Dylan Foster Evans, Head of School of Welsh at Cardiff University; Gareth A. Bevan, former lecturer University of Bangor and adviser to the Ordnance Survey; Professor David Thorne (Chair), former Professor of Welsh at the University of Wales, Lampeter; Dr G. Angharad Fychan, Senior Editor of Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru (A dictionary of the Welsh language) and is a founder and Secretary of the Welsh place-names Society; Professor Emeritus Hywel Wyn Owen, former Director of the Place-name Research Centre at Bangor University.
- 4.7 This has ensured that each recommendation given in the name of the Welsh Language Commissioner is made on a firm scholarly basis.
- 4.8 The majority of place-names in the List of Standardised Welsh included for Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough are consistent with current usage. However, there are a very small number of suggestions that may be contentious. The names that specifically relate to Rhondda Cynon Taf can be seen at Appendix 2.

5. CURRENT POSITION

- 5.1 Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council currently holds a bilingual Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG). The LLPG allows departments such as Planning, Highways, and Transportation to have a consistent approach to place names as they administer their respective duties.
- 5.2. Additionally, in 2015, the Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group approved a revised policy for Street Naming and Numbering which includes the requirements of Welsh Language Standards Regulations 2015. This revised policy stipulates that naming and numbering for new developments and existing un-named roads, lanes or streets should be in Welsh only and replacement street names should be bilingual either by adding a relevant prefix/suffix and/or in cases where the main element of the street-name is in English, a suitable translation would be given,
- 5.3 Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council informs all the statutory necessary bodies, including Ordnance Survey, of any names used by the Council which in turn are fed into the Geographic Information System/LLPG.

- 5.4 The majority of the place-names recommended by the Welsh Commissioner are consistent with the current Local Land and Property Gazetteer for RCT. However, the Welsh Language Commissioner recommends that the Council adopt a mono-lingual version for Llanhari, Treorci and Cwmdâr, with the aim of ceasing to use Llanharry, Treorchy and Cwmdare. Further recommendations may be proposed in future and in such circumstances, a further paper would be presented to the Steering Group.

6. NEXT STEPS

- 6.1 If the Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group decides to recommend the adoption of the List of Standardised Welsh Place-names to Cabinet for consideration, and if approved by Cabinet, officers from the relevant departments will work on its implementation.
- 6.2 Officers will also further co-operate with the Welsh Language Commissioner to ensure the List reflects current usage of any given place name.
- 6.3 Additionally, co-operation with surrounding Local Authorities, with particular regard to directional signage, will be needed to ensure consistency.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken by the Welsh Language Commissioner.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Local Members have received written confirmation of these proposed changes and have been invited to respond with their comments for consideration, before a final decision is taken.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 9.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report. However, there will be costs and resources as yet not fully ascertained in respect of implementation of the List of Standardised Welsh Place-names.

10. LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 10.1 The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 regulates this area of work.

11. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 11.1 The Welsh language is a cross-cutting theme in the Corporate Plan and underpins all corporate priorities as the Council is required to comply with the amended Compliance Notice issued by the Welsh Language Commissioner in September 2016 under the Welsh Language (Wales) 2011 Measure in

addition to Strategies regarding the Welsh Language published by the Welsh Government.

- 11.2 This subject under discussion in this report is particularly relevant to goal seven of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 - a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. It is designed to ensure that the Welsh language has equal status to the English language in Wales and it also serves to protect the heritage of Wales by ensuring that Welsh place-names are preserved.
- 11.3 The Welsh Language Commissioner's List of Standardised Welsh Place-names is consistent with the five ways of working as it is designed to be implemented across Wales over a number of years. It has involved collaboration across different organisations and with a range of scholars and Council Officers have been involved in liaising with the Commissioner's office and providing access to the Council's gazetteer. If implemented, it will prevent confusion by ensuring consistent use of place-names across all areas of Wales by a wide range of bodies including the Welsh Government and Local Authorities. Where there are areas of dispute, a wider consultation with Elected Members and/or residents may be undertaken.

12. CONCLUSION

- 12.1 In order to maintain orthographic consistency and accuracy throughout Wales, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council has been asked (along with other Local Authorities in Wales) by the Welsh Language Commissioner to adopt a List of Standardised Welsh Place-names. The Commissioner stresses the importance of adopting standard forms for public administration, signage, maps and online search engines.
- 12.2 The List of Standardised Welsh Place-names is a live resource that will continuously grow and develop and the Welsh Language Commissioner wishes Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council to continue to collaborate in this field.