



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18TH OCTOBER, 2018

WELSH LANGUAGE STEERING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS - LIST OF STANDARDISED WELSH PLACE-NAMES

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS & INTERIM HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES IN CONSULTATION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR GERAINT HOPKINS

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Cabinet with the recommendations of the Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group which considered a report outlining the Council's responsibilities in relation to the [List of Standardised Welsh Place-names](#) as published by the Welsh Language Commissioner in July 2018.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the content of the report considered by the Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group on the 10th October, 2018 (attached as Appendix 1) and;
- 2.2 Agree the recommendations of the Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group which are listed at 2.2.1 to 2.2.2 of this report:
- 2.2.1 The Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group recommend that Cabinet seek written confirmation from the Welsh Language Commissioner, in respect of their rationale for the changes, as set out in the Full Welsh Language Commissioner's List of Standardised Welsh Place-names, in order to better inform a future decision of the Cabinet.
- 2.2.2 The Steering Group also recommends that Consultation takes place with the communities highlighted with the report and that the rationale adopted by the Welsh Language Commissioner is used as part of this process. Until otherwise agreed, the Council will continue to utilise the current names outlined within Rhondda Cynon Taf's Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG).

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The need for the Cabinet to consider the recommendations of the Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group in relation to the Welsh Language Commissioner's List of Standardised Place Names which was published in July, 2018.
- 3.2 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 across a wide range of bodies.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Welsh Language Commissioner is responsible for providing advice on the standard forms of Welsh place-names to individuals and organisations and to emphasise the importance of adopting standard forms for public administration, maps signage and online search engines.
- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 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.

5. THE WELSH LANGUAGE CABINET STEERING GROUP

- 5.1 The Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group met on the 10th October, 2018 where they considered the recommendations made by the Welsh Language Commissioner in respect of the adoption of place-names relevant to Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 5.2 The Steering Group acknowledged the work undertaken by the Place-Names Standardisation Panel, but were of the view that any changes made to the place-names in RCT, should be consulted upon with the local communities
- 5.3 Members noted that the Local Members who had received written confirmation of the proposed changes had not yet taken the opportunity to respond and therefore, it was not possible to have an insight into the views of the local residents.
- 5.4 Members sought clarification in respect of the wider list of place-names relating to RCT and questioned why the standardised Welsh form of areas such as 'Rhydyfelin' had also been changed to reflect alternative Welsh spellings. Members were of the view that the Commissioner's List failed to

provide any further detail into the reasoning behind the proposals and whether any changes to place names would affect the historical meaning of the area.

- 5.5 Taking the above into account and following a lengthy discussion, the Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group unanimously agreed that subject to Cabinet approval, officers would seek written confirmation from the Welsh Language Commissioner to establish the rationale of all of the changes outlined within the List prior to any consultation taking place with local communities.

6. NEXT STEPS

- 6.1 If Cabinet Members agree the recommendations made by the Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group, officers will be instructed to write to the Welsh Language Commissioner to gage a further understanding into the rationale behind the List of Standardised Place Names.
- 6.2 A further report will be presented to the Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group detailing the Welsh Language Commissioner's response, prior to any decision being made regarding consultation.

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 but no response had been received prior to consideration at the Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group.
- 8.2 Local Members will have further opportunity to respond with their comments at the Cabinet Committee meeting.

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.
- 10.2 As such, when the Council formulates a new policy, due regard must be given to ensure that any decision would have increased positive effects on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh Language.

10.3 Choosing not to adopt the List of Standardised Welsh Place-names could place the Council at risk of breaching sections of the Welsh Language Standards.

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 are 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 liaising with the Commissioner's office and providing access to the Council's gazetteer.

12. CONCLUSION

12.1 The Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group met on the 10th October, 2018 to discuss the advice provided to Rhondda Cynon Taf (along with other Local Authorities in Wales) by the Welsh Language Commissioner to adopt the List of Standardised Welsh Place-names.

12.2 During the meeting, Members agreed to recommend for Cabinet approval, that officers liaise with the Welsh Language Commissioner's office, to enhance the Council's understanding of the reasoning behind the proposed adoption of the place-names relevant to Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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Background Papers

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).