



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

WELSH LANGUAGE CABINET STEERING GROUP

9TH OCTOBER 2019

UPDATE - 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**

AUTHOR: Steffan Gealy, Service Manager, Welsh Language Services (01443 570002)

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Welsh Language Steering Group with the Welsh Language Commissioner's revised recommendations (Appendix1) for their [List of Standardised Welsh Place-names](#) as originally published in July 2018.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group:

- 2.1 Note the Council's current position in respect of the Welsh Language Commissioner's proposed List of Standardised Place Names.
- 2.2 Note the content of the revised List of Standardised Welsh Place-names received from the Welsh Language Commissioner in June 2019.
- 2.3 Approve the implementation of the List of Welsh Place-names as applicable to Rhondda Cynon Taf in part excluding the four significant changes relating to Treorchy, Rhydyfelin, Llanwono and Treforest.
- 2.4 Consider what comments, if any, they wish to make in response to the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office in respect of the List.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Welsh Language Commissioner aims to ensure orthographic consistency and accuracy throughout Wales and a List of Standardised Welsh Place-names has been produced to support this.

- 3.2 However, it is important to highlight that local authorities are ultimately responsible for deciding on the forms they use for place-names within their geographical area.
- 3.3 There are community sensitivities in relation to place-names that are an accepted part of custom and practice which may override the academic rationale for the proposed change – specifically in relation to Rhydyfelin, Llanwono, Treorchy and Treforest.

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 The Welsh Language Commissioner wrote to the Chief Executive of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council in July 2018, 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.
- 4.3 The Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group met on the 10th October, 2018 where the recommendations made by the Welsh Language Commissioner in respect of the adoption of place-names relevant to Rhondda Cynon Taf were considered.
- 4.4 Following a lengthy discussion on the complexities surrounding the adoption of the Welsh Language Commissioner's list of standardised place-names, the Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group resolved, with the agreement of Cabinet, that the Chair of the Steering Group seek written clarification from the Welsh Language Commissioner of the rationale for the proposed changes to place-names prior to any consultation taking place with local communities.
- 4.5 The Council's position was further explained to officers from the Welsh Language Commissioner's team when they visited Clydach Vale where particular reference was made to the complexities and impact of any amendments to place-names on the administration of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council business.
- 4.6 Subsequent correspondence from the Commissioner's office requested that the Council put any consultation process on hold. The Chair of the Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group responded to the Welsh Language Commissioner agreeing that it would be inadvisable to progress with any consultation based on the published list at this juncture.
- 4.7 Consequently, the Welsh Language Commissioner's Place-names Standardisation Panel agreed to revise their list of place-names in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

5. CURRENT POSITION

- 5.1 In June 2019, a revised list of standardised place-names was issued by the Welsh Language Commissioner's office, which includes some detail and rationale on the recommendations in order to inform any decision as to whether to go to public consultation.
- 5.2 The revised list continues to be mostly consistent with the current Local Land and Property Gazetteer for RCT and conversely seems to have a greater effect on the adopted *Welsh* forms e.g. the Welsh Language Commissioner recommends that we not use Aberllechau for Wattstown or Ystradyfodwg for Ystrad.
- 5.3 Fewer significant changes are included in the original revised list, most of which are grammatical amendments e.g. the use of the hyphen or the definite article 'Y'. Adopting these recommendations will benefit the Council financially with regards to signage / size of signage ending the need for bilingual signage such as Y Beddau / Beddau.
- 5.4 Of particular note in respect of their significance are the retention on the list of Rhydfelen (instead of Rhydyfelin); Treorci (instead of Treorchy); Llanwynno (instead of Llanwono) and Trefforest (instead of Treforest). These may be less acceptable to communities than the minor changes identified at 5.3 above.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The responsibility for undertaking an Equalities Impact Assessment does not lie with the Council in this instance as the List of Standardised Welsh Place-names has been developed and recommended for use by the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 Local Members received written confirmation of the initial proposed changes and were invited to respond with their comments for consideration.
- 7.2 Further consultation at this juncture will not be undertaken.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 8.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

9. LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 regulates this area of work.
- 9.2 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 and that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language.

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

- 10.1 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.
- 10.2 The subject under discussion in this report is particularly relevant to goal six 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. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 The Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group met on the 10th October, 2018 to discuss the advice provided to Rhondda Cynon Taf by the Welsh Language Commissioner to adopt the List of Standardised Welsh Place-names.
- 11.2 A further report was presented to Cabinet which sought approval to seek written information from the Welsh Language Commissioner relating to the rationale for any proposed changes to individual place-names prior to any consultation taking place with local communities.
- 11.3 Following correspondence with the Commissioner's office which requested that the Council put any consultation process on hold, the Chair of the Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group responded to the Welsh Language Commissioner agreeing that it will be inadvisable to progress with any consultation based on the published list.
- 11.4 Consequently, the Welsh Language Commissioner's Place-name Standardisation Panel met in May 2019 and has now submitted further recommendations which are mostly consistent with the current Local Land and Property Gazetteer for RCT and with fewer significant changes.