



## RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### CABINET

21<sup>st</sup> NOVEMBER 2019

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

#### REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND COMMUNICATION IN DISCUSSION 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 of the Welsh Language Commissioner's revised recommendations (Appendix1) for their [List of Standardised Welsh Place-names](#).

#### **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 9<sup>th</sup> October, 2019 (attached as Appendix 1) and;
- 2.2 Agree the recommendations of the Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group.

#### **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 revised List of Standardised Place Names, which was published in June 2019.
- 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 Cabinet Steering Group met on the 10<sup>th</sup> 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 public 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. THE WELSH LANGUAGE CABINET STEERING GROUP**

- 5.1 The Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group met on the 9<sup>th</sup> October 2019 where they considered the revised list of place-names relevant to Rhondda Cynon Taf, which had been published on the Welsh Language Commissioner's website in June 2019. Taking into consideration Members' concerns regarding the rationale behind the previously published list, the revised list includes some detail on the reasons for the recommendations in order to inform any decision as to whether to go to public consultation.

- 5.2 Officers considered the revised list to be more consistent with the current Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) for RCT, with fewer significant changes. As such, it was recommended that Members approve the list of Welsh Place-names as applicable to Rhondda Cynon Taf in part, excluding the changes in relation to Rhydfelen (instead of Rhydyfelin); Treorci (instead of Treorchy); Llanwynno (instead of Llanwono) and Trefforest (instead of Treforest).
- 5.3 During consideration of the report, Members were unanimous in their feelings towards adopting any of the recommended changes to the place names within RCT and remained of the view that any proposed changes should be consulted upon with the Local Member and community prior to implementation.
- 5.4 The Steering Group agreed to recommend that Cabinet refuse to adopt the List of Welsh Place-names as applicable to Rhondda Cynon Taf. Until otherwise agreed, the Council will continue to utilise the current names outlined within Rhondda Cynon Taf's Local Land and Property Gazetteer.

## **7. LEGISLATION TO BE CONSIDERED**

- 7.1 The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 regulates this area of work.
- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 Council, under the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, must do the following:

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### Policy Making

When you formulate a new policy, or review or revise an existing policy, you must consider what effects, if any (whether positive or adverse), the policy decision would have on -

- (a) opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language, and
- (b) treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

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### Policy Making

When you formulate a new policy, or review or revise an existing policy, you must consider how the policy could be formulated (or how an existing policy could be changed) so that the policy decision would have positive effects, or increased positive effects, on -

- (a) opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language, and
- (b) treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

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### Policy Making

When you formulate a new policy, or review or revise an existing policy, you must consider how the policy could be formulated (or how an existing policy

could be changed) so that the policy decision would not have adverse effects, or so that it would have decreased adverse effects, on -  
(a) opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language, and  
(b) treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.'

- 7.4 When formulating the recommendations made to Cabinet at paragraph 2 of this report the Steering Group had due regard to compliance with the Welsh Language Standards mentioned above. However, as with any decision taken by the Council, the Commissioner may determine to review compliance with those standards in line with its regulatory powers.

## **8. NEXT STEPS**

- 8.1 If having had due regard to the above legislation, Cabinet Members agree the recommendations made by the Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group, the responsible Cabinet Member in his capacity of Chair of the Steering Group will write to the Welsh Language Commissioner. The letter will seek to inform him of the Council's final position and respectfully request that the current forms of place-names applicable to Rhondda Cynon Taf are used on the Commissioner's website.

## **9. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **10. CONSULTATION**

- 10.1 Local Members will have an opportunity to respond with their comments at the Cabinet Committee meeting.

## **11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

- 11.1 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. Should the Council be found to be in breach of any Welsh Language Standards, it could result in a fine of up to £5,000 per upheld breach.

## **12. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT**

- 12.1 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.

- 12.2 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.

### **13. CONCLUSION**

- 13.1 Following the decision made by Cabinet on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2018, the Welsh Language Commissioner's Place-name Standardisation Panel met in May 2019 and has since submitted further recommendations, which are mostly consistent with the current Local Land and Property Gazetteer for RCT and with fewer significant changes.
- 13.2 The Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group met on the 9<sup>th</sup> October 2019 to discuss the advice provided to Rhondda Cynon Taf by the Welsh Language Commissioner to adopt the revised List of Standardised Welsh Place-names.
- 13.3 During the meeting, Members agreed to recommend that Cabinet refuse to adopt the List of Welsh Place-names as applicable to Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 13.4 The Steering Group also proposed that should Cabinet endorse the above-mentioned recommendation, the responsible Cabinet Member in his capacity of Chair of the Steering Group would write to the Welsh Language Commissioner. The letter will seek to inform the Commissioner of the Council's final position and respectfully request that the current forms of place-names applicable to Rhondda Cynon Taf are used on the Commissioner's website.

**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).