

OFFICIAL ATTENDANCE OF RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL'S WELSH LANGUAGE CABINET STEERING GROUP

Minutes of the meeting of the Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group on Wednesday 25th January, 2017 at 10am at the Council Headquarters, Clydach Vale.

County Borough Councillors in attendance:-

E Hanagan – Chairman

R Bevan

C Davies

Officers in attendance

Mrs W Edwards – Head of Community Learning

Mr S Gealy – Service Manger – Welsh Language Services

Ms E Siôn - Menter Iaith

Ms Hannah Williams – Cabinet Business Officer

23 APOLOGIES

Apologies for attendance were received from County Borough Councillors G Hopkins and M Webber and the Secretary to the Cabinet, Mr C Hanagan.

24 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made pertaining to the agenda.

25 MINUTES

The minutes of the 30th November, 2016 were approved as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

26 THE WELSH LANGUAGE PROMOTION STRATEGY

The Head of Community Learning provided the Steering Group with a copy of the updated Welsh Language Promotion Strategy and Action Plan, amended as requested by Members on 30th November, 2016.

The officer explained that the Strategy remained the same but that the Action Plan had been amended in the hope of providing clarity between the role and responsibility of the Council and the roles and responsibilities of Fforwm Iaith members for achievement of targets.

Members of the Group were referred to page 127 of the report where the implementation and monitoring of the plan was outlined. The officer explained that the progress of each service area will be closely monitored and reported back to the Senior Leadership Team every six months and the Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group no less than twice a year.

The Chair took the opportunity to thank officers for their hard work during the consultation process, commenting that it allowed residents to voice their opinions whilst strengthening collaborative working with partners.

Councillor C Davies also thanked officers for their work in conducting the Promotion Strategy and Action Plan, commenting that the division of responsibilities has made it clearer for all involved.

The Head of Community Learning advised the Group that every Director had been sent a copy of the draft Strategy and Action Plan in order for it to be disseminated to their services and amended if required. The officer explained that, overall, feedback from services had resulted in changes to timescales as opposed to changes to the actions. It was recognised that certain targets were ambitious for some service areas and that timescales had been adjusted slightly to reflect the current Welsh language staffing capacity.

Members questioned the next steps and it was advised that if approved, the Strategy and Plan would be submitted to Cabinet for approval and posted on the Council's website, with a copy sent to the Welsh Language Commissioner.

Members queried where the plan was in comparison to other Local Authorities and the Service Manager, Welsh Language Services explained that it was on par, but that other authorities such as those in North and West Wales have less to include.

One Member commented that an increase of 3% of the number of people able to speak the Welsh Language seemed reasonable but raised a number of concerns in achieving this:

- The anticipated 40% reduction in new births
- The movement of residents out of the area
- Death in the area

The Head of Community Learning advised that if the Welsh for Adults Centre achieved its target of an additional 900 adult learners, this would have a wide spread impact.

Members agreed that this remained a vital aspect of the Plan with one Member commenting that adults had shown enthusiasm towards the Welsh Language in his local community.

The Service Manager, Welsh Language Services commented that a percentage of staff categorise themselves as non-Welsh Language speakers when in some cases, they have knowledge but have lost it through the years due to lack of practice. E Sion, Menter Iaith, stressed the importance of working with these people to increase their confidence through events and classes.

Discussions ensued around the Welsh Language in education with Members agreeing that this was an essential role in the Action Plan. One Member commented that, unfortunately, Welsh schools were never built to suit location and population, but rather where buildings became available at the time. The Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Tourism and Planning explained the difficulty of developing new buildings due to lack of land, a change in demographic and at a time where the population is savvier. The Member added that it was positive that the plan was ambitious; giving partners a plethora of goals to work towards.

Members of the Steering Group were pleased with the actions contained within the report and the plans in place to monitor the progress.

E Sion advised that Fforwm Iaith would conduct future meetings prior to the Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group in order for her to successfully provide feedback on the targets identified in Part 2 of the Action Plan.

Following discussions, it was **RESOLVED** to:

- a) Note the contents of the report
- b) Approve the Strategy for Cabinet submission

This meeting closed at 10:40am

**Cllr E Hanagan
Chairman.**