



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL WELSH LANGUAGE CABINET SUB COMMITTEE

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Welsh Language Cabinet Sub Committee held on Tuesday, 25 October 2022 at 10.00 am.

County Borough Councillors - Welsh Language Cabinet Sub Committee Members in attendance:-

Councillor R Lewis (Chair)

Councillor M Webber Councillor G Caple

Officers in attendance

Ms L Davies, Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services
Ms G Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Mr S Gealy, Welsh Language Services Manager
Ms L Sheppard-Thomas, Welsh Language Services
Mr S Thomas, Eisteddfod Project Officer
Mr O Rowlands – Menter Iaith
Ms N Davies – Nico Cyf

1 Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Chair welcomed Members and Officers to the meeting of the Welsh Language Cabinet Sub-Committee and apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors C. Leyshon and M. Norris.

2 Declaration of Interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, there were no Declarations of Interest made pertaining to the agenda.

3 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 8th December 2021 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

4 Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2022-2027

The Service Manager for Welsh Language Services provided the Welsh Language Cabinet Sub-committee with a revised copy of the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy as required under Standard 145 of the Compliance Notice issued to Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council under Section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

The Service Manager then introduced Ms N. Davies, a Specialist Consultant from the language planning group Nico Cyf, who had been commissioned to

help formulate the ambitious five-year Strategy. As part of the Strategy, residents had been consulted in October 2021, the results of which could be found at Appendix 2 to the report.

The Consultant advised that the review of the first Strategy provided four main areas of consideration when drafting the new Strategy:

1. Responding to the Census data regarding Welsh Language in the area (the data was expected to be made available in December 2022 and would form the basis of an action plan);
2. The ever-changing circumstances;
3. Importance of partnership; and
4. Importance of measuring success and the impact the Strategy has on residents.

The Consultant provided Members with context to the new Strategy, which included consideration of the political environment and the effects of the pandemic. Members were then informed of the three key national themes within the new Strategy:

1. Increasing the number of Welsh speakers;
2. Increasing the use of Welsh; and
3. Creating favourable conditions – infrastructure and context.

It was explained that within the Strategy was opportunities to strengthen and promote the Welsh Language through events such as the Eisteddfod, the arts, sports and through surveys with residents.

The Chair thanked both officers for the informative presentation and noted that the work involved covered the Council as a whole and paid tribute to the Council's Consultation Team for ensuring members of the public, businesses, partner organisations and the third sector were involved.

The Chair was pleased to note that a lot of good practice had come out of the first Strategy and commented that the new Strategy would allow the Local Authority to develop and adapt to the current circumstances to ensure RCT is an encouraging environment to learn and develop the Welsh Language, whether that be at home or through educational or recreational means.

The Chair felt that the Local Authority were ambitious in terms of its Welsh Language targets and paid reference to the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan which strived to increase the year one learners by 10% over the next ten years. The Chair also spoke of the Council's large capital programme, over recent years and the investment in a number of new builds for Welsh Language schools to appeal to more parents and learners.

The Deputy Leader took the opportunity to praise the new, state of the art school being built in Rhydyfelin for Welsh-Medium education. The Deputy Leader echoed the Chair's comments regarding the ambitious targets set by the Council and Welsh Government but was hopeful that the areas identified within the Strategy would help the Council achieve some way towards it.

Referring to the socio-economic disadvantages and the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation, which was detailed in Appendix 3 to the report, the Deputy Leader commented that many communities had high levels of poor adult literacy skills and emphasised the importance of inclusivity when promoting the Welsh Language. The Deputy Leader agreed that consultation was vital and spoke of

the importance of listening to communities as progress is made.

The Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care spoke positive of the ambitious Promotion Strategy and emphasised that a bilingual or multi-lingual country has social, cultural and economic benefits. The Cabinet Member commented that the best way to capture young people would be at the earliest possible stage of education.

In response to the Cabinet Member, the Director of Education and Inclusion Services advised that both the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and the new curriculum for Wales focus on promoting the language, not only in Welsh-Medium schools but in English-Medium schools too. The Director advised that the new curriculum for Wales prioritised promoting the language at a very early age, and that Estyn inspected the English-Medium schools on that basis also. Referring to the WESP, the Director advised of the seven key outcomes and explained that the focus was on increasing the number of learners speaking Welsh in year one, but also included other measures such as the use of language in informal context, the education work force and any capacity pressures which exist.

The Chief Executive of Menter Iaith spoke positive of the relationship with the Council and spoke of upcoming events such as Parti Ponty and, of course, the Eisteddfod and explained that teams were working together to submit targets to Welsh Government. Following the events, the aim would be to keep the momentum going and learn from the experience.

Menter Iaith went on to speak of the success of Siarter Iaith, which had helped the second language tier and advised that both Welsh-Medium and English-Medium schools had participated in Parti Ponty, which conveyed the message that all the community can celebrate the Welsh Language. Reference was also made to the Football Association of Wales (FAW) and Menter Iaith were pleased to have secured funding to hold projects in partnership with the FAW and Welsh Government to promote the language. Menter Iaith expressed thanks to the Director of Education and Inclusion Services for spreading awareness across schools to ensure all students have the same opportunities.

The Director of Education and Inclusion echoed the comments of Menter Iaith in respect of partnership work and how fundamental it is to achieve such ambitious targets. The Director spoke positive of the strengthened relationship with Menter Iaith and of the strong relationships with other partners such as colleges, health professionals and staff in the English-Medium sector as well as those in the Welsh-Medium.

The Chair thanked the officers for the comprehensive report and reminded Members that an Action Plan would be reviewed by the Sub-Committee at a future meeting.

The Welsh Language Cabinet Sub-Committee **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the content of this report and the associated Strategy; and
2. To approve the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2022-27.

This meeting closed at 10.45 am

Cllr R Lewis (Chair)