

WELSH LANGUAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOL

This Welsh Language Impact Assessment (WLIS) tool enables RCT Council to consider the principles and requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015 to ensure compliance with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

Stage 1 – Information Gathering

NOTE: As you complete this tool you will be asked for **evidence to support your views**. Please see Welsh Language Impact Assessment Guidance for more information on data sources.

Proposal Name:	Proposed new Home to School Transport policy.
Department	Integrated transport Unit
Director	Stephen Williams
Officer Completing the WLIA	Geraint Roberts
Email	Geraint.e.roberts@rctcbc.gov.uk
Brief Description	The proposal seeks to introduce a proposed new Home to School Transport Policy, namely providing mainstream English, Welsh and Faith primary school, secondary school and college transport above statutory distance only and implemented from the start of the 2025/2026 academic year. Should the proposed new Home to School Transport Policy be implemented the Council would continue to provide discretionary Home to School Transport provision beyond statutory requirements in a number of areas.
Date	November 2023
Please outline who this proposal affects? (Service Users, Employees, Wider Community)	Service Users

<p>What are the aims of the policy, and how do these relate to the Welsh Language?</p>	<p>The aim of the proposal is to consult with interested parties and relevant stakeholders in respect of a proposed new Home to School Transport Policy, namely providing mainstream English, Welsh and Faith primary school, secondary school and college transport in line with relevant statutory distance criteria, which would be implemented from the start of the 2025/2026 academic year. This could potentially impact on the Council's ambitious Welsh in Education Strategic Plan targets to grow the number of learners accessing Welsh medium education.</p>												
<p>Who will benefit / Could the policy affect Welsh language groups? If so, list them here.</p>	<p>The proposal would affect transport entitlement for learners attending Welsh medium primary and secondary schools that live under the statutory distances from school, although the proposed changes may adversely impact more on learners in Welsh medium settings who are generally more reliant on school transport to access education. This is a potential risk to our target to significantly grow the numbers of learners accessing Welsh medium education in Rhondda Cynon Taf, as specified in our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. It should be noted however that under the proposed Home to School Transport Policy the discretionary element of allowing a learner to select their nearest suitable school in accordance with choice of English or Welsh Medium language would continue.</p>												
<p>Current linguistic profile of the geographical area(s) concerned</p>	<p>The 2021 Census figures regarding the Welsh language show a decrease in the percentage of Welsh speakers across Wales to 17.8%. There was, however, a small increase in RCT – the percentage of the population of the County Borough who can speak Welsh increased from 12.3% to 12.4%. Numerically, RCT saw a 2.8% increase in the number of Welsh speakers in the County Borough, from 27,779 speakers to 28,556 speakers. RCT was also one of only four Local Authorities in Wales to see an increase in the percentage of Welsh speakers – the others were Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil and the Vale of Glamorgan. All of these are neighbouring County Boroughs, which could demonstrate that our region is seeing some positive trends in terms of increases in Welsh speakers, and that there may be a resulting increase in demand for services through the medium of Welsh. As further, more detailed, data from the Census becomes available for RCT (e.g., LSOA data), we will need to consider what impact it may have on the services we provide.</p> <p>The table that follows outlines the Welsh language skills of residents living in RCT and Wales and is obtained from the 2011 Census.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="981 1134 1771 1321"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="4">Welsh Language Skills of Residents (2011 Census)</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Welsh Language Skill</th> <th>RCT</th> <th colspan="2">Wales</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Can speak, read and write Welsh</td> <td>9.7%</td> <td colspan="2">14.6%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Welsh Language Skills of Residents (2011 Census)				Welsh Language Skill	RCT	Wales		Can speak, read and write Welsh	9.7%	14.6%	
Welsh Language Skills of Residents (2011 Census)													
Welsh Language Skill	RCT	Wales											
Can speak, read and write Welsh	9.7%	14.6%											

Can speak and read but cannot write Welsh	0.9%	1.5%
Can speak but cannot read or write Welsh	1.6%	2.7%
Can understand spoken Welsh only	4.2%	5.3%
Other combination of Skills	3.3%	2.5%
No skills	80.4%	73.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

The data demonstrates that the Welsh language skills level of residents living in RCT is lower than the all Wales Welsh language skills level.

The table that follows outlines the Welsh language skills of residents living in RCT and Wales and is obtained from the 2021 Census.

Welsh Language Skills of Residents (2021 Census)			
Welsh Language Skill	RCT	Wales	
Can speak, read and write Welsh	9.8%	13.8%	
Can speak and read but cannot write Welsh	0.7%	1.1%	
Can speak but cannot read or write Welsh	1.4%	2.2%	
Can understand spoken Welsh only	3.9%	5.0%	

Other combination of Skills	5.5%	5.2%
No skills	78.7%	72.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

The data demonstrates that the Welsh language skills level of residents living in RCT is lower than the all Wales Welsh language skills level.

The data demonstrates the Welsh language skills level of residents living in RCT and the all Wales Welsh language skills level are lower in 2021 than 2011.

The Welsh Language Use Survey for the years 2013 to 2015, contains detailed information about Welsh speaker’s fluency and their use of the Welsh language in a range of settings. When looking where respondents living in Wales learned to speak Welsh, the majority, 45.0%, learned to speak Welsh at home, followed by 26.0% who learned to speak Welsh at nursery and primary school between the ages of 2 to 10 and 14.0% who learned to speak Welsh at secondary school at the age of 11 plus. The remaining 2.0% learned to speak Welsh in other settings, including at Welsh medium learning classes for adults.

The data demonstrates that the Welsh language skills level of residents living in RCT is lower than the all-Wales Welsh language skills level. In recent years, support has been given to promote and increase pupils use of the Welsh language in primary and secondary schools and in social contexts. This has been done through the Welsh Language Charter (Siarter Iaith), developed by Gwynedd Council, and various other projects, in partnership with the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service (CSCJES) and the Urdd. This could contribute towards the Welsh Government’s ambitious goal of creating a million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050 and the WESP.

Other relevant data or research

All Local Authorities in Wales must produce a WESP. The WESP is a long-term language planning tool which sets the direction for the strategic planning, delivery and growth in Welsh medium and Welsh language education. Through the WESP, and effective strategic planning and investment, the Council aims to contribute significantly to achieving the vision of one million people in Wales being Welsh speakers by 2050 as set out in Cymraeg 2050. The WESP can be viewed and downloaded from the Council website via:

[Welsh in Education Strategic Plan \(WESP\) 2022 – 2032 | Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council \(rctcbc.gov.uk\)](https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk)

There are seven outcomes within the WESP, two of which are:

- More opportunities for pupils to use Welsh in different contexts in school.
- An increase in the provision of Welsh medium education for pupils with ALN in accordance with the duties imposed by the ALNET Act 2018.

In recent years, support has been given to promote and increase pupils use of the Welsh language in primary and secondary schools and in social contexts. This has been done through the Welsh Language Charter (Siarter Iaith), developed by Gwynedd Council, and various other projects, in partnership with the CSCJES and the Urdd. This could contribute towards the Welsh Government's ambitious goal of creating a million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050 and the WESP.

Whilst the Council would meet statutory requirements from a free home to school transport perspective, this proposal may potentially impact on the numbers of families wishing to send their children to Welsh medium education as they might opt to send their child to a closer English medium school.

Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

In this section you need to consider the impact, the evidence and any action you are taking for improvement. This is to ensure that the opportunities for people who choose to live their lives and access services through the medium of Welsh are not inferior to what is afforded to those choosing to do so in English, in accordance with the requirement of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

Please note there is a separate impact assessment for Equality and Socio-Economic duty that must also be completed for policy proposals.

Remember that effects that are positive for some groups could be detrimental to others - even among Welsh language groups. Consider the effects on different groups. For example, a proposal may be beneficial to Welsh learners, but not to Welsh speakers.

Will the proposed action affect any or all of the following?

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts?	Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
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<p>Opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language</p> <p>e.g., staff, residents and visitors</p> <p>The rights of Welsh speakers and learners to use Welsh when dealing with the council and for staff to use Welsh at Work</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>All consultation correspondence would continue to be published in Welsh with the Welsh appearing first.</p> <p>Future recruitment would focus on recruiting Welsh speakers to increase face-to-face Welsh language service provision.</p> <p>As there are currently only 4% of staff within the Service area with Welsh language skills of level 3 or above, (the level at which speakers likely have sufficient skills to use the language more extensively at work), recruiting more Welsh speakers would have a positive impact on the service’s Welsh provision, and the Council’s attempts to promote the language.</p> <p>Moreover, in light of recent guidance from the Welsh Language Commissioner, the Council has a statutory duty not only to mitigate negative impacts, but to maximise any possible positive impacts too.</p>	<p>Current / ongoing public consultations shows Welsh language appearing first.</p> <p>The percentage of Welsh speakers in RCT according to the 2021 Census was 12.4%, and the Council’s Welsh Language Skills Strategy aims to ensure the percentage of staff with Welsh language skills is at a similar level.</p>	<p>Ensure that, upon each new order of consultation material, all correspondence is reviewed, and bilingualism retained.</p> <p>Encourage contact in Welsh by incorporating an appropriate additional line into correspondence, e.g., “we welcome correspondence in Welsh, which will not lead to a delay in responding”.</p> <p>Ensure steps are taken for basic relevant Welsh lessons for those who need it with the aim of further upskilling and training as appropriate.</p> <p>Investigate opportunities to ensure there are a number of Welsh-speaking members of staff on the team through advertising some new posts as “Welsh-essential” roles <i>where practical to do so</i>.</p>
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Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

Will the proposed action affect any or all of the following?

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts?	Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p style="text-align: center;">Numbers and / or percentages of Welsh speakers</p> <p>e.g. Welsh Medium Education / Study Opportunities. Links with the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 Strategy / RCTCBC Five Year Welsh Language Strategy</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>There is a potential that the additional walking distance from home to school may discourage parents from putting their children into Welsh medium schools, in favour of nearer English medium catchment schools, with a slightly greater risk at the primary school level, (albeit the risk is still low).</p> <p>However, it should be noted that under the proposal the Council would, as part of its discretionary provision, still allow a learner to select their nearest 'suitable school' in accordance with choice of language. On this basis there might be potential for growth in Welsh Medium demand where pupils live over 2 miles (in the case of primary school pupils) or</p>	<p>As part of its discretionary provision, the Council would, as now, allow a learner to select their nearest 'suitable school' in accordance with choice of language should the proposal be implemented.</p> <p>Out of a total of 1,217 pupils attending Welsh primary schools, (as of September 2023), 260 pupils would be affected by this proposal, (this represents 21% of all such pupils).</p> <p>Out of a total of 1,900 pupils attending Welsh secondary schools, (as of September 2023), 237 pupils would be affected by this proposal, (this represents 12% of all such pupils).</p>	<p>The Siarter Iaith Cymraeg Campus programme is having a positive impact on the promotion of the Welsh language in schools engaged with the programme through providing increased opportunities for pupils to use the Welsh language in different contexts.</p> <p>The Council would continue to adhere to The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 which requires the Council to produce a five year strategy outlining actions which will facilitate and promote the Welsh language.</p>

		<p>3 miles (in the case of secondary school pupils) from their nearest suitable Welsh Medium school who would be entitled to free transport).</p>	<p>Whilst the proposed changes will be applied equally to English medium education provision and Welsh medium education provision, as pupils generally travel further to Welsh Medium schools, a greater number of primary age pupils are impacted. However, this is reversed for secondary age pupils, where those attending English medium schools are impacted by a greater number.</p>	<p>The Council's Five Year Welsh Language Promotion Strategy (2022 – 2027) along with its supplementary action plan has been taken into consideration in order to encourage and facilitate long term growth for the Welsh language and Welsh medium education. The strategy outlines the Council's commitment to working towards the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 vision of increasing the number of Welsh speakers.</p> <p>The Council would continue to ensure a clear alignment with the Five Year Welsh Language Promotion Strategy. This commitment to promoting the Welsh language, increasing the number of Welsh pupils and improving the Welsh language skills of staff and pupils across schools in Rhondda</p>
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				Cynon Taf is reaffirmed in the Education & Inclusion Directorate's Education Strategic Plan for 2022 – 2025.
<p>Opportunities to promote the Welsh language e.g. status, use of Welsh language services, use of Welsh in everyday life in work and in the community</p> <p>Actively encourage and promote the use of our services in Welsh to see an increase in demand over time</p>	Neutral	<p>The Welsh language has official status and legislation in place which provides rights for Welsh speakers to receive Welsh language services. The challenge is to expand the opportunities for people to be able to use the Welsh language in their daily life through creating the right conditions for new pupils of all ages to develop and use their skills from early years, through every stage of compulsory education and post-16 provision.</p> <p>As mentioned above, there is a potential that the additional walking distance from home to school may discourage parents from putting their children into Welsh medium schools.</p> <p>Yet, the proposal is clear that the Council would, as part of its discretionary provision, still allow a learner to select their nearest 'suitable school' in accordance with choice of language. On this</p>	As part of its discretionary provision, the Council would, as now, allow a learner to select their nearest 'suitable school' in accordance with choice of language should the proposal be implemented – please see data above.	<p>The Siarter Iaith Cymraeg Campus programme is having a positive impact on the promotion of the Welsh language in schools engaged with the programme through providing increased opportunities for pupils to use the Welsh language in different contexts.</p> <p>The Council would continue to adhere to The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 which requires the Council to produce a five year strategy outlining actions which will facilitate and promote the Welsh language.</p> <p>The Council's Five Year Welsh Language Promotion Strategy (2022 – 2027) along with its supplementary action plan has been taken into</p>

		<p>basis there might be potential for growth in Welsh Medium demand.</p> <p>If these benefits are indeed realised, this would potentially positively impact on our WESP targets and our strategic priorities to increase the number of Welsh language speakers and to growth the number of learners accessing Welsh medium education and opportunities.</p>		<p>consideration in order to encourage and facilitate long term growth for the Welsh language and Welsh medium education. The strategy outlines the Council's commitment to working towards the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 vision of increasing the number of Welsh speakers.</p> <p>The Council would continue to ensure a clear alignment with the Five Year Welsh Language Promotion Strategy. This commitment to promoting the Welsh language, increasing the number of Welsh pupils and improving the Welsh language skills of staff and pupils across schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf is reaffirmed in the Education & Inclusion Directorate's Education Strategic Plan for 2022 – 2025.</p>
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				The Council is aware that Welsh Government are in the process of reviewing its Learner Travel Guidance, however it is unclear what, if any, changes will be made. The Council will review any revisions to the Guidance, as and when issued, and consider accordingly.
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<u>Stage 2 – Impact Assessment</u>				
Will the proposed action affect any or all of the following?				
	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts?	Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<u>Compliance with the Council’s Statutory Welsh Language Standards</u> e.g. increasing or reducing the Council’s ability to deliver services through the Medium of	Neutral	All processes associated with this proposal would be in accordance with the Council’s Statutory Welsh Language Standards.	Contractual arrangements would ensure that all consultations are undertaken bilingually and all public correspondence in relation to these proposals would be sent out bilingually with Welsh positioned first.	The relevant and required statutory consultation will be undertaken bilingually and all public correspondence in relation to the proposal

<p>Welsh.</p> <p>Consider the rights of Welsh speakers to use Welsh when dealing with the Council and for staff to use Welsh at Work</p>				<p>will be produced bilingually.</p> <p>Ensure all officers involved with these proposals has an awareness of the Council's Statutory Welsh Language Standards and ensure compliance with these standards.</p> <p>All public consultation announcements will be made bilingually.</p>
<p>Treating the Welsh language, no less favourably than the English language</p>	<p>Neutral.</p>	<p>The proposed changes will be applied equally to English medium education provision and Welsh medium education provision.</p>	<p>The proposal is based on walking distance to all schools, regardless of language choice.</p>	<p>Greater promotion of Welsh medium schools across the County Borough.</p>

Stage 3 - Strengthening the proposal

Having listed actions in section 2 which may mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts – please record below which ones you will imbed into the policy proposal and who will be responsible for them.

Also consider is the proposal necessary? Would it be possible to meet demand without any new developments? Could other existing provision be used? Where should the development be?

What are you going to do?	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible?
The Council would continue to adhere to The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, and work towards achieving the goals of Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 vision by promoting the Welsh language.	Ongoing	Transportation and Education & Inclusion Services.
Encourage contact in Welsh by incorporating an appropriate additional line into correspondence, e.g., "we welcome correspondence in Welsh, which would not lead to a delay in responding".	Ongoing	Transportation and Education & Inclusion Services.
The Council is aware that Welsh Government are in the process of reviewing its Learner Travel Guidance, however it is unclear what, if any, changes will be made. The Council would review any revisions to the Guidance, as and when issued, and consider accordingly.	If, as, and when the Welsh Government make any changes to its Learner Travel Guidance.	The Welsh Government (Review) and then the Transportation and Education & Inclusion Services (Implementation)

If ways of reducing the impact have been identified but are not possible to implement, please explain why. Give sufficient detail of data or research that has led to your reasoning.

What was identified?	Why is it not possible?

Stage 4 – Review

As part of the Welsh Language, Equalities and Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment Process all proposals that fall within the definition of Significant Key Decision should present at the Officer Review Panel. This panel is made up of officers from across Council Services and acts as a critical friend before your report is finalised and published for SLT/Cabinet approval.

If this proposal is a Key Strategic Decision please forward your impact assessment to CouncilBusiness@rctcbc.gov.uk for an Officer Review Panel to be organised to discuss your proposal. [See our guidance document](#) for more information on what a Significant Key Decision is.

For all policy proposals, whether it is a Significant Key Decision or not you are required to forward this assessment to Welsh Language services in the first instance for some initial guidance and feedback.

It is important to keep a record of this process so that we can demonstrate how we have considered and built in sustainable Welsh language considerations wherever possible. Please ensure you update the relevant sections below

Welsh Language Services Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Welsh Language Services feedback
Officer Review Panel Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Officer Review Panel considerations
Consultation Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consultation

Stage 5 – Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing

How and who will you monitor the impact and effectiveness of the proposal?

The Council's Transportation and Education & Inclusion Services will monitor the impacts of this proposal, holding periodic review meetings.

Stage 6 – Summary of Impacts for the Proposal

Provide below a summary of the impact assessment. This summary should be included in the Welsh Language Considerations section of the SLT/Cabinet report template. The impact assessment should be published alongside the report.



A Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been completed and the main findings are as follows -

The proposal seeks to introduce a proposed new Home to School Transport Policy, namely providing mainstream English, Welsh and Faith primary school, secondary school and college transport above statutory distance only and implemented from the start of the 2025/2026 academic year. Under the proposed Home to School Transport Policy the discretionary element of allowing a learner to select their nearest suitable school in accordance with choice of English or Welsh Medium language would continue.

Whilst the proposed changes will be applied equally to English medium education provision and Welsh medium education provision, as pupils generally travel further to Welsh Medium schools, a greater number of primary age pupils are impacted. However, this is reversed for secondary age pupils, where those attending English medium schools are impacted by a greater number.

This impact assessment has been completed prior to any consultation being undertaken on the proposal. Should a consultation be initiated by Cabinet on the proposal relevant feedback would be used to inform and update this impact assessment ahead of any final decision(s) being made in relation to the proposal.

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Stage 7 – Sign Off			
Name of Officer completing the WLIA	Geraint Roberts	Service Director Name:	Stephen Williams
Position	Integrated Transport Manager	I recommend that the proposal: (Highlight decision)	Is implemented with no amendments
			Is implemented taking into account the mitigating actions outlined
			Is rejected due to disproportionate negative impacts on the Welsh language
Signature		Service Director Signature	
Date	13/11/2023	Date	13/11/2023