



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL
WELSH LANGUAGE CABINET SUB COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Welsh Language Cabinet Sub Committee held on Tuesday, 7 May 2024 at 12.30 pm.

This meeting was recorded, details of which can be accessed [here](#)

County Borough Councillors – The following Councillors were present:

Councillor R Lewis (Chair)

Councillor C Leyshon Councillor M Webber
Councillor G Caple Councillor M Norris

Officers in attendance

Ms L Davies, Director of Public Health, Protection and Community Services
Mr S Gealy, Welsh Language Services Manager
Ms N Lewis, Head of Community and Welsh Language Services
Mr O Rowlands – Menter Iaith

6 Declaration of Interest

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, there were no declarations made pertaining to the agenda.

7 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17th October 2023 as an accurate record.

8 Matters Arising

The Welsh Language Services Manager took the opportunity to inform the Welsh Language Cabinet Sub-Committee that the Welsh Language Commissioner had very much welcomed the Council's proposal to develop a Welsh Language Guaranteed Interview Scheme.

Members were informed that Human Resources officers were working with Welsh Language Service officers on executing the proposal to be consistent with the Veterans Guaranteed Interview Scheme. It was officers' view that a separate policy would not be required as the justification had been set out in the report considered by the Sub-Committee in October 2023.

It was hoped that from mid-summer, following agreement by Members on the wording, a new section would be included alongside the existing Veterans Guaranteed Interview Scheme wording on the Council's recruitment website and application forms, inviting applicants to be part of the scheme.

Members were pleased to note the positive comments received in relation to the proposal and noted that the proposed wording for the scheme would be

circulated for comments following the meeting.

9 Draft Welsh Language Standards Annual Report to the Welsh Language Commissioner 2023-2024

The Welsh Language Services Manager provided the Welsh Language Cabinet Sub-Committee with a copy of the Draft Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2023 – 2024.

Members' attention was drawn to the draft report, which was attached at Appendix 1. The report covered the eighth full year of the implementation of the standards from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 and it was noted that a final report must be published on the Council's website and made available in each of the Council's offices that are open to the public no later than 30 June 2024.

The officer referred Members to section 5 of the report, which detailed the current position, and it was noted that despite the financial pressures facing the Council and resulting service changes, there had been continual successes in Welsh language compliance. It was also pleasing to note that feedback from the Welsh Language Commissioner during the Council's annual meeting with their Standards Setting and Compliance Officer held in Quarter 3 2023-2024, continued to be very positive in respect of the progress made in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The officer referred Members to section 5.4 of the report, which detailed the following areas for improvement:

- The continuing need to increase the number of Welsh speaking staff;
- Effective monitoring of any mitigating actions noted in any statutory Welsh Language Impact Assessments;
- Effective scrutiny of the partnership elements of the 5 Year Strategy for the Promotion of the Welsh Language; and
- Continuous training and awareness regarding Welsh Language Standards.

The Chair spoke positive of the Annual Report and commented that it evidenced compliance across the Council. The Chair was particularly pleased to note that 552 staff had undertaken the Bitesize sessions and that 94 members of staff, including Elected Members had begun learning the language with the support of the Council's Tutor. The Chair noted the areas for improvement and that there were challenges around recruitment but praised the Council for its innovative strategy with developments such as the Welsh Language Guaranteed Interview Scheme.

The Deputy Leader was pleased to note the content of the report and the Council's compliance with the Welsh Language Standards and suggested that it would be beneficial for the Overview and Scrutiny to have sight of it. In terms of the complaints identified in section 14 of the draft Annual Report, the Deputy Leader was satisfied that the issues could be easily rectified. The Deputy Leader echoed the Chair's comments in relation to the positive take up of Bitesize sessions by staff and Members of the Council and advised that she would also be taking part to improve her language skills in readiness for the Eisteddfod.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services was pleased with the content of the Annual Report and added that the Welsh Language was

now embedded across the Council's new Corporate Plan.

The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the content of the draft report;
2. To approve the draft report in order for a final version to be published on Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's website, and approve the distribution of the final report to each of the authority's offices that are open to the public by no later than 30 June 2024; and
3. To approve arrangements for publicising the fact that the final annual report has been published.

10 Update on progress against actions within the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy: Arts Service, Libraries and One4All Service and the Community Development Team

The Director of Public Health, Protection and Community Services provided an update to Members on progress made against actions within the [Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2022-2027](#).

The Arts Service, Libraries and One4All Service, and the RCT Together Community Development Team had made progress in support of the delivery of the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy through their provision of information and advice, engagement and participation, and programmes and projects and Members attention was drawn to section 5 of the report, which detailed the key highlights.

The Chair thanked the Director for the positive report and noted that it had captured areas in which the public regularly frequent, and thus was pleased to note the opportunities for the public to learn the Welsh Language in the community.

The Chair was pleased to note that since 1 April 2022 to end of March 2024, over 400 applications for grants of between £1,000 to £200,000 had been received by the Community Development Team for their Community Grant programme; and that eight projects, specifically targeting Welsh Language use opportunities, had been approved. The Chair emphasised the importance of working with the community and community groups such as Menter Iaith, of whom all share the same ambitions.

The Deputy Leader echoed the Chair's positive comments in relation to the work of the Arts Service, Libraries and One4All Service and the Community Development Team. The Deputy was particularly pleased to note that a new Steering Group, led by Pontypridd Town Council and community organisations and supported by the RCT Together Community Development Team, had been established in Pontypridd with a focus on tracking and developing Welsh language activities.

Referring to section 5.3.1, the Deputy Leader sought clarification on how many of the 400 grants received had been approved during the period 1 April 2022 to end of March 2024. Officers advised that a vast amount of grants were awarded to applications across RCT, which had met the priorities of the Community Grant Programme and that the exact number would be circulated to Members following

the meeting.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services took the opportunity to commend the libraries for the array of work undertaken to promote the language; such as Welsh Language stories and craft sessions, as well as a variety of Welsh language activities offered by external partners.

The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED:**

1. To consider the information within the report.

This meeting closed at 1.03 pm

**Councillor R Lewis
Chair.**