



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

WELSH LANGUAGE CABINET SUB-COMMITTEE

15 OCTOBER 2024

**WELSH LANGUAGE SERVICES - WELSH LANGUAGE PROMOTION
STRATEGY 2022-2027 ACTION PLAN PROGRESS REPORT**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION, AND
COMMUNITY SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR
EDUCATION, INCLUSION AND WELSH LANGUAGE**

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Welsh Language Cabinet Sub-Committee with an update on the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2022 – 2027 Action Plan (Appendix 1), as approved by this committee on 5th May 2023 which supports the implementation of the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2022-2027 (Appendix 2), also approved by this Committee on 25 October 2022.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Welsh Language Cabinet Sub-Committee:

- 2.1 Note the content of the report;
- 2.2 Consider whether further information is required from the service areas noted in the action plan.
- 2.3 Approve possible additional support/steps as outlined in 5.5 to address known challenges.
- 2.4 Approve to continue to progress with the actions as outlined in the current agreed Action Plan (Appendix 1).

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Council is required to produce a Five-Year Strategy to facilitate and promote the Welsh Language in the county under Standard 145 of the Compliance Notice issued under section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

- 3.2 A report outlining progress on the implementation of the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy and Action Plan should be submitted to the Welsh Language Cabinet Sub-Committee for discussion.
- 3.3 The strategy to facilitate and promote the Welsh Language in the county as set out under Standard 145 of the Compliance Notice, supports the Welsh Government's strategy Cymraeg 2050 – A million Welsh speakers published July 2017.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 On 25th October 2022 and on 5th May 2023 respectively, this Committee, the Welsh Language Cabinet Sub-Committee, approved second, revised copies of the statutory Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2022 – 2027 (Appendix 2) and supporting Action Plan (Appendix 1) 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.
- 4.2 The Council's first statutory 5 year Welsh Language Promotion Strategy and Action Plan concluded in terms of timescale in 2021.
- 4.3 The aim of the second statutory 5 year Welsh Language Promotion Strategy and Action Plan is to build on the good progress made by the Council and its partners to promote and facilitate the language over the past five years.
- 4.4 Specifically, the action plan reflects the three main prescribed national themes outlined in the Strategy which are as follows:
- Theme 1: Increasing the number of Welsh speakers
 - Language transmission in the family
 - The early years
 - Statutory education
 - Post-compulsory education
 - The education workforce, resources and qualifications
 - Theme 2: Increasing the use of Welsh
 - The workplace
 - Services
 - Social use of Welsh
 - Theme 3: Creating favourable conditions – infrastructure and context
 - Community and economy
 - Culture and media
 - Wales and the wider world
 - Digital technology
 - Linguistic infrastructure

- Language planning
- Evaluation and research

5. CURRENT SITUATION / PROGRESS

- 5.1 The progress outlined in Appendix 1 covers the position after 18 months of implementation of the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2022 – 2027 Action Plan across Council services.
- 5.2 Progress on many of the activities and targets in the Action Plan the Council is responsible for achieving (*as opposed to the activities and targets that partners are responsible for achieving*) are also reflected in the annual service self-evaluations contained in the Welsh Language Standards Annual Report to the Welsh Language Commissioner 2023 – 2024, approved by this committee on 7th May 2024. This ensures consistency across service area plans, and consistency in the reporting mechanism for the Welsh Language Commissioner and does not mean additional workload for services.
- 5.3 Overall, service areas have made good progress as they seek to meet their targets in the plan, despite facing challenges such as service restructures and reduced budgets. In addition, the Council's successful hosting of the National Eisteddfod in August 2024 is further testament to its commitment to facilitating and promoting the language in the longer term and wider area via its legacy.
- 5.4 In terms of progress, of particular note are the following:
- 112 schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf (97%) are engaged with the Siarter Iaith (WM) or Cymraeg Campus (EM) – this is a key resource for increasing children and young people's use of Welsh;
 - 15 Welsh medium, and 58 bilingual settings registered to deliver the Childcare Offer in RCT;
 - Significant progress in the implementation of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan;
 - All SPF Community Grant application have a scoring section on the assessment criteria for Welsh language with the aim of embedding the language in community funded projects;
 - 31% of this year's intake of RCT Council apprentices are Welsh speakers;
 - Improved links between RCT schools and Coleg y Cymoedd to promote opportunities for Welsh medium further/higher education courses and modules for RCT pupils;
 - Communities for Work + Welsh language taster sessions held to improve language skills and enhance outcomes for employment, including increased engagement with businesses;
 - English medium childcare settings are now engaged with the Clebran scheme to provide Welsh language support for English-medium settings who are not members of Mudiad Meithrin;
 - Continued support for RCT Members and staff to improve their Welsh skills via internal tutor;

- The Guaranteed Interview Scheme was launched in August 2024 and Welsh Language Services along with Human Resources will continue to monitor its impact;
- Trilingual resources (leaflet and online resource) were distributed to schools in the area, and to the centres housing Ukrainian refugees;
- 172 children attending Welsh language swimming lessons in our leisure centres
- Welsh-medium swimming lessons now also available via private providers hosted at RCT schools e.g. Bryncelynnog Comprehensive.

5.5 Despite the good progress made by the Council, challenges remain as we seek to improve. Areas that remain challenging include the following:

- Effective monitoring of the partnership elements of the 5 Year Strategy for the Promotion of the Welsh Language;
- Effective monitoring of grant funded community groups of their Welsh language offer;
- More effective and targeted support to community groups to embed the language in their activities;
- Further improve partnership working with Menter Iaith and other community groups to ensure there is no replication of actions and maximise best outcomes for capacity and any available funding;
- Continuous training and awareness regarding Welsh language requirements across service areas.

6. NEXT STEPS

6.1 It is notable that a great deal of work has been already undertaken by Council services and Partners to meet the ambitious actions as outlined in the Action Plan. Over the next period, areas where progress has been more limited or more challenging, service areas will be invited to:

- Review some of the existing actions to reflect changed circumstances;
- Ensure the Action Plan reflects changes implemented by the Council and/or partners in respect of organisational structure or responsibilities;
- Discuss with service areas, Fforwm Iaith, community groups and partners about ways of improving monitoring and implementation and identify support if needed.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

7.1 The report has been prepared in response to RCT Council's statutory requirement to comply with Welsh Language Standards and such assessments aren't required.

8. **WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The report has been prepared in response to RCT Council's statutory requirement to comply with Welsh Language Standards and such assessments aren't required. Approval of this report will provide evidence of our compliance to the regulator.

9. **CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT**

- 9.1 The topic of the report relates to a statutory duty and therefore there is no requirement to consult on this issue. Nevertheless, a consultation process was undertaken before the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy was approved in 2022.

10. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

- 10.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report. However, there will be costs and resources in respect of implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan. Yet, importantly, those associated costs and resources should not be treated as additional costs due to the mainstreaming or substitution of Welsh language into existing provision.

Non-compliance with a standard could incur financial penalties of up to £5,000.

11. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

- 11.1 Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and Welsh Language Statutory Standards 2015 regulate this area of work.

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

- 12.1 'Culture, Heritage and Welsh Language' is now included as one of four wellbeing priorities in the Council's new Corporate Plan – 'Working with our Communities' and aims to continue to grow the use of the Welsh Language so that it thrives in our homes, communities and work as required to comply with the amended Compliance Notice issued by the Welsh Language Commissioner.
- 12.2 A statutory Annual Compliance Report is submitted to the Welsh Language Commissioner outlining the work undertaken by the Council to comply with the Welsh language statutory standards that will contribute to the Welsh Government's longer-term goal of 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050. The work undertaken to achieve these standards involves working collaboratively with partners and residents to facilitate a wide range of opportunities for the use of the Welsh language in communities across the county.

- 12.3 The Welsh language is also directly related to Goal 6 of the Well-being of Future Generations Act - a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. It also contributes to the creation of a more equal Wales by providing opportunities for Welsh speakers to access Council services in the medium of Welsh if they so wish.

13. CONCLUSION

- 13.1 Good progress has been made against key areas of the Welsh Language Promotion Action Plan as highlighted in section 5 above. However, circumstances remain challenging for Council services and partners and some of the targets may need to be reviewed in future. Maximising the opportunities afforded by the Eisteddfod bounce is key as well as the greater monitoring and support of council partners and grant funded community groups.
- 13.2 Although the target for growing the number of people able to speak Welsh also remains challenging, the Council remains in a positive position to meet those targets and is supporting innovative projects such as the guaranteed interview scheme, the first of its kind in Wales.



Appendix 1 - Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2022 – 2027 Action Plan

Appendix 2 - Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2022 – 2027