

**Report of the:
Welsh Language Promotion Strategy
Task and Finish Group**

**A Task and Finish Group to
Develop a Welsh Language
Promotion Strategy**

August 2018



Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Members of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee undertook a Task and Finish Group, to develop a Welsh Language Promotion Strategy for the County Borough, to enable the Council to comply with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (No 1) Regulations and to aim for the Welsh Government's target of achieving 1 million Welsh Speakers by 2050.

The Task and Finish Group commenced on the 29th January 2018 and met regularly to complete this task. The group held discussions and workshops to gather all information required to develop the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy and a summary of the discussions are included within the report.

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Since July 2016, the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee have considered reports on the implementation of the Welsh Language Standards as applied to the Council.

In the meeting held on 13th December 2017 the Members supported the establishment of a Task and Finish Group to develop a Welsh Language Promotion Strategy to comply with the requirements of Standard 145 (Promotion).

Standard 145 (Promotion) states that every Local Authority must produce, and publish on their website, a 5-year strategy that sets out how they propose to promote the Welsh language and to facilitate the use of the Welsh language more widely in their area; and the strategy must include (amongst other matters) - (a) a target (in terms of the percentage of speakers in your area) for increasing or maintaining the number of Welsh speakers in your area by the end of the 5 year period concerned, and
(b) a statement setting out how you intend to reach that target; and you must review the strategy and publish a revised version on your website within 5 years of publishing a strategy (or of publishing a revised strategy).

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Task and Finish Objective	To Develop a Welsh Language Promotion Strategy
Membership	<p><u>Elected Members</u></p> <p>Cllr A Woolcock Cllr H James Cllr S Paddison Cllr S Penry</p> <p>Cllr Alun Llewellyn Cllr J.D Morgan</p> <p>Cllr S Hunt</p> <p><u>Advisors/Support Officers</u></p> <p>Charlotte Davies Chloe Plowman Caryn Furlow Rhian Headon Owain Glenister</p>
The main aims of the Project	To develop Neath Port Talbot CBC's Welsh Language Promotion Strategy in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (No1) Regulations.
Scope of the study	To comply with the requirements of Welsh Language Standards 145 and 146, limiting the scope of the Strategy to the Council's responsibilities.
How it will contribute to achieving Corporate/Community Objectives /	<p>The Strategy will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • help the Council comply with the Welsh Language Standards • help meet its Wellbeing Objectives particularly Objectives 1 and 3 and the respective associated

Priorities.	<p>Improvement Priorities 3 and 3 and 6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be developed in line with the sustainable development principle • contribute to the public service board Wellbeing Objectives (which was informed by the Wellbeing assessment)
Initial list of key officers, stakeholders, partners or other agencies to involve	<p>Officers – as stated above</p> <p>Further officers, stakeholders, partners or other agencies to be decided.</p>
Key issues to be addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What should a Welsh Language Promotion Strategy include? • Realistically, how can the Council influence the increase or maintain the numbers of Welsh speakers? • What actions are required? • What targets are required?
Timescale for completion of the task	Strategy produced by 31 March 2018 (or earlier)
Meeting Dates	<p>29th January 2018 1.00pm. 15th February 2018 10.00am 26th February 2018 2.00pm 8th March 2018 10.00am 22nd March 2018 10.00am 11th April 2018 2.00pm 1st May 2018 2.00pm 12th July 2018 10.00am</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy and Action Plan produced by the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy Task and Finish Group (attached at Appendix 2) be accepted and commended to Cabinet for approval subject to any amendments made at today's meeting.
2. That subject to paragraph 1 above, Cabinet be requested to commend the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy and Action Plan to Council for adoption, subject to amendments made at Cabinet.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

The following Members of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee took part in the Task and Finish Group:

- Cllr A. Woolcock (Chairman)
- Cllr S. K. Hunt
- Cllr H. N. James
- Cllr A. Llewelyn
- Cllr J. D. Morgan
- Cllr S. Paddison
- Cllr S. M. Penry

The Task and Finish Group commenced on the 29th January 2018 and met regularly to progress and develop the creation of a Welsh Language Promotion Strategy in order to comply with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards.

The Group recognised that the Council is required to produce a 5 year strategy that sets out how Welsh Language will be promoted and how it will be further facilitated throughout the Borough.

The Group received support from O.Glenister, Chief Officer Menter Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot, who provided advice, guidance and knowledge as he has previously worked with other neighbouring authorities to help develop their promotion strategies.

Members also invited Cefin Campbell, advisor with Sbrectrwm. He informed members that he had previously worked with five other authorities to help progress their Welsh Language Promotion Strategies. He informed the Members of the group that there are a variety of different models that could be followed when creating a Strategy, however it is important for Neath Port Talbot to find the model that is most appropriate.

C.Campbell discussed with the group that the Valley communities in the county borough have historically been Welsh speaking and advised that the Council needs to develop a Welsh Language Promotion Strategy that reflects the need to safeguard the Welsh speaking areas as well as to improve the position of those communities that speak little or no Welsh.

The Members of the Group discussed in detail what the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy should include and how the Strategy can look to increase or maintain the number of Welsh speakers in the County Borough.

The Group considered baseline figures, evaluated the local demographic and identified community resources, such as partner organisations and facilities that would assist in delivery of the Action Plan.

Members agreed that the Action Plan would be divided into two sections; the first referring to interventions and actions that would be considered the direct responsibility of the Council and the second referring to the work of partner organisations.

Members wanted the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy to reflect the themes contained within the Corporate Plan 2018-2022.

Therefore the following themes were selected for inclusion:

- Strategic Priority 1. Children and Young People (aligned to NPT Corporate Plan heading 'Children and Young People')
- Strategic Priority 2. Families (aligned to NPT Corporate plan heading 'Adults')
- Strategic Priority 3. Communities (aligned to NPT Corporate plan Heading 'Economy and Environment')

Members also wanted to include aims for the Five year plan and chose the following aims:

- Put steps in place to slow down the percentage decrease in the number of Welsh speakers in the County Borough

- Increase the number of Welsh speakers in the County Borough
- Increase the usage of the Welsh language in all aspects of life
- Raise awareness of the language as a component of Neath Port Talbot's heritage, culture, tourism and business sectors
- To drive and support Welsh medium education and the creation of new Welsh medium schools in particular, primary schools through an effective Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP)

Members discussed and agreed that a target of a minimum increase of 1% in the number of Welsh speakers in the county borough would be a realistic target for the Strategy.

As part of their deliberations Members asked for individual Council Directorates to contribute to the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy and the responses that were received were considered.

Members discussed in the group that education is a main priority in aiming to hit the target of a million Welsh speakers. It was acknowledged that language transfer at home was a key issue.

Members noted that where the parents' first language is English there is some reluctance to continue Welsh medium education at secondary level. This appears to be linked to their concern surrounding their ability to support their children at home with Welsh medium language homework etc. However after discussions within the group it was noted that parents are now provided with support packages in order for them to help their children with their homework. Members suggested that establishing homework clubs in Welsh medium schools which could provide support to parents who are not familiar with the Welsh language.

Members also wanted the Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP) to be referenced within the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy to help drive and support Welsh Medium Education.

Members discussed the need to strengthen links between the Welsh language and the Council's key policies and strategies and to consider developing a Welsh signage policy for all new developments as members felt this would promote the Welsh language.

Members also discussed the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy should cross reference the Valleys Action Plan, to help promote the Welsh language in the Valleys.

Members discussed that leisure centres should proactively promote the use of Welsh, both in terms of provision and making it visible by encouraging a language champion in every leisure centre with responsibility for actively promoting Welsh both visually and in its leisure provision.

The group discussed and agreed that the relevant Scrutiny Committee review the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy annually and the actions be revised where considered appropriate, subject to approval by Cabinet.

The Welsh Language Promotion Strategy was reported to Cabinet on 16 May 2018, to seek approval for the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy to go out to Consultation for a 4 week period.

Following the Consultation, the Welsh Language Promotion Task and Finish Group met for a final time on 12 July 2018, to discuss the results of the consultation.

The Consultation was held on a four week period which closed on 22 June 2018. The consultation received a total of the following responses from the various consultation activities as follows:

- 45 responses received in total from both versions of the questionnaire (42 in English; 3 in Welsh)
- 81 responses to the 'light touch' consultation (21 in Port Talbot, 34 in Neath and 26 in Pontardawe)
- 13 completed questionnaires via the post boxes distributed across the 20 libraries/public buildings
- The majority of responses to the full questionnaire (where indicated) came from Neath and the surrounding area.
- 3 responses received from organisations, including the Older Persons' Council, as well as one 'on behalf' of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council.

In the last meeting of the Welsh Language Promotion Task and Finish group, the members considered all consultation responses and agreed that the Strategy and Action Plan include text to strengthen and clarify particular areas as well as the inclusion of additional actions.

The following amendments and were agreed to be included in the Strategy and Action Plan:

- text to strengthen
 - the position re resources/funding to meet the actions;
 - the strategy is a first step in a long journey;
 - clarification of the relationship between Menter Iaith and Language Forum to help deliver the aims
- text to explain the term 'no less favourably'
- text to improve clarity of the first aim in the strategy.

The group also agreed that the following additional actions be included:

- To develop a dynamic resource re history of place names, etc., on the website;
- Develop a designated webpage to include information on opportunities for learning/using Welsh, links to other organisations and websites;
- Consider ways to encourage businesses to promote the Welsh language;
- To encourage elected Members to use Welsh words and greetings at events;