

Welsh Language Promotion Strategy

Consultation Report



1. Introduction

The Welsh Language Promotion Strategy and associated action plan was developed in accordance with the Welsh Language Standards (No1) Regulations 2015, Standard 145.

The Standard places a duty on the Council to produce, and publish on your website, a 5-year strategy that sets out how you propose to promote the Welsh language and to facilitate the use of the Welsh language more widely in your area along with a target for increasing or maintaining the number of Welsh speakers in the area.

A public consultation on the Council's draft Welsh Language Promotion Strategy and associated action plan was undertaken for a 4 week period, from 25th May to 22nd June 2018.

The purpose of the consultation was to give a wide range of interested bodies and the general public the opportunity to offer and comment on the draft prior to the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy and Action Plan being finalised and adopted by Council.

A total of 45 responses were received via the online survey and survey boxes, with 79 individuals giving their views on the Strategy's aims during 'light touch' consultation events in Port Talbot, Neath and Pontardawe. In addition comments were received via email from Cilybebyll Community Council.

Please note where quotes from respondents have been used these are a direct quote from the consultation responses.

2. What we did

Consultation and Engagement Plan

To help ensure that the consultation was as widely available as possible, there were a number of mechanisms by which people could submit their views. These included:

- a self-completion questionnaire published on the Council's web site
- consultation packs in 20 in libraries and civic centres)
- promotion via email to a range of stakeholders
- promotion via the Council's corporate social media accounts messages

- awareness/consultation events held in Port Talbot, Neath and Pontardawe

More detail can be found at Appendix 1

3. Consultation at awareness/consultation events

The detailed questionnaire was too lengthy to complete in person given the time available and location of the awareness/consultation events held in Port Talbot, Neath and Pontardawe therefore, it was considered more appropriate for there to be a 'light touch' consultation at these events. These events captured people's initial responses to the aims of the Strategy as well as an opportunity to provide comments.

4. Consultation summary analysis

A range of promotional methods were used to create awareness of the consultation and encourage members of the public to engage with the council from a good cross section of the county borough, as detailed in the Consultation and Engagement Plan (Appendix 1).

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,.
- Comments received from Cilybebyll Community Council via email

All views and comments expressed during the consultation have been considered prior to the Strategy and Action Plan being finalised.

Specific comments in relation to the 21st Century Schools' Programme have been addressed in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) where it states that the proposed project in Pontardawe will be subject

to a range of impact assessments including Welsh and community assessments, to help assess any 'potential detrimental impact on Welsh medium education' in the area.

The terminology use in the question 'what effect do you think the strategy will have on: Treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language' was considered 'derogatory to the Welsh language'. However this form of words was taken directly from the Policy Making Welsh Language Standards 88-97:

....you must consider what effects, if any (whether positive or adverse), the policy decision would have on - (a) opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language, and (b) treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

One comment was received in relation to the ethnicity categories used in the equalities monitoring questions; 'White Welsh/White European was not an option'. It should be noted that standard ethnicity categories are used for ease of comparison across services/organisations. It should also be noted that there was an option to identify as 'Other ethnic group' with opportunity to provide additional information.

5. Responses from questionnaire

There were 45 respondents in total.

5.1 Comments on the aims of the Strategy:

The majority of respondents (24, 53.3%) agreed with all of the five aims of the draft strategy while 6 (13.3%) agreed with some of them. 11 disagreed with all or some of the aims.

Main reasons given for agreeing with the aims:

- a number of respondents felt a strong sense of pride in the language and its survival with promotion in all its forms key to this;
- language was considered an important part of 'our' culture and identity, both nationally and locally;
- support for the increase in Welsh speakers in the area and the high demand for Welsh medium education supporting this.

Main reasons given for disagreeing with the aims were:

- English is the language of business and daily life and such a choice should be accepted
- Funding of essential services should be a priority
- Risk of alienating people by promoting the language

Specific aims agreed with and associated comments:

- all respondents (4) to this question specifically supported the aim 'to drive and support Welsh medium education and the creation of a new Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP). Comments highlighted that by children are better able to absorb the language, it will ensure the growth and promotion of the language thereby retain it for future generations.
- In addition 2 respondents specifically supported the aims to 'increase the number of Welsh speaker in the County Borough' and to 'raise awareness of the language as a component of Neath Port Talbot heritage, culture, tourism and business sectors.' Comments acknowledge that these were achievable.

Specific aims disagreed with and associated comments:

- Of the 4 respondents to this 2 considered the promotion of the language a waste of public money particularly where budgets were being reduced and services cut
- Although the reasoning behind the aim 'to slow down the percentage decrease in the number of Welsh speakers in the county borough' was understood it was considered negative and an acceptance of the decrease in Welsh speakers.
- One respondent disagreed with the aim to drive and support Welsh medium education on the basis it would create a division between Welsh and English speakers. However, this was not as negative as first considered with the additional comment 'the aim is bilingualism' and the need to 'increase the teaching of Welsh in preschool and primary education'.

5.2 Comments on the actions associated with the Strategy:

20 (45.5%) 'sort of' agreed that the actions would deliver the aims while 19 (43.1%) agreed they would with 6 (13.3%) respondents disagreeing.

Reasons given:

- While some comments considered the actions 'comprehensive and thorough', that they would 'greatly assist in making [it] a living language and they were essential for the promotion of the language, others felt they were 'not ambitious enough'.
- Some comments referred to the difficulty in learning Welsh due to the 'very little standardisation within it' which impacts on learning especially for those with learning disabilities.'
- A comment was made of there being 'lot of expectation of 3rd parties' which are outside the Council's influence.
- A couple of comments were made in support of promoting activities in the predominantly English speaking areas of the county borough but not at the cost of traditional Welsh speaking areas, such as Pontardawe and Gwaun Cae Gurwen.
- A couple of respondents highlighted that there was a need to change perceptions especially where there is no incentive to use Welsh. Change would be required in all areas including businesses.
- in order to get more Welsh in preschool services staff able to train 'early years' student need to be employed

5.3 Comments on the effects of the strategy on:

- **People's opportunities to use Welsh**
- **Treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language**

While two thirds of respondents considered the strategy would have a positive effect on opportunities to use Welsh, only 44.4% of respondents considered that there would be positive effect on treating the Welsh language 'no less favourably' than the English language.

There were only 2 negative responses to the question and this was in relation to treating the Welsh language 'no less favourably' than the English language.

Comments received included:

- 'supporting the Welsh language can only have a positive effect , though I find the words 'no less favourable' derogatory to the Welsh language'
- Many comments were received supporting the positive effects of the strategy, 'Of course, this is Wales, Welsh should be treated more favourably. Just do it', but were tempered by an acknowledgement that more would be required.
- While it was acknowledged amongst some respondents that the Strategy would help 'in social and structural terms, would have 'a positive influence' and that 'there are benefits with Welsh language use' it was also highlighted that 'people will always speak English' and that '...[it] will always be the main business language', and that there will 'still be a vast difference in the number of people who speak and don't speak Welsh'
- 'Lack of respect towards the language and history'.

5.4 Further comments provided on the strategy

- 'The legislation does not treat the two language as equals. If anything it is creating the opposite of the Welsh Knot...'
- 'The strategy will help if those who can use Welsh are to use it... no criticism...as far as the Council can promote the use of Welsh. However, the Welsh language needs to be simplified.'
- 'Opportunities for the use of Welsh in leisure centres is a great idea.'
- 'Incidental Welsh a good place to start and set a positive mindframe for the language'
- More opportunities to promote/encourage Welsh were identified; 'inclusion of free of charge lesson for learners', Welsh language conditions included in various applications etc., 'introduce non Welsh streams to English medium primary schools', 'hosting the Urdd/National Eisteddford', 'more availability of informal conversational classes, 'more opportunity to use it out of school', etc.
- 'Use money elsewhere where it can have a more beneficial effect on our lives'
- 'Use correct Welsh words and not Welsh word and the rest in English, especially as there are Welsh words available'.
- 'Being inclusive is critical to the future of the language'
- One respondent commented on the lack of White Welsh/White European as ethnicity categories.

- language skills, to learn/improve Welsh, an important consideration when recruiting staff,

6. Comments received via email - Cilybebyll Community Council

While the Community Council welcomed the strategy as moving in the right direction it did also comment that more detail in relation to timescales would have been helpful.

It also noted the limited reference to planning policy, the emphasis given to education although it was considered that ‘the impact of the Council’s 21st century schools programme has not been considered in the Strategy, particularly the implications of emerging plans for a “superschool” in Pontardawe with its likely impact on local primary and secondary schools which make a significant contribution to the promotion of the Welsh language’

7. Responses from the ‘light touch’ consultation

The ‘light touch’ consultation focused on whether an individual agreed/disagreed or was undecided about each of the aims of the strategy. A total of 81 individuals participated; 21 in Port Talbot, 34 in Neath and 26 in Pontardawe. Not all respondents chose to answer all questions and the following has taken this into account:

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

94.8% of people agreed
3.8% of people disagreed
1.2% of people were undecided

Aim - Increase the number of Welsh speakers in the County Borough

89.4% of people agreed
7.8% of people disagreed
2.6% of people were undecided

Aim - Increase the usage of the Welsh language in all aspects of life

81% of people agreed
10.1% of people disagreed
8.8% of people were undecided

Aim - Raise awareness of the language as a component of Neath Port Talbot's heritage, culture, tourism and business sectors

90.7% of people agreed

2.6% of people disagreed

6.5% of people were undecided

Aim - To drive and support Welsh medium education and the creation of new Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP)

93.4% of people agreed

3.9% of people disagreed

2.6% of people were undecided

8. Comments received:

- A number of comments were received in relation to Welsh language and education; more Welsh medium schools needed/more Welsh needs to be taught in English medium schools/need to be taught Welsh language more from an earlier age.
- 'The Welsh language is more and more visible. It would be a pity if NPT was left behind'
- The wording of the first aim was considered 'clumsy'.
- A few comments acknowledging the difficulty in meeting the aim to 'increase the number of Welsh speakers in the county borough' as Welsh speakers are leaving the area.
- More affordable language courses were also identified as a way to help encourage support for Welsh.

9. Response to comments

The majority of comments received referred to issues that had been addressed in the Strategy and as a result these comments were duly noted.

However, a small number of comments required further consideration. Consequently, it was considered appropriate to make amendments to the strategy and develop additional actions to reflect the points raised. Details of these amendments are highlighted later in the report.

Following the further consideration of a few comments in relation to Welsh medium education it was considered these issues had been

sufficiently addressed within the Strategy or the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). Issues raised in relation to the teaching of the language were a national consideration and is part of the Cymraeg 2050 Strategy. A suggestion to include Welsh streams in English medium school is one of a number of options being explored to meet the demand of Welsh medium education.

The proposed development of a new school at Pontardawe also attracted comments in relation to the 'devastating effect' it will have on the Welsh language. The service response indicated that this 21st Century School project was at an early stage of development and will be subject to various impact assessments including Welsh and Community impact assessments, to assist in assessing potential detrimental impact on Welsh medium education in the area. This is referenced in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

The difficulties faced by pupils with learning difficulties within Welsh medium education settings was also raised and while a range of additional needs support is offered through the medium of Welsh further work to enhance current provision is being explored.

Suggestions aimed at promoting the Welsh language via licensing conditions for events etc, will be explored more fully over coming months.

10. Changes made following consultation

The various comments received during the consultation were fully considered by the task and finish group. The majority of the comments required no further action, either as they supported the strategy or that comments were already addressed within the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan or the strategy itself.

Some comments related to aspects of the Council's work, e.g. signage, which were being addressed under the Welsh Language Standards as have been applied to the Council.

A few issues were referred on to service areas, notably education and licensing, for consideration. The Task and Finish Group evaluated these responses and amendments to the strategy were made where appropriate.

The following amendments were made:

COMMENT	AMENDMENT
Promoting the language considered a waste of public money particularly where budgets were being reduced and services cut	Additional text to strengthen the position on the resources identified to meet the aims of the strategy.
Actions are identical to those identified (and failed) previously; Welsh still not commonplace	Additional text to stress that the strategy is built on the foundation of previous work but with renewed focus and commitment given the increase in prominence of the language, recent legislation and Welsh Government's vision for one million Welsh speakers by 2050.
Reliance on third parties to deliver actions outside of the Council's 'control'	Additional text to strengthen the nature of the relationship between Menter Iaith and the Language Forum to help deliver the aims
The first aim is 'clumsy' and considered a negative aim	Additional text to clarify the aim
The terminology 'no less favourably' considered derogatory	Explanation of the origin of the terminology – Standards 88- 97 to be included in the consultation response report

Some suggestions were made during the consultation which were considered appropriate for inclusion as actions , which would not entail extra funding to achieve, to help deliver the aims of the strategy.

SUGGESTION	ADDITIONAL ACTION
Limited Welsh history of place names etc on website	Develop a dynamic resource re history of place names, etc., on the website
Better accessibility to/of language training courses	Develop a designated webpage to include inclusive information on opportunities for learning/using Welsh, links to other organisations and websites
Encourage businesses to promote Welsh language	Consider ways to encourage businesses to promote the Welsh language
Elected Members to use Welsh greetings at events	Encourage Elected Members to use Welsh words and greetings at events

11. Equalities Information

The council's standard set of equalities monitoring questions were also included with the survey. A breakdown of the equalities information relating to the consultation respondents from both versions of the questionnaire can be found in the table below.

Please note these questions are voluntary and as such not every respondent has completed this section. Therefore the overall demographic profile of respondents presented in this report may not be a true reflection of the county borough.

Consultation Equalities Information

Age Range	Number
Under 16	0
17-24	0
25-29	4
30-39	5
40-49	12
50-59	11
60-74	5
75-85	0
86+	4
Prefer not to say	1

Welsh Language	Number
Little or no knowledge	8
Learner	12
Fluent speaker and writer	9
Fairly fluent speaker	5
Fairly fluent speaker and writer	6
Fluent speaker	2

Do you consider yourself to have a Disability?	Number
Yes	9
No	30
Prefer not to say	3

Gender	Number
Male	21
Female	17
Transgender	0
Prefer not to say	2

Religion / Belief	Number
Christian	23
Sikh	0
Buddhist	0
Hindu	0
Jewish	0
Muslim	0
No religion	15
Any other religion	7
Prefer not to say	4

Sexual Orientation	Number
Heterosexual	32
Lesbian	0
Gay	0
Bisexual	1
Prefer not to say	8

Nationality	Number
Welsh	34
Scottish	0
English	0
British	5
Irish	01
Other	0
Prefer not to say	2

Ethnic Origin	Number
White (British)	32
White (Irish)	0
White (Other)	0
Mixed (White and Black Caribbean)	0
Mixed (White and Black African)	0
Mixed (White and Asian)	0
Mixed (Other)	0
Asian (Indian)	0
Asian (Bangladeshi)	0
Asian (Pakistani)	0
Asian (Other)	0
Black (African)	0
Black (Caribbean)	0
Black (Other)	0
Chinese	0
Other Ethnic Group	7
Prefer not to say	3

Consultation & Engagement Plan

The plan below lists a range of engagement activities we undertook during the consultation period 25th May to 22nd June 2018. The plan demonstrates we targeted a cross section of the community, including: the general public, those with protected characteristics, families, children and young people and partners.

What	Where
Consultation packs, containing the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference copy of the draft Welsh Language Promotion Strategy and Action Plan (English and Welsh) • self-completion questionnaires (English and Welsh), replicating the online questionnaire • A post box for completed questionnaires 	Consultation packs were available in all council, and community libraries and the One Stop Shops in Neath and Port Talbot, 13 participants completed the questionnaire and posted their feedback via the 20 post boxes distributed in the public buildings
Corporate social media accounts (e.g. Facebook/Twitter)	Social media postings were communicated throughout the consultation period via Facebook and Twitter
Council Website	Online questionnaire and supporting materials published via a link from the Council's Welsh Language Standards webpage www.npt.gov.uk/well-being
Press Release	Via Council website and media contacts
Council's corporate staff newsletter	The consultation was promoted via the Council's corporate staff newsletter 'In the Loop' to encourage staff to give their views
Email with Web link	Email promoting the consultation was sent to a comprehensive list of internal and external stakeholders; local equality groups, trade unions, Public Services Board, schools, etc.)
Awareness/consultation events	'Light touch' consultation on the aims of the strategy in Port Talbot, Neath and Pontardawe on 12 th /13 th /14 th June