

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Council

26th September 2018

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Digital Officer

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Neath Port Talbot Welsh Language Promotion Strategy

Purpose of the Report

1. To present the Neath Port Talbot Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2018- 2023 to Council for adoption.

Executive Summary

2. Welsh language standard 145 requires:
3. 'every Local Authority to produce and publish 'a 5 year strategy that sets out how they propose to promote the Welsh Language and to facilitate the use of Welsh Language more widely in their area.'
4. A Policy and Resources Task and Finish group was established to develop a Welsh Language Promotion Strategy to meet the requirement of the standard.

5. The draft Welsh Language Promotion Strategy and Action Plan were developed by the Policy and Resources Task and Finish Group which was subject to a four week period of consultation. The Strategy and action plan were amended in light of responses, where considered appropriate, following consultation and was approved by Cabinet on 1 August to be recommended to Council for adoption.

Background

6. Since July 2016, the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee have considered reports on the implementation of the Welsh Language Commissioner's Welsh Language Standards.
7. The Committee, following the agreement on the application of Standard 145, resolved in December 2017 to undertake a Task and Finish Group to develop a Welsh Language Promotion Strategy for the county borough.
8. The draft Welsh Language Promotion Strategy and Action Plan went to Cabinet on 16th May 2018, to seek approval to consult for a 4 week period. The Strategy and Action Plan were amended in light of responses, where considered appropriate, following the consultation and was approved by Cabinet on 1 August to be recommended to Council for adoption.

Development of the Strategy

9. The Task and Finish Group, with support from Menter Iaith Castell nedd Port Talbot and council officers, considered what should be included in the Strategy to help increase or maintain the number of Welsh speakers in the County Borough.
10. As a result of in depth discussions and consideration of current circumstances the following aims were deemed appropriate:
 - 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)
11. The Group was keen for the Strategy to be aligned with the Corporate Plan 2018-2022 in order to provide a sense of cohesiveness and the following priorities were selected to reflect and support those in the Corporate Plan:
- Priority 1 Children and Young People - aligned to Well-being Objective 1 - To improve the well-being of children and young people
 - Priority 2 Families - aligned to Well-being Objective 2 - To improve the well-being of all adults who live in the county borough
 - Priority 3 Communities - aligned to Well-being Objective 3 - To develop the local economy and environment so that the well-being of people can be improved
12. A target of a minimum increase of 1% in the number of Welsh speakers in the county borough was considered, in light of current circumstances, a realistic target by the Group.
13. The associated action plan included interventions and actions that were the direct responsibility of the Council as well as work that was/would be being undertaken by partner organisations.

Consultation

14. The draft Strategy and action plan were subject to a four week public consultation, between 25 May and 22 June 2018. Following this changes were made, where considered appropriate, to both the Strategy and Action Plan to reflect responses received.

Financial Impact

15. There are no additional financial impacts attached to the Strategy as all actions have been developed within budgetary constraints.

Integrated Impact Assessment

16. An Integrated Impact Assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016). The full Impact Assessment was considered at Cabinet at the meeting on 1 August 2018.
17. An overview of the Integrated Impact Assessment has been included in this report in summary form only and it is essential that Members read the Integrated Impact Assessment, which is attached to the report at Appendix 2, for the purposes of the meeting.
18. Strategy has been developed in accordance with the legislative requirements of the Welsh language Standards (No1) Regulations and reflects the sustainable development principle of the Wellbeing of future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
19. While the anticipated outcome of the Strategy will be positive, some potential negative impacts have been identified during the consultation exercise and mitigating actions have been developed to address these. In addition, it is acknowledged that potential negative impacts are likely if implementation of the Strategy is not fully achieved and/or publicity is not undertaken sensitively.
20. Amendments which aim to address issues/comments raised during the consultation/assessment process have been made to the Strategy and Action Plan as appropriate

Workforce Impacts

21. There are no direct workforce impacts associated with the Strategy as all actions have been developed taking into account our current workforce and resources.

Legal Impacts

22. This report sets out how the Council meets its legal duty under the Welsh Language Standards which has been referenced in the body of this report.

Risk Management

23. There are no direct risk management impacts associated with the report however; there may be a financial risk to the Council for failure to comply with the Welsh Language Standards.

Consultation

24. This item has been subject to a four week public consultation period which included an online survey and consultation events held in Port Talbot, Neath and Pontardawe. The consultation report is available as a background paper.

Recommendation

25. That Council adopt the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy and Action Plan.

Reasons for Proposed Decision

26. To ensure that Neath Port Talbot complies with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards Regulations 2015.

Implementation of Decision

27. The decisions are proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Welsh Language Promotion Strategy and Action Plan

Appendix 2 - Integrated Impact Assessment

Background papers

- Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Compliance Notice
- Report of the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy Task and Finish Group
- Consultation Report

Officer Contact

Karen Jones, Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Digital Officer, Tel:

01639 763284 e-mail: k.jones3@npt.gov.uk