

Minutes of the Meeting of the Language Committee held at the Council Chamber, Penmorfa, Aberaeron and remotely on Wednesday, 10 July 2024

Present: Councillor Catrin M S. Davies (Chair), Councillors Chris James (Vice-Chair), Gwyn Wigley Evans, Gareth Lloyd and John Roberts.

Officers in attendance: Non Davies, Corporate Manager: Culture; Carys Lloyd-Jones, Language Policy Officer; Geraint Edwards, Corporate Lead Officer: People and Organisation; Huw Owen, Work Welsh Training Officer; Steffan Jones, Street Naming & Numbering Officer / Master Data Coordinator; Nia Jones, Corporate Manager: Democratic Services and Neris Morgans, Democratic Services Officer.

(3.00pm- 4.36pm)

1 Apologies

- i. Councillor Rhodri Davies apologised for his inability to attend the meeting.
- ii. Elen James, Corporate Lead Officer: Lifelong Learning apologised for her inability to attend the meeting due to other Council Commitments.

2 Disclosure of personal/ prejudicial interests

There were no disclosures of personal/ prejudicial interests.

3 To confirm as a true record the minutes of a meeting of the Language Committee held on 15 March 2024

It was RESOLVED to confirm as a true record of the minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2024.

4 Any matters arising from the minutes

In relation to item 5, Officers were reminded to write more concisely to reduce the workload of the translation service.

5 Present the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy

The Language Policy Officer presented the draft Welsh Language Promotion Strategy for 2024-29. She thanked all for their engagement, collaboration, and support in developing the Strategy in her first 6 months in post. The Welsh Language (Wales) Bill 2011 established a legal framework to impose duties on certain organisations, including Ceredigion County Council to comply with standards in relation to the Welsh language. Standard 145 placed a duty on the County Council to develop and publish a 5-year strategy that explained how the Council intended to promote the Welsh language and facilitate the use of Welsh within the wider area.

4 strategic themes that reflected 4 aspects of the county had been set in the new Strategy (learn, live, belong and succeed). At the Ceredigion's Bilingual Future Language Forum, discussions had focused on the Strategy's action plan, to ensure it was current and appropriate for the next 5 years. A review of Ceredigion's Bilingual Future Language Forum's current terms of reference would be undertaken, to harmonise the Strategic Groups.

The following main points were raised during discussions:

- A target of 1.5% increase of Welsh speakers by 2029 (612 speakers off the 2021 baseline) reflected how Ceredigion's Bilingual Future Language Forum and Officers collaborated, as the initial target (an increase of 1%) had been deemed low. The figure had been revised following further research by the Language Policy Officer.
- Welsh Language Immersion Centres would be promoted to latecomers in primary and secondary schools, to support the integration into Welsh-medium education.
- Culture and Schools Services worked closely together to promote the Welsh language and Theatr Felinfach ran a successful scheme last year for home-educated children. The intention was to review and continue with the scheme.
- Following concerns with the practicality of some of the action points, it was clarified that a review of the Ceredigion's Bilingual Future Language Forum would enable not only a more effective monitoring process but a more proactive way of addressing any weaknesses identified.
- Members congratulated the Language Policy Officer for presenting the Strategy effectively and visually.

Following questions from the floor, it was AGREED:

- To note that the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy was due to go to Public Consultation between August and September 2024.
- To identify the content of the Integrated Impact Assessment.
- To agree that the Language Strategy would be submitted to the attention of the Council's Cabinet and then to the Ceredigion Public Service Board for approval.
- To approve the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2024-2029, subject to it being presented to the Language Committee before final approval if deemed necessary.

6 Annual Monitoring Report of Welsh Language Standards 2023-24

The Language Policy Officer explained that she had only been in post for the last quarter of the reporting period, but all services had worked closely to provide the required data.

The report set out the actions taken to comply with the requirements of the Standards, which are organised under the 5 principal standards, namely:

- Service Delivery Standards
- Policy Making Standards
- Operational Standards
- Promotional Standards (a requirement to develop and publish a 5-year Strategy)
- Record Keeping Standards

An overview of the key achievements as outlined in the report was provided and areas for action for the next implementation period (2024-25).

The following main points were raised during discussions:

- Concerns were raised that the public were unaware there was a separate Welsh and English Facebook page for the local authority.
- During discussions with educational establishments around the development of new social care courses, Officers were encouraged to ensure Welsh language provision was given consideration.
- As the local authority operated a Hybrid Working Strategy, opportunities for informal group discussions virtually through the medium of Welsh would hopefully benefit employees.
- Elected Members, Officers and the public were encouraged to contact the Clic Team- Customer Contact through the medium of Welsh as 100% of the team were Welsh-speaking (ALTE levels 3,4 or 5).

Following questions from the floor, it was AGREED:

- To adopt Ceredigion County Council's Annual Monitoring Report of the Welsh Language Standards (2023-2024).
- To approve that the full report is presented to the Council's Cabinet for approval and publication on the Council's corporate website, as required by the Welsh Language Standards procedure, in accordance with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

7 Welsh Language Skills of the Corporate Workforce

The Corporate Lead Officer: People and Organisation provided an update on the procedures for assessing the Welsh language skills of corporate staff and the provision of in-house Welsh language courses. Up until the introduction of the Ceri system, staff records were retained within the individual services. Following the corporatisation of the HR function and the launch of the Ceri system in 2015 it was possible to introduce a standard approach to identifying the Welsh language requirements of corporate posts and the skill levels of the post holders.

An overview of the following as outlined in the report was provided:

- Identifying the Welsh language requirements of posts
- How was/is the data captured?
- New posts and vacancies
- ALTE and CEFR Frameworks

The Work Welsh Training Officer reported that a record number of employees from various services had enrolled on Welsh Language courses this year. Since starting as a pilot scheme in 2018, Ceredigion's Work Welsh Scheme had become the blueprint for other Local Authorities' Work Welsh schemes across Wales and the scheme was respected nationally.

Entry, Foundation (level 1), Intermediate (level 2) and Advanced 1 and 2 (level 3 parts 1 and 2) courses were available in-house for local authority employees annually, with the Advanced 3 course (level 3 part 3) also being offered from September 2024 onwards. The courses were promoted all year round in a range of ways, with a greater push during the summer months. An overview of the additional learn Welsh activities above the requirements of the grant funding was provided. This included discussions around the

delivery of bespoke sessions to residents & staff at Hafan y Waun Residential Care Home.

The following main points were raised during discussions:

- If a condition was placed within an employee's contract of employment to achieve the necessary Standard of Welsh within two years, the line manager held responsibility for monitoring this, however, it was acknowledged that the transition from one ALTE to another generally took more than two years. Monitoring progress was an area for improvement, although at present, there was nothing in place nationally to hold employees to account when the requirements were not met. In the long term, The National Centre for Learning Welsh may develop a process to support employers with this.
- Most of the public sector in Wales used the ALTE framework, although the Welsh Government had recently adopted the CEFR framework. Any changes to the local authority's use of language proficiency frameworks would require careful consideration, given the significant undertaking it would involve.
- Town and Community Council representatives were elected democratically therefore it was not in the local authority's remit to enforce the use of the Welsh Language in their work.
- Given the recruitment challenges in some services corporately, having a balance in terms of enforcement was key. Promoting the Welsh Language, providing opportunities and supporting employees with their Welsh Language Development was important, but there was room for improvement from an expectation, support and monitoring perspective.

The Chair extended her thanks to the Officers for explaining the process and encouraged all staff members to use the Welsh language.

Following questions from the floor, it was AGREED to note the report on the procedure for assessing the Welsh language skills of corporate staff and the provision of in-house Welsh language courses.

8 Street Naming and Numbering Policy Update

Consideration was given to the report updating Members on Ceredigion County Council's Street Naming and Numbering Policy. The report outlined how the Street Naming and Numbering function had progressed over the last year (April 2023 - March 2024).

The following main points were raised during discussions:

- Elected Members were encouraged to contact the Street Naming & Numbering Officer / Master Data Coordinator to correct place names or points of interest that appeared incorrectly on maps.
- Any changes to house names should be reported to the service, to ensure Royal Mail had the most up-to-date information.
- It was reported that Royal Mail no longer used 'Dyfed' or local authority names on their online databases, however, all companies had different address records and many such as BT continued to use 'Dyfed' as opposed to Ceredigion.

Following questions from the floor, it was AGREED to note the report.

9 Forward Work Programme

The following items were suggested by Committee Members:

- A short update on the progress against the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy
- An overview of the local authority's Social Media accounts
- Develop a guide to the use of the Welsh language for Town and Community Councils
- A project to promote awareness of Welsh culture and Welshness in residential homes

10 Any other matter which the Chairman decides is for the urgent attention of the Committee

Councillor Gareth Lloyd stated that at a recent sporting event for primary children by an external provider, the session had initially been held through the medium of English and was only held bilingually on request, with the support of local authority employees. He appreciated that a Welsh speaker was not always available, but every attempt should be made to ensure sessions were run bilingually where possible.

Non Davies explained that the local authority operated under the Welsh Language Standards and therefore was obliged to offer services bilingually. However, as external providers operated under their own language standards, the local authority was unable to enforce them to offer services bilingually.

The Chair stated that she would discuss the matter with the appropriate service.

**Confirmed at the Meeting of the Language Committee held on 14
November 2024**

Chairman: _____

Date: _____