

**Minutes of the Meeting of LANGUAGE COMMITTEE  
held Hybrid - Neuadd Cyngor Ceredigion, Penmorfa, Aberaeron / remotely via  
video conference on Monday, 13 June 2022**

**PRESENT;** Councillor Catrin M S Davies (Chair), Councillors Rhodri Davies, Gwyn Wigley Evans, Chris James , Gareth Lloyd and John Roberts

**Officers in attendance:** Miss Lowri Edwards (Corporate Lead Officer – Democratic Services, Ms Nia Jones, Corporate Manager-Democratic Services, Mrs Carys Morgan, Language Officer and Mrs Dana Jones, Democratic and Standards Officer

(10.00 am- 11:40am)

**1 Personal**

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

Condolences were expressed to the family of Cen Llwyd on his passing.

**2 Apologies**

None.

**3 Disclosure of personal/prejudicial interests**

None.

**4 To confirm as a true record the minutes of the Meeting held on 22 November 2022**

It was RESOLVED to confirm as a true record the minutes of the meeting held on the 22 November 2022.

**5 Welsh Language Committee Terms of Reference**

Consideration was given to the Welsh Language Committee Terms of Reference. It was AGREED to approve the document as presented.

**6 Welsh Language Standards Monitoring Report April 2021 - March 2022**

The Language Officer outlined the legal framework of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the requirement to produce a Welsh Language Standards Monitoring Report.

The Officer reported upon the key achievements within 2021-2022 in the report as follows:-

- Innovation, adapting quickly to the Coronavirus crisis, by organising democratic meetings virtually, with simultaneous translation service from Welsh to English; ensuring that the Council could protect the use of the Welsh language at public meetings.

- Ensuring that Clic Ceredigion, the customer care service provided the proactive offer of Welsh language services at the first point of contact; and that the language choice was recorded for the purpose of further contact.
- Live streaming of Cabinet and Council meetings on Facebook – using the Social Media platform to alert service users, that a Welsh and English stream was available. The Welsh stream (the main language of the meeting) was broadcasted on the Facebook account; with the simultaneous translation service introducing the English translation; promoting the principle of using Welsh in public administration.
- Used specific days in the national calendar to raise awareness of the Welsh language, organise virtual activities on St David's Day, Welsh Music Day, and Welsh Language Rights Day.
- Held a Ceredigion Bilingual Futures Forum workshop, to review what has been achieved to date with the Ceredigion Language Strategy, also considering what more would need to be done in order to be able to prepare for the successor Strategy.

The Language Officer reported that in the Assurance Report 'Bridging the Gap' the Welsh Language Commissioner placed an expectation on the Council to self-regulate its performance against the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards. With the Leadership Group's consent, a selection of Standards dealing with service provision was reviewed, as well as some of the Operational Standards which deal with internal administration. All Corporate Lead Officers were requested to score their services against aspects of the Welsh Language Standards, in an attempt to gauge current compliance.

It was stated that the main finding was that the Council was performing quite well against the requirements of those Standards, which pertain to the provision of primary services, i.e. users could be confident of receiving the following services in Welsh - services by telephone, written services, and services which could be planned in advance. Users were less likely to be able to receive more personal services or face-to-face services in Welsh. Although the Council aims to respect the language choice of its service users, in this respect it was very dependent on the expertise required, and the language skills available on different shifts. This finding was in line with national findings collated by the Welsh Language Commissioner: 'Bridging the Gap' Assurance Report. Following this self-regulatory work, it was reported that there would be a review on the Welsh Standards' action plan for the benefit of planning work for the next phase.

This report noted the progress towards fulfilling the Welsh Language Standards as well as presenting specific data for the 2021-22 financial year. It was reported that the progress was pleasing but acknowledge that there were still improvements to be made to the Welsh-medium provision within the Councils' services. However, the pandemic and remote working had created a number of

language planning related challenges, and the Council needed to be mindful of these as they moved on to the next phase.

Challenges on moving forward:

- It must be recognised that remote working had offered new opportunities for staff, but it may have had a less positive impact on the use of Welsh. A large number of officers may not hear, see or speak Welsh, and this could affect their confidence to use Welsh with service users.
- In the post-pandemic rehabilitation phase, many sectors across the Authority were finding it very difficult to recruit professionals; for example there was a great shortage of Welsh-speaking social care professionals. It was vitally important to ensure that the workforce has the appropriate skills in order to provide the proactive offer of a Welsh language service.
- All Welsh language learning courses had been delivered virtually during this period. These changes may well slow down the development of some individuals as there were not the same opportunities at home to practise their skills between the more formal lessons. Some learners would not see or hear Welsh for long periods between the formal lessons. They have also lost the informal conversation that was taking place at the photocopier or over a cup of tea, which established the practice of using Welsh naturally.
- In looking at the current data available, the number of service users choosing to use the Council's Welsh language services does not match the number who could speak Welsh within the County. Ceredigion County Council had active and dedicated Welsh-speaking staff across all Council services, and the Council need to encourage people to contact the Council in Welsh, and to use those Welsh language services available to them.

It was reported that during the next period, it would be necessary to look in more detail at how the Council provided the proactive offer of a Welsh language service, and how it organised its services so that Welsh speakers were more likely to use those Welsh language services available to them. To address this issue, these were some of the actions that needed to be considered going forward.

- Development of a training pack on the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards for councillors, following the May 2022 election.
- Revision of the Grants Policy in order to ensure that the Welsh Language Commissioner's good practice was highlighted.
- Revision of the Integrated Impact Assessment Guide, in order to assist officers to note any impact on the Welsh language.

- Creation of a report which outlines what the Ceredigion Language Strategy had achieved and preparation of the Strategy's development for the next five years.
- Coordination of a project Group to develop a 'Welcome Pack' in an attempt to assimilate incomers: work which stems from the Bilingual Futures Forum
- Introduction of a plan which recommends improvements in order to fulfil the requirements of the Action Standards – using Welsh internally, as well as promoting the concept of a bilingual workplace
- Census Report 2021: Welsh Speakers analysis

Following questions from the floor, it was AGREED

- (i) to receive the report,
- (ii) to approve that the full report was submitted to the Council's Cabinet for approval and publish on the Council's corporate website, as required by the Welsh Language Standards regime, in accordance with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011; and
- (iii) to thank the Language Officer for her detailed presentation and report

The following issues were raised from the presentation on the report:-

- The need to assist Officers who could speak Welsh to also be more confident in presenting reports/presentations in Welsh in committees and training. It was reported that there were courses available within the Council to all Officers such as "Gloywi iaith" to improve their skills
- That there was a need for Town and Community Councils to have translation facilities at their meetings as meetings were now only held through the medium of English. It was reported that CERED had translation equipment that could be provided, however, a translator was required which cost an individual Council approximately £600 per annum. The Language Officer reported that it had been discussed previously that to assist Councils; it had been proposed that Councillors could translate broadly to the non-Welsh speakers the matter in discussion; and not word for word as a professional translation would. It was reported that this was an issue that was required to be resolved by the individual Town or Community Council and was not the responsibility of County Council. They could also seek advice from One Voice Wales.
- To consider writing Welsh in a simpler and clearer way to encourage learners.
- The need to produce an information pack to circulate to the care sector on the need to have available staff that could speak Welsh to their patients. The Language Officer reported that she was aware that this was available; and she would contact the Local Health Board for a copy; and circulate accordingly to Members.

## **7 Feedback on Language Awareness Session and Welsh Language Standards (10 June)**

The Language Officer reported that the session had been successful, and 26 Councillors had attended. Issues discussed included language planning for the future and the language policy. Members of the Committee stated that the session had been informative and thanked her for her work.

**8 Chairing and Holding Bilingual Meetings**

All Members welcomed the document and agreed that it should be circulated throughout the Council to promote the need to hold bilingual meetings.

**9 Welsh Language Commissioner seeks evidence of Compliance with Welsh Language Standards: Self-Assessment Questionnaire 2022-23**

It was reported that the Questionnaire would be completed prior to the next meeting due to the deadline in July for its submission, however, a copy of the response would be presented at that meeting.

**10 Forward Work Programme**

The Language Officer reported that the draft agenda would be circulated to the Chair prior to the meeting and items could be added/removed at that stage.

The following was also agreed:-

- Circulate to Members the Street Naming and Numbering Policy due to the number of dwellings that were changing their dwelling names from Welsh to English and naming their new dwellings in English. However, it was reported that recently more dwellings were reverting to the Welsh names than vice versa in the County, this was welcomed by Members.
- That Members receive a briefing session on the new categorisation policy of schools by the Schools Service.

**11 Any Other Business**

None.

**Confirmed at the Meeting of the Language Committee held on 5 December  
2022**

**Chairman:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_