

Bridgend County Borough Council

Annual Monitoring and Improvement Report – Welsh Language Scheme

1. Introduction

This report outlines the progress that Bridgend County Borough Council has made in implementing its Welsh Language Scheme during the financial year 2009-10. It has been prepared in accordance with the monitoring and reporting framework outlined in the Scheme.

The Council is pleased with the progress that has been made, but is not complacent about what work is outstanding. We are pleased to have continued building a positive relationship with the Welsh Language Board, for example, participating in the Board's reviews of Welsh language services and the influence of Welsh Language Schemes.

2. Progress against timetable

A full report of progress against every target within the Scheme's Action Plan relating to the financial year 2009-10, as well as those targets that had slipped from 2008-09, can be found in **APPENDIX A**.

3. The availability of front-line services through the medium of Welsh

In the Annual Monitoring and Improvement Report 2008-09, we provided details of the Welsh language services now available through the Council's Customer Service Centre. The Centre includes a revamped reception area at the Civic Offices, and by the end of 2010 will include the provision of a Single Telephone Number.

During 2008-2009, the Centre successfully recruited four full-time Welsh-speaking staff on a "Welsh language essential" basis. However, two of those have since left the Centre and further recruitment on a "Welsh essential" basis did not produce a field of applicants strong enough to fill the posts. Any further vacancies will be advertised on a "Welsh essential" basis. The current complement of two Welsh-speaking staff represents 12% of the Centre's staff. **(Performance Indicator WLI2).**

Bespoke "Welsh in the Workplace" training was commissioned from the University of Glamorgan's Welsh for Adults Centre. This was recognised as good practice by the Welsh Assembly Government in a document entitled "Guidelines for organising Welsh language training in the workplace". Articles have appeared in the County Borough Bulletin and the "Bridgendders" staff newsletter to promote these developments to a wider audience and promulgate "best practice".

The Council has worked with the Welsh Language Board to promote these services through the “Mae gen ti ddewis” publicity campaign. Local publicity materials have been produced, such as posters, leaflets, a web banner and e-mail signature, which are being used to reinforce the national campaign which includes radio and television advertisements.

Website

The Council’s website is a key element in providing a front-line service through the medium of Welsh. A large amount of information has now been translated, in line with our commitment to developing a bilingual website.

The website has been re-designed and it is now easier to change between Welsh and English pages. There is still some translation work to be done to ensure a fully bilingual website, but this is being progressed as a priority in the Council’s Web Development Project. Staff across the Council have been advised that any content now published to the website must be translated into Welsh. They have been issued with instructions on how to achieve this.

The website also now includes “Browse Aloud” software to make it accessible for visually-impaired people, in both English and Welsh. Bridgend County Borough Council was one of the first organisations to make this facility available bilingually.

Other progress

A Welsh Language Active Young People Officer has been appointed, employed by the Urdd, located with the Active Young People Department (AYPD) and funded by European Social Fund for a period of four years. It is an unique post in Wales and the Healthy Living service in the Wellbeing Directorate is pleased to have been able to develop it in partnership.

The service is working with the new Welsh medium secondary school at Llangynwyd, and is progressing an initiative to develop Welsh language sports courses and coaching staff. A key element of the initiative will be the development of accredited leadership training for young people in the medium of Welsh to enhance sport and physical activity opportunities at a local level. The Council is also approaching the Sports Council for Wales to invest in a broad range of activity programmes across the County Borough.

The Active Young People Department (AYPD) has also appointed a new Disability Sport Wales Officer who is a Welsh speaker. As part of the links with Ysgol Llangynwyd, a series of Welsh medium after-school activities and holiday camps have also been operated.

The Childcare Development Team employs a part-time Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin Development Worker. An article on the work of Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin was included in the County Borough Bulletin, to promote the value of Welsh medium nursery education.

Young people's services

In 2007, the Council worked with the Welsh Language Board to check progress with developing services for young people through the medium of Welsh. In March 2010, the Board's Children, Young People and Skills Unit initiated a meeting with the Council to review recent developments, and share information and good practice.

In addition to the positive developments within the Active Young People Department (AYPD), there has also been progress within the Youth Service and Children and Young People's Partnership:

- Local Extending Entitlement funding has been granted to Menter Bro Ogwr and Urdd Gobaith Cymru.
- There is Welsh language representation on a number of the CYP Partnership's sub-groups, and Menter Bro Ogwr provides the 14-19 "Bilingual Champion".
- There is representation from Ysgol Gyfun Llanhari on the Bridgend Youth Council.
- The Youth Service has made promotional material available in Welsh, e.g. the calendar of events, Duke of Edinburgh Award materials. There are also examples of young people completing the Duke of Edinburgh Award through the medium of Welsh.
- The Youth Service's Management Information System records whether young people have a preference to use Welsh, and this facilitates an analysis of gaps in provision.

Developments under consideration include:

- The Youth Service will work with Menter Bro Ogwr to ensure that Youth Service opportunities (e.g. training) can be rolled-out within the Menter's Welsh medium youth clubs. The two organisations will also work together on summer holiday provision.
- Ysgol Gyfun Llangynwyd will be eligible to nominate pupils to be members of Bridgend Youth Council from September 2010 (there will be Year 9 pupils at the school from that date).
- The CYP Partnership will work to mainstream Welsh language provision within third-party contracts or Service Level Agreements.

4. Management & administration of the Scheme

The Chief Executive has overall accountability for the Welsh Language Scheme. Implementation is co-ordinated by the Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Development & Partnerships), assisted by the Corporate Equalities Management Group. Corporate Directors and Heads of Service are responsible for complying with the Scheme's requirements and require the Directorate representatives to the Corporate Equalities Management Group to monitor and report on the implementation of the scheme.

The Cabinet Equalities Committee provides political leadership, democratic accountability and an overview on all equality issues including the Welsh language. This comprises all Cabinet members, and cross-party representation on an advisory basis. It is chaired by the Deputy Leader – a Welsh learner who is the Council’s Welsh Language Champion. This Committee receives the Annual Monitoring Report and Half-Yearly Report for consideration and approval.

Staff have been issued with advice and guidance to raise awareness of their responsibilities in relation to the implementation of the Scheme.

We have identified where data can be sourced from departments and specific officers around the Council in order to report on the performance indicators that are detailed in our Welsh Language Scheme. This information is included within this Report.

The Council continues to ensure that any translators it uses are suitably qualified (members of Cymdeithas Cyfieithwyr Cymru - the Association of Welsh Translators) in order to provide a high quality service. A procurement exercise resulted in a list of three approved translators. This list has been circulated to key staff throughout the Council and is available on the Council’s Intranet.

5. Language skills

A summary of staff skills has been produced through the Trent HR system. Statistical data on the numbers of Welsh speakers, readers and writers as at 30th September 2009 are available for the whole authority and for individual directorates (**Performance Indicator WLI4**).

However, due to inconsistent collection and declaration of Equal Opportunities data in the past, and the absence of compulsory declaration, these figures will not reflect the true numbers of Welsh speakers in the organisation. These issues are being addressed by the Council at present with a view to improving the quality of data available, which will support the development of a Language Skills Strategy.

Welsh speakers, readers and writers – by Directorate

Welsh speakers	Total
Children’s Directorate	176
Wellbeing Directorate	38
Communities Directorate	16
Resources Directorate	11
Legal & Regulatory Services	3
Corporate Development & Partnerships	4
BCBC total	248

Welsh readers	Total
Children's Directorate	155
Wellbeing Directorate	35
Communities Directorate	14
Resources Directorate	9
Legal & Regulatory Services	3
Corporate Development & Partnerships	2
BCBC total	218

Welsh writers	Total
Children's Directorate	120
Wellbeing Directorate	32
Communities Directorate	10
Resources Directorate	7
Legal & Regulatory Services	1
Corporate Development & Partnerships	1
BCBC total	171

Welsh speakers, readers and writers – by Pay Scale

	WELSH SPEAKERS	WELSH READERS	WELSH WRITERS
SCALE 1 - 6	89	71	60
SENIOR OFFICERS	9	10	6
PRINCIPAL OFFICERS	17	14	9
CHIEF OFFICERS	1	0	0
SOULBURY & YOUTH OFFICERS	3	3	3
TEACHERS	129	120	93
TOTAL	248	218	171

During the financial year 2009-10, BCBC staff and Councillors attended courses organised by the Welsh for Adults centre of the University of Glamorgan.

50 members of staff and 16 Councillors enrolled on Entry 1 courses that took place between January and June 2009. 5 elected members and 13 members of staff completed the course.

A further 60 individuals enrolled for courses starting in September 2009. The breakdown of the courses attended by staff from September 2009 is as follows:

- Entry 1 – 25
- Entry 2 – 25
- Entry 1&2 – 4
- Entry & Foundation – 3
- Foundation 1 – 1
- Foundation 1&2 – 1
- Intermediate 1 – 1

16 of those enrolled on courses from September 2009 had previously attended Entry 1 courses from January 2009, thus demonstrating progression.

(Performance Indicator WLI4).

6. Mainstreaming the Welsh Language

Bridgend County Borough Council has published a new Corporate Equality Scheme. We aim to make links with the Welsh Language Scheme on matters that are best addressed jointly. For example, we will aim to tackle issues such as staffing (particularly linguistic needs and skills), and mainstreaming through recruitment, training, procurement and commissioning.

Equality Impact Assessments are being undertaken with the aim of mainstreaming equality issues across the Council. These Assessments will be carried out on the Council's strategies and services, will take into account provision of services through the Welsh language, alongside other equality strands, as a key risk factor. They will form the basis of a frank assessment of potential best practice that could be built upon, identifying areas for improvement, and barriers to improvement that need to be tackled.

Training for staff, in order to "roll-out" and implement Equality Impact Assessments, was carried out in February and March 2010. Attendees were provided with Advice and Guidance on Welsh language issues.

In addition, implementation of the Welsh Language Scheme and Corporate Equality Scheme has been incorporated in the Council's corporate Business Planning process (please refer to 4.22 of the Corporate Statement of Intent). Key actions are monitored by the Cabinet Committee and at quarterly business reviews.

The Council has forged closer links with the local Menter Iaith, the local Fforwm Iaith and the Welsh Education Partnership to ensure that matters relating to the Welsh language are addressed in partnership.

We have been pleased to submit information the local *papur bro* to promote developments within the Council to a wider audience. The County Borough Bulletin, and the Council's internal staff newsletter, have also been used to communicate positive messages about our Welsh language services.

7. Complaints

No complaints relating to the Council's Welsh Language Scheme were received during the financial year 2009-10 (**Performance Indicator WLI6**).

The Council participated in the Welsh Language Board's review of complaints. A questionnaire was completed and returned to the Board, and a consultant appointed by the Board met with relevant officers from the Council who have responsibility for the Welsh Language Scheme and the Corporate Complaints Policy. Feedback from the review indicated that the Council is in "full compliance".

We appreciate the constructive suggestions made in the feedback. Our response to the recommendations for changes can be found in **APPENDIX B**.

Appendix A – Milestones for 2009-2010 from the Welsh Language Scheme 2008-2011, Action Plan

Project	Advice & Guidance		
Senior Sponsor	Assistant Chief Executive – Corporate Development & Partnerships.		
Milestone	Responsible	Update	
Development of advice and guidance for third parties on the implementation of the Welsh Language Scheme. April 2009	Policy & Performance Management Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An advice and guidance leaflet has been published aimed at the Council's third party contractors. ○ The leaflet contains information on what is expected from them under the Welsh Language Scheme. ○ This is being distributed to them on a rolling basis by the Corporate Procurement team. 	
Promote use of Welsh National Database of Terms October 2008	Policy & Performance Management Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Completed. The Database has been promoted to Council staff through the Council's intranet. 	
The Council's Best Practice Guide to Consultation, published internally to assist staff through this process, will contain specific guidance on conducting consultation bilingually. October 2008	Policy & Performance Management Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The current Best Practice Guide to Consultation advises staff on the production of consultation materials in Welsh. ○ The Council's draft Citizen Engagement Strategy references the need to offer language choice when consulting with residents. ○ Guidance on how to conduct consultations bilingually will be updated in new consultation guidelines that will support implementation of the Citizen Engagement Strategy. 	
Other progress – E-learning		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Advice for staff that was developed in the last financial year has been adapted to be included in the staff e-learning programme. 	

Project	Website development		
Senior Sponsor	Assistant Chief Executive – Corporate Development & Partnerships.		
Milestone	Responsible	Update	
Continual translation process throughout 2009. Reviewing sections at a time. Throughout 2009	Web Development Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In line with this commitment, the Council’s new website now includes a substantial number of Welsh language pages. ○ The website has been re-designed and it is now easier to change between Welsh and English pages. ○ There is still some translation work to be done to deliver a more complete bilingual website, but this is being progressed as a priority in the Council’s Web Development Project. ○ Staff across the Council have been advised that from 1st March 2010 content now published to the website must be translated into Welsh. They have been issued with instructions on how to achieve this. ○ The website also now includes “Browse Aloud” software to make it accessible for visually-impaired people, in both English and Welsh. Bridgend County Borough Council was one of the first organisations to make this facility available bilingually. 	

Project	Recruitment advertising		
Senior Sponsor	Head of Human Resources.		
Milestone	Responsible	Update	
Bilingual advertising of all posts for which Welsh language skills are deemed essential or desirable. April 2009	HR management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Posts have been advertised bilingually where Welsh language skills have been needed. ○ Examples include Customer Service Advisors and schools-based staff in Welsh medium schools. ○ Progress is being made towards advertising all posts bilingually beginning in the 2010-11 financial year. 	

Project	Staffing & Training		
Senior Sponsor	Head of Human Resources.		
Milestone	Responsible	Update	
Authority-wide linguistic needs assessment to identify where Welsh language skills are essential or desirable. October 2008	Lead: HR management Support: PPMU	This action is currently being progressed partly in conjunction with the Corporate Equality Scheme and Customer Service Centre, in order to deal with common issues in a co-ordinated manner. A Training Needs Assessment questionnaire linked to the above was distributed to Group Managers across the Council in March 2010. The results will be analysed and used as the basis for a Welsh Language Skills Strategy. The aim is to have a draft Strategy prepared by the end of May 2010.	
Authority-wide linguistic skills audit to update the database of staff with Welsh language skills and to identify any shortfall in provision. April 2009	Lead: HR management Support: PPMU		
Development of a Welsh Language Skills Strategy. October 2009	Lead: HR management Support: PPMU		
Assessment of the need for specific vocational training through the medium of Welsh for identified Welsh speaking staff in their Directorates.	Lead: HR management Support: PPMU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Vocational training will be addressed by the Skills Strategy above. ○ There are some examples of successes in this area – e.g. bespoke “Welsh in the Workplace” training was organised for the Welsh-speaking staff in the Customer Service Centre. ○ This was recognised as good practice by the Welsh Assembly Government in a document entitled “Guidelines for organising Welsh language training in the workplace”. ○ Articles have appeared in the County Borough Bulletin and the 	

October 2009		"Bridgenders" staff newsletter to promote these developments to a wider audience and promulgate "best practice".
Provision of training/development interventions. April 2009	Lead: HR management Support: PPMU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Further training and development issues will be addressed by the Skills Strategy above. ○ In the meantime, following the successful enrolment of approximately 16 Councillors and 50 members of staff on beginners Welsh courses in January 2009, 5 elected members and 13 members of staff completed the course, and a further 60 individuals enrolled for courses starting in September 2009. ○ The breakdown of the courses attended by staff from September 2009 is as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Entry 1 – 25 ○ Entry 2 – 25 ○ Entry 1&2 – 4 ○ Entry & Foundation – 3 ○ Foundation 1 – 1 ○ Foundation 1&2 – 1 ○ Intermediate 1 – 1 ○ 16 of those enrolled on courses from September 2009 had previously attended Entry 1 courses from January 2009, thus demonstrating progression.
Workplace activity to promote the use of Welsh. April 2009	Lead: HR management Support: PPMU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "Taster" sessions were held in the Customer Service Centre during Adult Learners Week in May 2009, and also during February 2010, with the sessions advertised to staff via Bridgenders e-mails. ○ Due to logistical difficulties that prevented the setting up of a Buddy system to link new learners with fluent Welsh-speakers, we are investigating funding available from the Welsh Language Board for initiatives to promote Welsh in the workplace. We propose to work

		<p>with Menter Bro Ogwr to utilise their skills and expertise.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ An article regarding the Customer Service Centre's successful staff training has appeared in the County Borough Bulletin and the Bridgend staff magazine.○ "Mae gen ti ddewis" campaign materials have also been displayed in workplaces and public areas within Council buildings.
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Appendix B – Bridgend County Borough Council’s response to recommendations made in the Welsh Language Board’s review of Corporate Complaints procedures

WLB recommendation	BCBC response	Action
Suggestions from WLB report for BCBC		
When information about complaints is logged centrally it should include the following mandatory information namely a code or specific heading for all ‘complaints about the Welsh service provision/Welsh Language Scheme’.	Implemented .	Legal & Regulatory Services.
To adopt the best linguistic service practices a question on ‘language choice – Welsh, English or Other’ should be included in the Complaint Form.	At present, the Policy, Complaints Form, and web info/guidance are all available bilingually. We believe that this demonstrates to Welsh speakers that the process is a bilingual one. Language choice should be obvious from which language the complainant used on the form. However, we take on board this point and will make the amendment on the next occasion that the form is reviewed.	Legal & Regulatory Services to make amendment next time the Complaints Form is reviewed.
Any training or guidance on dealing with complaints should as a minimum confirm that a lack of service in Welsh or lack of continuity of service in Welsh is a ‘type’ of valid complaint.	Agreed. Complaints are dealt with by a small number of nominated officers who are aware of these issues. Lack of service in Welsh will be reported as part of the official reporting process.	Legal & Regulatory Services to ensure that these issues remain embedded in the monitoring and reporting process.
Under ‘Subject of Complaint’ in the ‘Corporate Complaints Policy – Monitoring Report’ the heading ‘Welsh service provision/Welsh Language Scheme’ needs to be included to ensure a comprehensive overview and appropriately mainstream the linguistic dimension.	Agreed. Welsh service provision will remain embedded in the monitoring and reporting process.	Legal & Regulatory Services to ensure that these issues remain embedded in the monitoring and reporting process.

<p>'Equalities Policies and Schemes Research' April 2006 Report is very commendable and highlights those challenges facing the Council in terms of improving service provision in Welsh. The following should be considered for future focus groups:</p> <p>At the very least the focus group should be bilingual,</p> <p>The majority of participants should have direct experience of accessing the Council's services and in Welsh,</p>	<p>Current corporate guidance on consultation does include guidance on the Welsh language. This is about to be revised. We will ensure that revised guidance covers these matters. This relates directly to our Welsh Language Scheme Action Plan.</p> <p>Agreed - depending on circumstances / topic of consultation, e.g. previous WLS focus groups have been held in Welsh only.</p> <p>Agreed - for relevance.</p>	<p>PPMU to action as new consultation guidance is developed and published. This relates directly to our Welsh Language Scheme Action Plan.</p>
<p>WLB recommendation</p>	<p>BCBC response</p>	<p>Action</p>
<p>Participants would benefit from being informed how the Council has considered their views in terms of short and mid terms action plans. This feedback element would assist in changing perceptions about the Council and possibly stimulate community champions on behalf of the Council.</p>	<p>Agreed - corporate guidance already emphasises the importance of feedback.</p>	
<p>The 'Corporate Complaint Policy' does not mention the bilingual context embodied in the Welsh Language Scheme and therefore should include the following:</p> <p>Insert 'We welcome contact in Welsh or English' as the last sentence under 'Informal Complaint Stage'.</p> <p>Insert 'the bilingual' after '...email, letter or using...' under 'Formal Complaint Stage'</p>	<p>At present, the Policy, Complaints Form, and web info/guidance are all available bilingually. We believe that this demonstrates to Welsh speakers that the process is a bilingual one.</p> <p>However, we will make the suggested changes on the next occasion that the Policy is reviewed.</p> <p>This will avoid pursuing a lengthy process of changing the policy, when proactive and practical measures are already being pursued.</p>	<p>Legal & Regulatory Services to make amendment next time the Complaints Policy is reviewed.</p>

<p>Insert 'in your preferred language' after '...your email' in the paragraph beginning 'We will send a letter.' under 'Formal Complaint Stage'.</p> <p>Insert 'in your preferred language' after '...respond to you' in the paragraph beginning 'We will usually investigate' under 'Formal Complaint Stage'.</p> <p>Insert 'in your preferred language' at the end of the first paragraph under 'Review Stage'.</p> <p>Insert 'in your preferred language' after '...written' under 'Informal Complaint Stage'.</p>		
<p>Suggestions from national summary</p>		
<p>Compile data on the language preference of the complainant, i.e. number of complaints received in Welsh (and English).</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>	<p>Legal & Regulatory Services to ensure that these issues remain embedded in the monitoring and reporting process.</p>