

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT TO CABINET EQUALITIES COMMITTEE

23 NOVEMBER 2017

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR – OPERATIONAL AND PARTNERSHIP SERVICES

WELSH LANGUAGE STRATEGY: ANNUAL UPDATE REPORT

1. Purpose of report

To update Cabinet Equalities Committee on the work undertaken to meet the objectives within the Welsh Language Five Year Strategy (2016 to 2021), during year one of its introduction.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan / Other Corporate Priority

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 introduced Welsh Language Standards which impact upon the work of the whole council. The standards link to the equalities agenda, form a key component of the council's Transformation Programme and Customer Charter, and link to the following corporate priorities:

- Priority 2: Helping people to be more self-reliant;
- Priority 3: Smarter use of resources.

3. Background

The council's final compliance notice from the Welsh Language Commissioner includes two standards (145 and 146) that require the council to have produced and published a Five Year Strategy by 30 September 2016. The strategy, which is attached as appendix 1, sets out how the council will promote the Welsh language and facilitate its use in Bridgend county borough for the period covered by the strategy. The strategy includes:

- a target (in terms of the percentage of Welsh speakers in Bridgend county borough) for maintaining the number of Welsh speakers by the end of the 5 year period;
- a statement setting out how the council intends to maintain that target. The council is also required to review the strategy and publish a revised version on its website within 5 years of publishing the initial strategy.

Five years after publishing the strategy the council must:

- assess to what extent it has followed the strategy and reached the target;
- publish an assessment on its website, containing:
 - the number of Welsh speakers in the Bridgend area and the ages of those speakers;
 - a list of activities that have been arranged or funded during the five years to promote use of the Welsh language.

4. Current situation / proposal

Section 1 of the council's Five Year Strategy (2016 – 2021) focuses **internally** on maintaining the number of Welsh speaking employees in the council. The section outlines:

- a linguistic profile of the council's workforce;
- how the council can support its employees to improve their Welsh language skills and raise awareness of Welsh language in the workplace;
- recruitment and selection.

Within this section there are three key objectives.

Objective 1: Identify the capacity in service areas to deliver services in Welsh.

- Actions have been taken to increase the level of employee data held in the Human Resources integrated system.
- A Welsh Language Assessment Tool has been built within the council's Learning & Development website to enable managers to assess language skill requirements for posts within service areas. This tool will allow managers to audit existing skills and conduct a skills analysis to identify training needs. This is currently being piloted in Customer Services.

Objective 2: Provide appropriate learning and development solutions at various levels to meet identified needs within budget allocation.

- Awareness of Welsh language in the workplace has been raised by promoting two new e-learning modules: Welsh Language Standards and Welsh Language Awareness.
- Welsh language 'Meet and Greet' workshops are run for staff to ensure they can meet and greet customers. During this period, 32 employees have completed this training.
- A Welsh language training programme is offered to employees at various levels:
 - Cwrs Mynediad Year 1 (Sept 2016 to June 2017) - 27 employees completed this;
 - Cwrs Mynediad Year 1 (Sept 2017) - 26 employees have signed up;
 - Cwrs Mynediad Year 2 (Sept 2017) - 19 employees have signed up;
 - Business Welsh for existing Welsh speakers (Sept 2017) - 11 employees have signed up.
- All community-based learning and other learning opportunities are promoted via the council's Learning & Development website.

Objective 3: Establish arrangements in recruiting to positions where Welsh language skills are essential.

- Assessing and recording Welsh language skills requirements for all vacancies have been undertaken for this period, taking into account service and skills assessments.
- A range of recruitment advertising methods, which target Welsh speakers has been identified and adopted eg via Menter Bro Ogwr.

- A range of assessment tools in the selection process relating to Welsh language skills is available.

Section 2 of the strategy focusses **externally** on maintaining the number of Welsh speakers in the wider county borough. In addition to outlining the current situation, this section describes the following key objectives:

Objective 1: Raise the profile of the Welsh language, culture and local activities and events organised by the council and our partners in a structured way.

A rolling calendar of Welsh language activities and events is in place and details are shared across internal and external communications channels, such as press, social media and Bridgenders, depending on the target audience and nature of the event. These include:

- Eisteddfod yr Urdd: 14 tweets resulting in a reach of over 160k; 9 Facebook posts resulting in a reach of over 213k
- Urdd 7's: 20 tweets resulting in a reach of over 18k; 2 Facebook posts resulting in a reach of over 15k
- Accessing Welsh medium education: 1 Facebook post resulting in a reach of over 8.5k
- Dydd Miwsig Cymru / Welsh Language Music Day: 4 tweets resulting in a reach of over 9.5k
- Shwmae Sumae Day: 3 tweets resulting in a reach of over 1k
- St David's Day: 9 tweets resulting in a reach of just under 8k
- St Dwynwen's Day: 2 tweets resulting in a reach of over 2.5k

We also created a separate communications plan for the Urdd Eisteddfod, which resulted in:

- Internal communications to all staff
- Social media content (as above) and launch of BCBC Instagram account
- Media coverage: print, online and broadcast
- Ticket competitions

Objective 2: Increase promotion and awareness of the council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP).

- **WESP objective 1:** increase the number of seven year old children being taught through the medium of Welsh;
- **WESP objective 2:** increase the number of learners improving their language skills when transferring from primary to secondary school;
- **WESP objective 4:** increase the number of learners aged 16 – 19 studying Welsh in school, college and work;
- **School modernisation programme:**
 - to review and consider our options to deliver Welsh medium education and increase numbers;
 - to review and consider Welsh medium schools' future provision covering ages 3-16 or 3-19 years;

- to map the provision of Welsh medium additional learning needs support;
- **Flying Start programme:**
 - extend provision within identified communities across Bridgend County Borough, targeting children 0-4 and their families;

The schemes included in Bridgend's 21st Century Schools and Education Strategic Outline Programme submitted to Welsh Government make a commitment to increasing existing provision:

- Bridgend West (Welsh-medium 2 form entry provision) in line with the Welsh education survey, indicating there is demand for additional primary provision in that area
- Bridgend North East (where there may be an opportunity to create additional Welsh-medium provision to meet the demand for housing developments potentially addressing the number of Welsh-medium education places serving the area) as priority band B schemes

Objective three: to explore (and implement where possible) any new activities which will support the use of the Welsh language more widely within the county borough, promoting these accordingly.

The council has worked with Menter Bro Ogwr (MBO) to explore opportunities for joint working and these have been identified as follows:

- BCBC to work with MBO to advertise Welsh-essential jobs on their website and Facebook page;
- MBO to continue working with Halo and Awen Trust to provide recreational courses through the medium of Welsh for adults in Bridgend;
- BCBC to promote public Siop Siarad sessions among staff via the intranet.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules

There are no proposed changes to the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

This is an information report. As such, no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

7. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

8. Recommendation

That the Cabinet Equalities Committee receives and considers this report.

Andrew Jolley

Corporate Director - Operational and Partnership Services

Date: 13 November 2017

9. Contact officer

Claire Saralis

Customer Services, Communications, Marketing and Engagement Manager
Level 1, Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB
Email: claire.saralis@bridgend.gov.uk
Telephone: 01656 642047

Background papers: none.