

**BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**REPORT TO CABINET EQUALITIES COMMITTEE**

**3 DECEMBER 2020**

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**ANNUAL UPDATE REPORT ON PROGRESS MADE WITH MEETING THE OBJECTIVES  
WITHIN THE WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS FIVE YEAR STRATEGY**

**1. Purpose of report**

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

**2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan / Other Corporate Priorities**

- 2.1 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 and form a key component of the council's Transformation Programme and Customer Charter.
- 2.2 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:

**Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient** – taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.

**Smarter use of resources** – ensuring that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

**3. Background**

- 3.1 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 one**, 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 five 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 five years of publishing the initial strategy.

3.2 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.

3.3 It was agreed that the strategy would be split into two sections, section one to address our employees and section two for our public. The following individual objectives were agreed:

#### **3.3.1 Section one: employees**

- Objective 1: Identify the capacity in service areas to deliver services in Welsh.
- Objective 2: Provide appropriate learning and development solutions at various levels to meet identified needs within budget allocation.
- Objective 3: Establish arrangements in recruiting to positions where Welsh language skills are essential.

#### **3.3.2 Section two: the public**

- 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.
- Objective 2: Increase promotion and awareness of the council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) particularly in relation to objectives one, two and four of the WESP plan.
- Objective 3: 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.

A series of actions sit underneath each objective.

3.4 Internally it was agreed to report on the strategy to Cabinet Committee Equalities on an annual basis rather than just report at the end of the five-year period. This would provide an opportunity to identify any gaps and keep developments and activities on track.

## **4. Current situation / proposal**

Since the last annual report the following developments in the period October 2019 and September 2020 can be noted:

### **4.1 General developments:**

- Officers attended the launch event for the ‘Closing the Gap’ Welsh Language Commissioner assurance report on 15 September 2020. This is the sixth assurance report published by the Commissioner. The report addresses the issues on which organisations need to take action over the coming months. It includes evidence on:
  - organisations’ performance in providing Welsh language services and encouraging people to use them
  - compliance arrangements – what organisations do to ensure their provision is compliant
  - workforce capacity – ensuring that there are enough Welsh speakers in the right roles
  - promoting the Welsh language – contributing to the future of the Welsh language by considering the impact of policy and grant decisions on the language
  - implementing Welsh language promotion strategies.

A copy of the concise version of the ‘Closing the Gap’ Welsh Language Commissioner assurance report can be seen in **Appendix two** (Welsh) and **Appendix three** (English).

- Following the Welsh Government consultation seeking views on the draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) Regulations 2019 and Guidance, new regulations came into force at the end of January 2020, with the guidance published in February 2020. The new regulations made provisions enabling the next cycle of WESPs to commence in September 2021 with current Plans remaining in place during the transition to the new WESP arrangements. These dates were subsequently pushed back by one year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, so now it is expected that a draft WESP will be submitted to Welsh Government for approval by 31 January 2022 to come into effect on 1 September 2022. To increase alignment with School Modernisation programmes, WESPs will become 10-year rather than 3-year plans and annual work plans and progress reports will be required.
- The Welsh in the Workplace policy is available to all staff via our staff intranet.
- Continue to work with Menter Bro Ogwr (MBO) on agreed actions. These can be summarised as:
  - 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
- We will be working on the new five year strategy over the next six to eight months, which is due for publication in September 2021.

## 4.2 Employee developments:

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

- A Welsh language assessment tool has been undertaken in key front line services i.e. Bridgend Resource Centre, Customer Services and Trem-y-Mor. These services now have detailed updated Welsh language training plans in place.
- Welsh language skills are assessed for each vacancy when advertised. This is being reviewed to assist managers and clarify requirements for applicants.
- Monitoring is still carried out monthly to identify the demand for Welsh services across all access channels within Customer Services including telephone, face-to-face, email and online, albeit the face-to-face channel is currently suspended due to Covid-19. With there being more English speaking customers over the phone (99.97 % of contact in this period), an option has been introduced to arrange a call back with a Welsh speaker if none are available at the time of calling.

#### 4.2.2 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 (37 completions) and Welsh language awareness (209 completions).
- A Welsh language training programme is offered to employees at various levels:
  - Cwrs Mynediad/Mynediad blwyddyn – Entry Level Year 1 (October 2019 to September 2020) – **14** enrolled
  - Cwrs Mynediad/Mynediad blwyddyn – Entry Level Year 2 (October 2019 to September 2020) – **6** enrolled

Funding for community based learning is available to those employees who are unable to access the Welsh language training due to the nature of their role, working hours or the level of provision provided. A total of 6 employees were supported during October 2019 to September 2020 to access this training.

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

- New guidance is being developed to ensure that there is clarity about the Welsh language skills needed for vacancies. This includes updating the recruitment documentation so that managers are explicit about the skills needed and candidates can better determine their suitability for roles. Online recruitment is available in Welsh to enable the submission of Welsh applications.
- Vacancies have been advertised via Menter Bro Ogwr.
- Four Welsh speaking Apprentices have been appointed to permanent roles across the council
- Attendance at the Careers Day at Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd

### 4.3 Public developments:

#### 4.3.1 **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

The rolling calendar of Welsh language activities and events is still in place and details are shared across internal and external communications channels, such as press, social media and Bridgend, depending on the target audience and nature of the event. During the period the following activities and events have been promoted:

- Benefits of choosing Welsh-Medium Education
- Bridgend Business Forum St David's Day event
- Welsh Language Rights Day
- Family lives Welsh language helpline
- Exploring options for increasing the provision of Welsh medium education
- How can I support my children to use the Welsh language at home if I don't speak Welsh?
- Supporting children to speak Welsh In the home
- Welsh for adults 20 minute Welsh lessons
- A new Welsh-medium childcare facility for more than 30 children is to be built in the Ogmere Valley.
- Shwmae Sumae day
- Check out this summer programme of activities to give your kids a summer full of Welsh
- Come and celebrate #StDavidsDay with @menterbroogwr and @ysgolyfos
- Saint Dwynwen's Day
- Celebrate 70 years of #Welsh medium education in the Llynfi Valley

4.3.2 **Objective 2:** Increase promotion and awareness of the council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) particularly in relation to objectives one, two and four of the WESP plan.

- The £2.6m Capital Grant plans are well underway for the provision of four early years' settings to feed current Welsh-medium primary schools in Bridgend and any future provision (including nursery provision in Bridgend town). The four early years' setting are planned for Bettws, Ogmere Valley, Porthcawl and Bridgend Town. Planning approval has been granted for the provision at Bettws and Ogmere Valley due to open in Autumn 2021; an options appraisal is currently being conducted for Porthcawl to open in 2022; the options appraisal for Bridgend provision was completed in July and reported in August. It is proposed that this development will be aligned with plans for the future YGG Bro Ogwr. The stakeholder group continues to support the planned developments, meetings are being held with colleagues within the procurement team to identify how the local authority is able to secure providers who will deliver all the above services through the medium of Welsh.

Progress on **Outcome 1: More seven-year-old children being taught through the medium of Welsh** include:

- The council monitors the transition from nursery to primary provision with the aim to increase numbers entering Welsh-medium provision in early years by **5%** over the next three years
- The council monitors the number of seven-year-old children being taught through the medium of Welsh by referring to the year 3 population (7-8 year olds) in the

Pupil level annual school census (PLASC) data (as outlined in the table below). The PLASC data provides a more meaningful and consistent measure than previously used date of birth data.

### Welsh-medium proportion of the whole cohort for year 3

YEAR 3 PUPILS (age 7-8) *excluding special schools and excluding dual registrations							
PLASC Year (January)	YBO	YCG/CYC (**CyC opened in Jan 2019)	YCS	YFOS	TOTAL Welsh-medium year 3 cohort	Year 3 cohort for all schools*	% Year 3 pupils in Welsh-medium education
2016	65	20	37	27	149	1631	9.14%
2017	41	21	37	25	124	1593	7.78%
2018	55	13	41	29	138	1694	8.15%
2019**	64	28 **	41	29	162	1780	9.10%
2020	53	21	38	24	136	1713	7.94%

- Given the small numbers involved, any difference year on year needs to be interpreted cautiously because a small change can impact on the proportions e.g. one family move in/out of the area or a new school opens. The figures above show a similar pattern over the years with little variation. As part of our aspiration to meet ambitious targets set by Welsh Government, there has been a significant amount of promotional work designed to encourage more families to consider Welsh-medium education for their child/ren. Given that these are pitched at mothers from the birth of their child/ren, we anticipate that the increase in numbers should begin to feed through to year 3 in approximately five years' time.
- While the actual number has decreased from 2019-2020, this is reflective of the smaller cohort. The proportion of the cohort learning through the medium of Welsh has remained similar to previous years, although 2019 showed a slightly higher figure – potentially related to the opening of Ysgol Calon y Cymoedd in January 2019.

Progress on **Outcome 2: More learners continuing to improve their language skills on transfer from primary to secondary school** include:

- The Council monitors the transition from primary provision to secondary provision with the aim to improve transition rates **by 10%** between each phase of education and increase retention of children in Welsh-medium education in FP and KS2
- Summer 2016 - there were 122 children in year 6 in the Welsh primaries in 15/16. The number in year 7 in YGG Llangynwyd in 16/17 was 110
- Summer 17 - there were 119 children in year 6 in the Welsh primaries in 16/17. The number in year 7 in YGG Llangynwyd in 17/18 was 114
- Summer 18 - there were 110 children in year 6 in the Welsh primaries in 17/18. The number in year 7 in Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd in 18/19 was 106.
- Summer 19 - there were 131 children in year 6 in the Welsh primaries in 18/19. The number in year 7 in Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd in 19/20 was 125.

- There is a known issue where parents make choices about sending their child to a Welsh-medium primary school and then an English-medium secondary school. Parents are encouraged to commit to continuity of Welsh-medium education for their child/ren.
- Since September 2017, full course GCSE Welsh second language became compulsory and there is encouragement for young people to continue learning through Welsh and maintain their language skills.
- A multi-agency task and finish group was established during the Covid-19 lockdown period to support pupils' language retention and development where they are from non-Welsh speaking families. A vast array of resources were shared with schools for online learning and many have been added to BCBC's website.

June 2016 Pupils entered into Welsh language GCSE (short course and full)  
**Welsh 1<sup>st</sup> Language 98**  
**Welsh 2<sup>nd</sup> Language (Full) 585**  
**Welsh 2<sup>nd</sup> Language (Short) 784**

June 2017 Pupils entered into Welsh language GCSE (short course and full)  
**Welsh 1<sup>st</sup> Language 99**  
**Welsh 2<sup>nd</sup> Language (Full) 877**  
**Welsh 2<sup>nd</sup> Language (Short) 769**

June 2018 Pupils entered into Welsh language GCSE (full course)  
**Welsh 1<sup>st</sup> Language 77**  
**Welsh 2<sup>nd</sup> Language (Full) 1185**

June 2019 Pupils entered into Welsh language GCSE (full course)  
**Welsh 1<sup>st</sup> Language 99**  
**Welsh 2<sup>nd</sup> Language (Full) 1094**

June 2020 Pupils entered into Welsh language GCSE (full course)  
**Welsh 1<sup>st</sup> Language 100**  
**Welsh 2<sup>nd</sup> Language (Full) 1122**

The numbers engaged in the Welsh Second Language Full course have continued to increase since the removal of the short course from the curriculum.

Progress on **Outcome 4: More learners' aged 16-19 studying subjects through the medium of Welsh** include:

- An extensive collaboration between YGG Llangynwyd in Bridgend and YGG Llanhari in Rhondda Cynon Taff continues to ensure that the school is able to meet the requirements of the Learning & Skills Measure
- School's results data is used to improve the provision of Welsh medium education, BCBC undertakes an annual review of Post 16 provision with each sixth form including YGG Llangynwyd

June 2016 Pupils entered into Welsh language A level

**Welsh 1<sup>st</sup> Language 9. Welsh 2<sup>nd</sup> Language 22**

June 2017 Pupils entered into Welsh language A level  
**Welsh 1<sup>st</sup> Language 10. Welsh 2<sup>nd</sup> Language 29**

June 2018 Pupils entered into Welsh language A level  
**Welsh 1<sup>st</sup> Language 10. Welsh 2<sup>nd</sup> Language 14**

June 2019 Pupils entered into Welsh language A level  
**Welsh 1<sup>st</sup> Language 9. Welsh 2<sup>nd</sup> Language 16**

June 2020 Pupils entered into Welsh language A level  
**Welsh 1<sup>st</sup> Language 2. Welsh 2<sup>nd</sup> Language 9**

The number of pupils completing A Level Welsh as a first language and as a second language has decreased.

- Central South Consortium continues to deliver training to upskill teachers in Welsh language skills to improve learning.
- There is a sabbatical scheme on offer which is funded by Welsh Government.

Progress on **increasing capacity within the Welsh medium sector implemented through school 21st Century Schools and Education programme** includes:

- In January 2020, Cabinet approval was received to progress the Band B feasibility studies for Bridgend North East (2.5-form entry (FE) replacement Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr) Bridgend West (2FE replacement for Ysgol y Ferch O'r Sgêr) and Bridgend South East (2FE entry dual-stream school located at the proposed Parc Afon Ewenni residential development).
- The feasibility studies for the schools in Bridgend North East and Bridgend West are progressing well.
- In respect of the Bridgend South East scheme at Parc Afon Ewenni (a proposed English/Welsh-medium 2FE school), it was agreed that the scheme could not progress without the housing coming on-line and this scheme is some way off and outside of the Band B period.
- Options appraisal work is still being progressed for the delivery of a Welsh-medium starter class

Progress on **supporting Flying Start settings** include:

- Within Bridgend the number of Flying Start childcare providers has reduced from 13 to 10, three of which are Cylch Meithrin offering Welsh language provision.
- Mudiad Meithrin data related to the transition from these settings to Welsh-medium primary schools is analysed to ensure effective transition as a means of maintaining linguistic continuity. This work is ongoing and the data held



within BCBC is provided by colleagues at Mudiad Meithrin which forms part of this intelligence.

- The LA childcare team work to investigate the reasons for some parents not continuing with Welsh-medium education and to improve the transfer rates where they are not already 100%. This work has been supported by the booklet ‘Pam dewis addysg Gymraeg?’/ ‘Why choose Welsh medium education?’ This is given to parents at the birth of their child and at the 18-month home visit by the Flying Start Health Visitor and shared on the BCBC website.
- At the 18 month visit, all Flying Start children’s parents are given information regarding the opportunity to receive provision at two years via the medium of Welsh if they so wish.
- Within Flying Start areas, parents are regularly made aware from the earliest opportunity of the benefits that are available to them from the Flying Start programme, including the opportunity for their child to benefit from Welsh language childcare provision.
- All antenatal parents in the borough benefit from information regarding Welsh language benefits for their child with Cymraeg I blant sponsoring information at both the scan and the child health record books that all children receive.

4.3.3 **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.

During the period BCBC has worked in partnership and supported activities across the county borough including:

Work with Menter Bro Ogwr to deliver school half term activities:

Hwyl y Chwefror / February Fun	11 children
Hwyl yr Hydref / Autumn Fun	19 children

Bridgend County Borough Council and the Urdd Sports Department have worked in partnership to:

- Deliver high quality Welsh medium sports provision, with a focus on developing sustainable community based opportunities that support continuity from school engagement programmes.
- Continue the development of the School Sport and Wellbeing programmes at YGG Llangynwyd, providing opportunities for extra-curricular provision for Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils, as well as engaging with the Girls Network programme and MAT leaders
- Continue the successful development of our family ‘Chwaraeon Bach’ programmes which include rugby, netball and football, sustaining a successful netball pathway, as well as developing weekly Welsh medium learn to swim lessons at Litchard Primary school that engages with new swimmers at Splash and Wave 1.

- Introduce a structured programme of Welsh medium activities for second-language schools where positive experiences are provided through sport to promote the benefits of being bi-lingual
- Support in partnership over 2,700 children and young people accessing Welsh medium provision, with 57% of girls attending weekly provision, and 33 leaders and coaches receiving training.

## **5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules**

There is no effect upon the policy framework and procedure rules.

## **6. Equality Impact Assessment**

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

## **7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Assessment**

7.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

## **8. Financial Implications**

8.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

## **9. Recommendation**

That the Cabinet Committee Equalities receives and considers this report.

**Mark Shephard**

**Chief Executive – Chief Executive’s Directorate.**

**Date: 3 December 2020**

## **10. Contact officers:**

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**Background papers:**

None