

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET COMMITTEE EQUALITIES

27 JULY 2021

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL WELSH LANGUAGE PROMOTION STRATEGY 2021-2026

1. Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to update Cabinet Committee Equalities on the development of the Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) draft Five Year Welsh Language Promotion Strategy for 2021 to 2026.

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives/other corporate priorities

2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:

1. **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focused on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions of all people in the county borough.
2. **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.
3. **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 Welsh Language Standards places a requirement on the council to produce a Five year Welsh Language Promotion Strategy. This is a statutory requirement relating to the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure passed by the National Assembly for Wales in 2011. This is our second Welsh Language Promotion Strategy and aims to build on progress made over the last five years.

3.2 Welsh Language Standards

Welsh Language standard 145	You must produce, and publish on your website, a 5-year strategy that sets out how you propose to promote the Welsh language and to facilitate the use of the Welsh language more widely in your area; and the strategy must include (amongst other matters) - (a) a target (in terms of the percentage of speakers in your area) for increasing or maintaining the number of Welsh speakers in your area by the end of the 5 year period concerned, and (b) a statement setting out how you intend to reach that target; and you must review the strategy and publish a revised version on your website within 5 years of publishing a strategy (or of publishing a revised strategy).
Welsh Language standard 146	Five years after publishing a strategy in accordance with standard 145 you must - (a) assess to what extent you have followed that strategy and have reached the target set by it, and (b) publish that assessment on your website, ensuring that it contains the following information - (i) the number of Welsh speakers in your area, and the age of those speakers; (ii) a list of the activities that you have arranged or funded during the previous 5 years in order to promote the use of the Welsh language.

3.3 The first Welsh language strategy devised six objectives, three that focussed on internal practices and three that focussed on our communities.

The three key objectives for internal practices were:

- Objective one: Identify the capacity in service areas to deliver services in Welsh.
- Objective two: To provide appropriate learning and development solutions at various levels to meet identified needs within budget allocation.
- Objective three: To establish arrangements in recruiting to positions where Welsh language skills are essential.

The three key objectives for our communities were:

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

3.4 Progress against the objectives for 2016-2021 has been reported annually to Cabinet Committee Equalities, and annual reports are published on the BCBC

website. This current strategy builds on the progress that has been made, meets the needs of the Welsh speakers and learners in the county borough, meets the legislative requirements and most importantly, is meaningful, appropriate and achievable for everyone involved.

4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 In devising this strategy, consideration has been given to the policy context and created a language profile of Bridgend County. Six overarching objectives have been developed and will use information gathered from the consultation to work with services across the council to develop an action plan to achieve these aims. The Draft five year Welsh Language Strategy can be seen in **Appendix one**.
- 4.2 In developing this strategy consultation has been undertaken with the public, key stakeholders, schools and members. The consultation took place between 10 May and 18 June 2021. The consultation received a total of 439 completions, and the responses will be used to develop the Five year Welsh Language Strategy 2020-2026 action plan. This means that our strategy uses established national criteria but localises the information and targets.
- 4.3 The objectives have been set to build on the progress made over the past five years and in line with the Welsh Language Commissioner's Commissioners strategic objectives which are:
- Influencing policy to develop the Welsh language
 - Expanding people's rights to use Welsh
 - Ensuring that public bodies comply with Welsh language standards
 - Facilitating wider use of Welsh with businesses and charities
- 4.4 A public consultation has been carried out, where key stakeholders including Welsh-medium schools in the county borough, and members of the WESP forum were engaged. Details of the consultation can be seen in **Appendix two**.
- 4.5 Based on the progress made with the objectives from the last five year Welsh Language Strategy, the feedback from the consultation, and local and national developments the following overarching objectives have been developed:
- **Promote the use of the Welsh Language within the workforce:**
Increase the opportunities for staff to access the Welsh language and increase the use of Welsh in the workplace.
 - **Increase awareness of the Welsh Language and opportunities to use Welsh within Bridgend County Borough Council:**

Raise the profile of the Welsh language, culture and local activities and events organised by the council and our partners in a structured way and improve access to services through the medium of Welsh.

- **Support and promote the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP):**

Continue to support the use of the Welsh language in early year's settings, expand Welsh-education within the County and provide Welsh language community learning opportunities for adults. Promote all objectives of the WESP but in particular promote and monitor outcomes one, two, three, four and five.

- **Promote the use of Welsh Language and culture in town centre businesses and charities:**

Promote the advantages of using the Welsh language within business, charities, tourism, care etc. and support promotion of the availability of Welsh products and services.

- **Participation and engagement:**

Ensure that all full public consultations ask residents to feedback on how the policy or proposals may affect the use of, or impact on the Welsh language and conduct an annual public consultation (for the lifetime of the strategy) to allow feedback on Welsh language services and performance.

- **Implement the new early years settings in Bridgend County Borough:**

Deliver early year's development plans within Bettws, Ogmere Valley, Porthcawl and Bridgend Town to support current Welsh-medium primary schools in Bridgend. Promote early years settings and develop, alongside the WESP, a career pathway which is promoted to learners within Bridgend College and YGG Llangynwyd.

4.6 In addition to these objectives a target has been set to increase the Welsh speaking population of Bridgend, in line with the Welsh Government 2050 target of one million Welsh speakers. The Welsh Government's strategy, *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers*, notes the Government's ambition of reaching a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

A projection for the number of Welsh speakers aged three and over up to 2050 has been produced as part of the strategy.

It is projected that there will be **666,000 people aged three and over able to speak Welsh by 2050, equivalent to around 21 per cent of the population**. This is just over 100,000 more Welsh speakers than there were in 2011 but around 334,000 short of the target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

BCBC's aim therefore is for 21% of residents aged 3 and over to be able to speak Welsh by 2050. According to the 2011 census 9.7% of the population of Bridgend

county borough aged 3 and over are already Welsh speakers meaning that we need to increase this by 11.3% to meet the Welsh Government target by 2050.

To reach this target, the aim is to increase Welsh speakers within the county borough by a minimum of 1.9% during the lifetime of the current strategy and each subsequent strategy period up until 2050.

Welsh Language strategy delivery periods (years)	Projected percentage of Welsh speakers
2011 (Census data)	9.7% (actual)
2021-2026	11.6%
2026-2031	13.5%
2031-2036	15.4%
2036-2041	17.3%
2041-2046	19.2%
2046-2051	21.1%

4.7 The above objectives formed the basis for the council's consultation exercise (**Appendix two**) which began on 10 May and ended on 18 June 2021. The consultation received a total of 439 survey responses.

Headline figures from the consultation show that:

- 70% of respondents either strongly agreed (49%) or agreed (21%) with Objective one: Promote the use of the Welsh Language within the workforce
- 73% of respondents strongly agreed (52%) or agreed (21%) with Objective two: Increase awareness of the Welsh Language Standards and opportunities to use Welsh within Bridgend County Borough Council
- 76% of respondents either strongly agreed (61%) or agreed (15%) with Objective three: Support and promote the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)
- 74% of respondents either strongly agreed (52%) or agreed (22%) with Objective four: Promote the use of Welsh Language and culture in town centre businesses and charities
- 69% of respondents either strongly agreed (49%) or agreed (20%) with Objective five: Encourage statutory participation and engagement through the Welsh Language
- 73% of respondents either strongly agreed (58%) or agreed (15%) with Objective six: Implement the new Welsh Language early years settings in Bridgend County Borough

4.8 Details of the consultation were shared on social media using the council's corporate Facebook and Twitter accounts.

4.9 The survey responses received and the feedback gained was used to support the final development of the Draft five year Welsh Language Strategy.

4.10 A detailed action plan will now be developed during July and August 2021. The action plan will outline the specific tasks and actions to be undertaken over the next five years and will be outcome focused.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

5.1 The report has no direct effect upon the policy framework or procedure rules but is required to effectively implement the council's statutory duties in relation to compliance with the The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and The Welsh Language Standards.

6. Equality Impact 2010 implications

6.1 The actions set out in the Draft five year Welsh Language Strategy will positively assist the council in delivering its equality objectives. A Full Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken during the development of the action plan in July and August 2021.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

7.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. The following is a summary to show how the five ways of working to achieve the well-being goals have been used to formulate the recommendations within this report:

Long-term -The consideration and approval of this report will assist in supporting Welsh Language objectives the short-term and in the long term.

Prevention – Compliance with the Welsh Language Standards ensures that there the Welsh Language is treated no less favourably than the English Language.

Integration – Compliance with the Welsh Language Standards support all the wellbeing objectives and ensures integration for all people within our communities.

Collaboration - Monitoring compliance of the Welsh Language Standards is done in collaboration with all council services.

Involvement - Publication of the report ensures that the public and stakeholders can review the work that has been undertaken.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 The implementation of the plan will be managed within existing resources.

9. Recommendation

9.1 That Cabinet Committee Equalities approve the draft Five year Welsh Language

Promotion Strategy and endorse the development of the action plan.

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Background papers:

None