

**BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**REPORT TO CABINET COMMITTEE EQUALITIES**  
**8 NOVEMBER 2021**

**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 fifth year since its introduction.

**2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives/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 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 2020 and September 2021 can be noted:

### **4.1 General developments:**

- The 'Stepping Forward' - The Welsh Language Commissioner's assurance report for 2020-21 was issued in September 2021, focusing on:

- Regulation during the pandemic
- The effect of COVID-19 on the provision of Welsh language services
- The effect of COVID-19 on organisations' internal arrangements

A copy of the 'Stepping Forward' Welsh Language Commissioner assurance report can be seen in **Appendix one** (Welsh) and **Appendix two** (English).

- The Welsh in the Workplace policy has been promoted and is available to all staff via our staff intranet.
- Work has continued with Menter Bro Ogwr (MBO) on agreed actions. These can be summarised as:
  - Bridgend County Borough Council (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
- The 2021 to 2026 Welsh Language Promotion Strategy and action plan, building on progress made over the last five years, has been developed and was published on 1 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. Customer Services, Bridgend Resource Centre and Trem-y-Mor. These services now have detailed updated Welsh language training plans in place which will be updated yearly.
- Welsh language skills are assessed for each vacancy when advertised. The assessment has been reviewed and guidance been completed to assist managers and clarify requirements for applicants.
- Monitoring continues to be 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. Between October 2020 and September 2021 the demand for the Welsh language telephone line has increased from 0.03% of all calls, to 0.08% of all calls (an increase of 0.05% on the previous reporting period).

### **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 (13 completions) and Welsh language awareness (17 completions).

- A Welsh language training programme is offered to employees at various levels:
  - Cwrs Mynediad/Mynediad blwyddyn – Entry Level Year 1 (October 2020 to September 2021) – **11** enrolled
  - Work Welsh – Entry Level 1 (October 2020 to September 2021 – **4** 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 7 employees were supported during October 2020 to September 2021 to access this training.

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

- New guidance has been 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

### 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:

- Two Welsh-medium childcare facilities for more than 30 children are to be built in the Ogmore Valley and Bettws areas.
- Access simple steps on how to support your children to use the Welsh language at home #StaySafe #StayLearning
- Welsh lessons on Facebook live
- Exploring options for increasing the provision of Welsh medium education
- ClwbCylch online sessions
- Welsh summer activities
- Welsh Me and my baby programme
- #Brackla relocation and extension of Welsh medium primary
- Shwmae sumae
- Welsh medium booklet
- Welsh language and adopting in Wales

- #IaithGwaith
- Saint Dwynwens day
- Welsh Language rights day
- St David's Day
- Welsh in the workplace

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 draft WESP 2022-2032 was written with the members from the WESP Forum in summer term 2021. Cabinet gave approval to consult on the draft WESP on 14 September 2021. The consultation runs from the 27 September 2021 to 19 December 2021.

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

It is pleasing to note the growth observed in numbers after the opening of the new school YGG Calon y Cymoedd (CYC) (opened January 2019) (formerly YGG Cwm Garw). Please see table below.

PLASC Data All Pupils YGG Cwm Garw/YGG Calon y Cymoedd (opened January 2019\*)

	Nursery	Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total	
2015	31	13	23	21	17	18	18	13	154	
2016	23	31	15	21	20	17	17	18	162	5%
2017	20	21	29	14	21	17	15	17	154	-5%
2018	31	20	18	26	13	20	16	12	156	1%
2019*	27	28	21	20	28	14	20	15	173	11%
2020	35	23	29	23	21	30	13	20	194	12%
2021	35	30	25	30	28	22	29	14	213	9.7%

**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)	Ysgol Bro Ogwr	YCG/CYC (**CyC opened in Jan 2019)	Ysgol Cynwyd Sant	Ysgol Y Ferch O'r Sger	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 (eg 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 Gynradd Gymraeg 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 data table below tracks the numbers of pupils transferring from one year in Year 6 into Year 7 the following year. Although it shows a decrease in numbers from Year 6 to Year 7 each year it is encouraging that the 'leakage' has reduced since 2017.

	Welsh Primary Schools Year 6 Pupils	Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg (YGG) Llangynwyd Year 7 Pupils	Percentage increase/decrease
2016	122		
2017	119	110	-9.84
2018	110	114	-4.2
2019	131	106	-3.64
2020	113	125	-4.58
2021		112	-0.88

- The Council is committed to inspiring children and young people to use Welsh in all aspects of their lives. There is strong collaboration with Central South Consortium and the school to share good practice. Since launching the Siarter Iaith in our Welsh-medium schools and the Siarter Iaith Cymraeg Campus in our English-medium schools, innovative work has been undertaken by the schools to increase the social use of Welsh within the whole school community.

**Siarter Iaith Cymraeg Campus (English-medium)**

	Bronze	Silver	Gold
Number of schools	10	3	1

## Siarter Iaith (Welsh-medium)

	Bronze	Silver	Gold
Number of schools	4	4	

Ysgol Bryn Castell and Maesteg School are currently involved in the Cymraeg Campus pilot for secondary schools.

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

The table below shows that the number of 14 to 16 year-old students studying Welsh as a first language (through the medium of Welsh) has remained stable at around 100 pupils per year apart from the dip in 2018. These numbers match the cohort size of the only Welsh-medium secondary school in the borough.

We have also included the numbers of students who have been entered for examinations in Welsh as a second language and the impact of the Welsh second language full course becoming compulsory in 2017.

	Welsh 1st Language	Welsh 2nd Language (Full)	Welsh 2nd Language (Short)
2016	98	585	784
2017	99	877	769
2018	77	1185	*
2019	99	1094	*
2020	100	1122	*
2021	99	1189	*

The table below shows that the number of 16 to 19 year-old students studying Welsh as a first and second language declined in the year 2020. However, numbers increased again in 2021. Data is from WJEC USA files.

	Welsh 1st Language	Welsh 2nd Language
2016	9	22
2017	10	29
2018	10	14
2019	9	16
2020	2	9
2021	9	19

YGG Llangynwyd Year 12/13 population figures from PLASC 2016-2021 show there was a decrease in the numbers continuing to study through the medium of Welsh, although this may be attributed in part to the smaller cohort size. The numbers have increased in 2021. We do not have data on numbers studying in college or work-based learning settings.

PLASC figures for YGG Llangynwyd

January	Year 12	Year 13
2016	55	55
2017	69	42
2018	65	53
2019	45	49
2020	53	32
2021	66	48

- There are strong collaboration arrangements already in place between Bridgend and Rhondda Cynon Taf. There is also some collaboration with Bridgend College at post-16. Further education institutes (FEIs) are working to investigate demand for Welsh-medium provision for younger pupils (Year 10 and up) and to look at their capacity to deliver courses through the medium of Welsh.
- Secondary schools are supported to take steps to increase the number of qualifications that learners can study through the medium of Welsh through collaboration. The local authority funds transport costs for collaborative courses offered.
- Welsh language is offered as A-level subject in schools, and schools are supported to maintain smaller class sizes through collaboration between schools to create a viable class size. Transport costs are provided by the local authority.

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

Additional provision for three-year-olds will be available at the following schools:

**Ysgol Gymraeg (YG) Bro Ogwr**

- The local authority is proposing to increase Welsh-medium primary school places to serve the Valleys Gateway, Bridgend and Pen-coed areas of the county borough by enlarging and relocating YG Bro Ogwr to an alternative nearby site.
- 90 places will be available for three year-olds.
- The proposal will be subject to a consultation process under the School Organisation Code during the school year 2021-2022 and subject to Cabinet approval.
- The school will be funded by Welsh Government's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Colleges Programme plus BCBC capital funding if the matter proceeds.
- The new school, if approved, is currently scheduled to open in September 2025.

**Ysgol Y Ferch O'r Sgêr**

- Ysgol y Ferch O'r Sgêr will be enlarged to a two-form-entry school.
- 60 places will be available for three year-olds.
- The proposal has already been subject to a consultation process under the School Organisation Code and Cabinet approval has been received to proceed.
- Part funded by Welsh Government's revenue Mutual Investment Model funding and BCBC, the enlarged school will serve the west of the county borough.
- The new school is currently programmed to open in September 2024.



## **Porthcawl**

- In addition, there is an aspiration to create a Welsh-medium seedling school to serve the Porthcawl area. Currently, no funding has been allocated for the scheme. Cabinet have approved the submission of an expression of interest to Welsh Government in respect of the Welsh-medium capital grant funding. If successful, there would be an additional 30 places for three year-olds.
- The Welsh-medium childcare hubs, which we call Cymraeg 2050 hubs, are progressing. The projects at Bettws and Ogmere Valley are scheduled for completion by September 2022. There are a further two Welsh-medium childcare projects planned for the County Borough. The Bridgend Town provision has been aligned with the Bridgend North East project, as part of Band B of the School Modernisation Programme. This Welsh-medium childcare provision will form an integral part of the replacement school for YG Bro Ogwr, subject to Cabinet approval. The Bridgend North East project is scheduled for completion by September 2025. In the interim period, there are plans to offer additional Welsh-medium childcare places at the Flying Start Brackla setting. The timeline for the remaining Welsh-medium childcare project planned for Porthcawl will be determined following the feasibility stage of the project.
- The aim of the project is to provide 16 sessional Welsh-medium childcare places, together with 6 places for 0 to 2 provision and wrap-around/out-of-school provision, which would operate for 52 weeks of the year at each of the four settings. This will offer the local authority a potential for an additional 176 Welsh-medium sessional sessions available.

Further to the above the Bridgend Childcare Team continues to work with a number of settings regarding the development towards becoming a non-maintained nursery education provider. This will include the new Cymraeg 2050 provisions and those Cylch Meithrin who are not currently registered to this offer (three potential providers).

The following projects are planned for delivery by the end of 2032:

- A dual-stream, two-form-entry entry school at Parc Afon Ewenni (subject to that site being taken forward in the next Local Development Plan) (ie 30 Welsh-medium places for three year-olds)
- A one form entry school at Porthcawl (ie 30 places for three year-olds)

Also, the local authority is undertaking an options appraisal process to create an additional one form entry provision central to the Bridgend area (ie 30 places for three year-olds).

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

Flying Start provision within Bridgend works closely with existing Welsh-medium provision. This offers sustainability for the Cylch Meithrin settings. Flying Start places are provided in partnership with Cylch Meithrin at the following areas:

Afon y Felin provision in Welsh-medium is available at Cylch Meithrin Y Sger;

- Sarn provision in Welsh-medium is available at Cylch Meithrin Plant Bach Sarn;
- Plasnewydd provision in Welsh-medium is available at Cylch Meithrin Cynwyd Sant;
- Garth provision in Welsh-medium is available at Cylch Meithrin Cynwyd Sant.

Within Caerau, Flying Start has in place stand-alone provision at Dechrau'n Deg Blaenllynfi. Within Brackla, the Flying Start setting will be offering 50% (16 places) of the provision via the medium of Welsh from January 2022. The Cymraeg 2050 developments will also be able to offer Flying Start provision in Lewistown, Blackmill, Bettws and Brackla.

- There are 312 English-medium places available within the Flying Start programme;
- There are 77 Welsh-medium places available within the Flying Start programme;
- 19% of the Flying Start places are available via the medium of Welsh.

This number will increase in January 2022 with the decrease of 16 English-medium places at Flying Start Brackla which will be the increase of Welsh-medium places moving forward. This will bring the percentage of places available via the medium of Welsh to 24% which will support the use of the Welsh language more widely within the county borough, promoting these accordingly.

#### 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:

October Half Term	3 events	24 children
February Half Term	2 events	24 children
August Half Term/Summer Play Schemes	4 events	114 children
Summer of Fun programmes	17 events	124 children

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

- Ensure high quality Welsh medium sports provision, with a focus on developing sustainable community based opportunities that support continuity from school engagement programmes. This is in-line with Welsh Government, National Governing Body and Local Authority guidance for COVID-19.
- Continue the development of the School Sport and Wellbeing programmes at YGG Llangynwyd, providing opportunities in the following:
  - **Extra-Curricular:** Weekly sports provision for KS3 and 4 pupils across a variety of sporting opportunities including dodgeball, football, basketball and girls only provision

- **MAT Leaders:** recruitment of 10 new leaders, whilst adapting content to online and face-face provision to support the school and community programmes.
  - **Girls Network:** Created a link with the Urdd #FelMerch campaign to deliver weekly extra-curricular opportunity, as well as training opportunities, and summer programmes
- Continue to develop and grow community opportunities post COVID-19 with all clubs returned successfully, and a growth in new sessions and provision, including a new weekly Rygbi Bach club in Brackla. New developments are in place for a weekly Welsh medium Gymnastics club, as well as community based #FelMerch opportunities for girls 14+
  - Provide opportunities during school holidays for children and young people to continue the use of Welsh language outside of school hours. This included a successful programme of Summer of Fun opportunities across Bridgend, with 3-weeks of multi-sport provision at YGG Llangynwyd as well as a variety of opportunities in the parks for families, surfing for girls 14+, and tots provision for children aged 3 – 6 years.
  - Introduce Welsh medium opportunities within second-language schools. This includes the launch of the national Chwarae yn Gymraeg provision which aims to support and encourage the use of Welsh language throughout the school '*Lead by pupils and enjoyed by pupils*'. Developments are also in place to provide a new weekly Urdd Sports Club at Coety Primary School.
  - Support in partnership with over 2,850 children and young people accessing Welsh medium sports provision, 59% of girls attending weekly provision, over 950 attending holiday provision, and 27 leaders and coaches receiving training to support provision in the community.

## 5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

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

## 6. Equality Act 2010 implications

- 6.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales, the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. This is an information report, therefore it is not necessary to carry out an Equality Impact assessment in the production of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

## 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. 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 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

## **9. Recommendation**

That the Cabinet Committee Equalities receives and considers this report.

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**8 November 2021**

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**Background papers:**

None