

**BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**REPORT TO CABINET COMMITTEE EQUALITIES**  
**23 NOVEMBER 2022**

**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 The purpose of this report is to update Cabinet Committee Equalities on the work undertaken to meet the objectives within the Welsh Language Standards Five-Year Strategy (2021 to 2026), during the first year since its introduction.

**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**:

**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.

- 2.2 The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 introduced Welsh Language Standards which impact upon the work of the whole council.

**3. Background**

- 3.1 The council's final compliance notice from the Welsh Language Commissioner received in 2015, includes two standards (145 and 146) that require the council to have produced and published a Five-Year Strategy by 30 September 2016. Our second 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 five-year period; and

- 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; and
- publish an assessment on its website, containing:
  - the number of Welsh speakers in the Bridgend area and the ages of those speakers; and
  - 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:

#### **Section 1: 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.

#### **Section 2: 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 the promotion and awareness of the council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) particularly in relation to Objectives 1, 2 and 4 of the plan.
- Objective 3: 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 A series of actions sit underneath each objective.

3.5 It was agreed previously to report progress 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 2021 and September 2022 can be noted:

## **General developments**

- 4.1 The council has asked residents from across Bridgend County Borough, schools, elected members and other stakeholders to share their views by taking part in a public consultation on the draft Welsh Language objectives. The public consultation went live on 10 May 2021 and closed on 18 June 2021. The new Welsh Language Strategy and action plan for 2021 to 2026 was published on the Council's website on 1 September 2021.
- 4.2 The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) consultation was launched on 27 September 2021. This consultation invited views on Bridgend County Borough Council's (BCBC's) WESP 2022-2032. The consultation aimed to seek the views of residents, our workforce, elected members, and stakeholders on the proposed WESP for 2022-2032. The results from the consultation were used to inform the final WESP which has been in place since September 2022. The consultation closed on 19 December 2021, and results were presented to Cabinet Committee Equalities in January 2022. BCBC's WESP was approved by Welsh Government and implemented on 1 September 2022. The WESP 2022-2032 can be found on the council's website.
- 4.3 The Welsh in the Workplace policy is available to all staff via our staff intranet.
- 4.4 BCBC continues 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; and
  - MBO to continue working with Halo and Awen Trust to provide recreational courses through the medium of Welsh for adults in Bridgend

## **Employee developments**

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

- 4.5 Welsh language skills are assessed for each vacancy when advertised. A guidance document is available to the recruiting manager during the recruitment process. The guidance document encourages the recruiting manager to assess the Welsh Language needs of the team before completing and returning the Vacancy Management Form.
- 4.6 Monitoring is carried out monthly to identify the demand for Welsh services across all access channels within Customer Services including telephone, face-to-face, email, online and face-to-face. 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.

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

- 4.7 Awareness of Welsh language in the workplace has been raised by promoting two new e-learning modules: Welsh Language Standards (17 completions) and Welsh language awareness (30 completions).
- 4.8 A Welsh language training programme is offered to employees at various levels:
- Cwrs Mynediad – Entry Level Year 1 (October 2021 to September 2022) – 21 enrolled; and
  - Work Welsh – Entry Level 1 (October 2021 to September 2022 – 4 enrolled.
- 4.9 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 34 employees were supported during October 2021 to September 2022 to access this training.

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

- 4.10 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 so candidates can better determine their suitability for roles. The new guidance has been distributed to all staff. Online recruitment is available in Welsh to enable the submission of Welsh applications. Vacancies have been advertised via MBO.

**Public developments:**

**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**

- 4.11 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:
- Afon y Felin Primary School – Gold Award Cymraeg Campus
  - Litchard Primary School – Gold Award Cymraeg Campus
  - Urdd Gobaith Cymru - Summer of Fun
  - Commenced construction of a Welsh-medium childcare facility at Blackmill
  - Commenced construction of a Welsh-medium childcare facility at Bettws
  - Welsh Language Rights Day
  - Diwrnod Shwmae Shwmae
  - Mudiad Meithrin and Cymraeg i Blant
  - Welsh Language Standards Annual Report
  - Welsh Language Strategy/Consultation
  - St David's Day
  - St Dwynwen's Day
  - Clwb Coffi
  - Welsh-medium playgroup or school

- Childcare Offer Wales
- Dydd Miwsig Cymru
- Welsh Government funding approval to temporarily increase the capacity of Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr with the introduction of a two-classroom mobile unit, until the replacement school is ready for occupation and approval of an 'expression of interest' for funding to establish a new Welsh-medium seedling school in Porthcawl
- Recruitment of Welsh speaking childcare providers

**Objective 2: Increase promotion and awareness of the council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) particularly in relation to Objectives 1, 2 and 4 of the WESP.**

- 4.12 The Council has received £2.8m of capital grant funding from Welsh Government for the provision of four early years' settings to feed Welsh-medium primary schools in Bridgend, the plans for which are well underway. The four early years' settings were planned for Bettws, Ogmere Valley, Porthcawl and Bridgend Town. The Bettws building is complete and was handed over to the local authority on 7 November 2022. Open days are being held at the building over 22 and 23 November 2022 for potential providers. This opportunity is currently being advertised across Bridgend County Borough County social media platforms. The childcare facility in Blackmill is due for handover on 23 December 2022, with similar open days running in January 2023. The local authority continues to work with partners on identifying providers to develop high quality Welsh-medium childcare provision.
- 4.13 The Bridgend town provision will be aligned with plans for the future replacement of Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr (currently estimated to be open for the beginning of autumn term 2025). Similarly, the Porthcawl provision will align with proposed new Welsh-medium seedling provision in the locality.

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

- 4.14 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.
- 4.15 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 to 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)	Ysgol Bro Ogwr	Ysgol Calon y Cymoedd	Ysgol Cynwyd Sant	Ysgol Y Ferch o'r Sgêr	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%
2021	45	28	37	12	122	1668	7.31%

- 4.16 Given the small numbers involved, any difference year-on-year needs to be interpreted cautiously because a small change can impact on the proportions (for example, 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 four years' time.
- 4.17 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:**

- 4.18 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 Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2. Further information is provided below:
- Summer 2016 - there were 122 children in Year 6 in the Welsh primary schools in 2015/2016. The number in Year 7 in Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd in 2016/2017 was 110
  - Summer 2017 - there were 119 children in Year 6 in the Welsh primary schools in 2016/2017. The number in Year 7 in Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd in 2017/2018 was 114.
  - Summer 2018 - there were 110 children in Year 6 in the Welsh primary schools in 2017/2018. The number in Year 7 in Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd in 2018/2019 was 106.
  - Summer 2019 - there were 131 children in year 6 in the Welsh primary schools in 2018/2019. The number in Year 7 in Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd in 2019/2020 was 125.
  - Summer 2020 - there were 113 children in Year 6 in the Welsh primary schools in 2019/2020. The number in Year 7 in Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd in 2020/2021 was 112.

- Summer 2021 - there were 132 children in Year 6 in the Welsh primary schools in 2020/2021. The number in Year 7 in Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd in 2021/2022 (as at PLASC 2022 in February) is 130.

4.19 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.

4.20 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.

4.21 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 was 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

**June 2021 Pupils entered into Welsh language GCSE (full course):**

Welsh 1<sup>st</sup> Language 99  
 Welsh 2<sup>nd</sup> Language (Full) 1189

4.22 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:**

- 4.23 The collaboration between Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd and Llanhari is still going strong. They have formed links with E-ysgol to look at a more blended learning approach for both schools. This has also been piloted this academic year with Pencoed Comprehensive School and Maesteg School using blended learning to increase the number of learners accessing A level Welsh. There has also been the recent addition of a learner from Archbishop McGrath Catholic High School who attends the online lessons.
- 4.24 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 Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg 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

**June 2021 Pupils entered into Welsh language A level**

Welsh 1<sup>st</sup> Language 9. Welsh 2<sup>nd</sup> Language 19

- 4.25 The number of pupils completing A Level Welsh as a first language and as a second language has increased.
- 4.26 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 the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme includes:**

- 4.27 Following Cabinet's decision in April 2021 to implement the proposal in respect of on enlargement to Ysgol y Ferch o'r Sgêr, the Welsh Education Partnership Company progressed the design of the replacement school building with input from key stakeholders. This work has culminated in a Stage 1 report which has been submitted to Welsh Government for consideration. The local authority is currently awaiting approval of the Stage 1 report in order to progress the project through the



next phase of design development. The replacement school is programmed to open in September 2024.

- 4.28 In January 2022, Cabinet approval was received to commence a statutory process in respect of a proposed enlargement to Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr with effect from September 2025. The statutory process has now concluded, and the outcome was reported to Cabinet in October. Cabinet determined to proceed with the proposal and to co-locate the Bridgend Town Welsh-medium childcare facility on the same site as the replacement school.
- 4.29 Welsh Government approved the local authority's 'expression of interest' for Welsh-medium capital grant funding to deliver a Welsh-medium seedling school in Porthcawl.
- 4.30 Welsh Government also approved Welsh-medium capital grant funding for a double mobile classroom as Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr to assist with the provision of additional pupil places until the replacement school opens in September 2025.
- 4.31 Welsh-medium childcare schemes at Bettws and Ogmere Valley are currently under construction and due for completion in 2022.

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

- 4.32 Within Bridgend, there are ten Flying Start childcare settings operated by the local authority, with a further six settings where places are purchased for Flying Start children. Four of these settings are Welsh-medium providers.
- 4.33 In order to increase the number of Welsh-medium childcare places in the county, the Flying Start setting at Brackla will become a Cylch Meithrin in the afternoon session from January 2023. This is to support the Cymraeg 2050 strategy, prior to the Welsh-medium childcare provision being provided in the Bridgend Town area which is planned for 2025.
- 4.34 Mudiad Meithrin provide data regarding the number of children that transition from Welsh-medium childcare settings to Welsh-medium primary schools. This is analysed to ensure effective transition as a means of maintaining linguistic continuity.
- 4.35 The booklet 'Pam dewis addysg Gymraeg?'/ 'Why choose Welsh-medium education?' has been developed in conjunction with Welsh language partners. When this has been finalised, it will be provided to parents at the birth of their child, at the 18-month home visit by the Flying Start Health Visitor and shared on the BCBC website.
- 4.36 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.
- 4.37 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.

4.38 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

**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.**

4.39 During the period BCBC has worked in partnership and supported activities across the county borough including work with Urdd Gobaith Cymru to deliver school half-term activities:

Summer 2021	737 children
October 2021	150 children
December 2021	30 children
February 2022	138 children

4.40 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 programs, which includes the family tots provisions, gymnastics and netball clubs.
- Continue the development of the School Sport and Wellbeing programmes at Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd, providing opportunities for extra-curricular provision for Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils, as well as engaging with the Girls Network programme, #FelMerch and MAT leaders.
- Introduce Welsh medium opportunities within second-language schools. This includes a national [Chwarae yn Gymraeg](#) provision which aims to support and encourage the use of Welsh language throughout the school as well as delivering after school provision within targeted areas of need.
- Continue to develop sustainable partnerships with local facilities and organisations as well as National Governing Body organisations to support the growth and development of Welsh language sporting provision across the county borough.
- Support in partnership and through the use of Welsh Government grant funding (Winter of Wellbeing and Summer of Fun) over 2,920 children and young people accessing Welsh medium provision, with 58% of girls attending weekly provision, and 22 leaders and coaches receiving training to support provision in the community.

## 5. Effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules

5.1 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 implications**

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**

9.1 Cabinet Committee Equalities is recommended to receive and consider this report.

**Mark Shephard**  
**Chief Executive**  
**23 November 2022**

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## **Background papers:**

None