

## **WELSH LANGUAGE STEERING COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Welsh Language Steering Committee held in Conference Room 1a, County Hall, Ruthin on Tuesday, 9 July 2019 at 10.00 am.

### **PRESENT**

Councillors Ann Davies, Huw Hilditch-Roberts, Arwel Roberts, Tony Thomas, Graham Timms (Chair) and Emrys Wynne (Vice-Chair)

### **ALSO PRESENT**

The Team Leader – Communications and Campaign Management (GW), Welsh Language Officer (MC), The Performance and Programme Systems Administrator (EJ), Corporate Director: Communities (NS), Democratic Services Manager (SP) and Committee Administrator (HB)

#### **1 APOLOGIES**

Councillors Ellie Chard, Tony Flynn and Joe Welch.

#### **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

#### **3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR**

The Democratic Services Manager (DSM) raised an item of appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair.

**RESOLVED:** that Councillor Graham Timms be appointed Chair and Councillor Emrys Wynne be appointed Vice-Chair.

#### **4 MINUTES**

The minutes of the Welsh Language Steering Group meeting held 19 March 2019 were submitted.

**RESOLVED:** - the minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 March 2019 be received and approved as a correct record.

#### **5 EISTEDDFOD YR URDD UPDATE**

The Team Leader – Communications and Campaign Management (TLCCM) presented the report which gave an update on the progress made so far for the Eisteddfod yr Urdd Denbighshire 2020.

The TLCCM advised members that the Eisteddfod yr Urdd would be on every Agenda from today, to ensure members are updated at all times.

There would be a proclamation to promote the Eisteddfod in October. The event would start in Prestatyn High School, parade through the high street and continue at the Bastion Fields, Prestatyn. Members were made aware that there would not be a Plan B, therefore the event would be reliant on the weather being appropriate.

It was expected that approximately 2,000 people would attend the event in October. Schools had already started preparing posters and banners for the event. There would also be Urdd Officers along the street and at the event promoting and providing information to the public.

Safety – a Risk Assessment had been completed in terms of road safety, for both pedestrians and vehicles; including road closures.

The TLCCM informed members that the Urdd had made an appeal for stewards to assist with the event, mainly for safety purposes.

He advised members that the PR team were working closely with the Urdd to ensure the event was successful, there would be stands on the field during the afternoon for children and young people.

Once the event in October has passed the team would turn their focus towards the Eisteddfod 2020.

A sub-committee should be set up in September to begin planning for the Eisteddfod Maes. Priority being a tent or building for the main stage.

The TLCCM confirmed that there was a communications plan in place already, a website and social media accounts would be set up also to ensure there would always be a constants feed of information being fed to the public.

### **Licensing**

Members were advised that Denbighshire had agreed with the Urdd to have one license covering all performances etc.

The Eisteddfod FWP would primarily be the promotion of the event, promotion of Denbighshire itself; things to do, places to stay, transport plans etc. Another area that would be focused on would be Denbighshire's image, this would include planting flowers on roundabouts, decorating the streets and ensuring that Denbighshire had a good presentation.

The TLCCM advised that as of September a monthly update could be provided to members to ensure they were updated and in case they would like to be involved. Denbighshire would also be present at the International Eisteddfod in Llanrwst.

In response to a query regarding appeals for volunteers, the TLCCM advised that they had approached rugby clubs, football clubs, the press, communities etc. and the response had been positive.

In terms of decoration, he explained that they would work closely with the highways and environment services to ensure the whole of Denbighshire would be decorated for the event.

Members were reminded that the event was organised and ran by the Urdd. The role of the local authority was to promote and market the event, the LA were also responsible for licenses, regulations, safety standards of stalls, safety in terms of entering and exiting the Maes etc.

**RESOLVED:** that the presentation on the Eisteddfod yr Urdd be received and note.

## **6 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE WELSH LANGUAGE COMMISSIONER**

The Team Leader – Communications and Campaign Management (TLCCM) gave a presentation on the Annual Report to the Welsh Language Commissioner.

The reports were published on the Denbighshire website every year so that the Welsh language Commissioner could access it and if any concerns were raised they would arrange a meeting.

The report reviewed processes and developments within the council.

One of the team's successful events was the Eisteddfod y Cyngor, staff from various departments made the event a success. The original plan was to host the Eisteddfod y Cyngor every two years, however due to its success and demand it will be held annually.

The TLCCM explained some of the ongoing projects they had. They had recently provided training for members of staff that could speak Welsh but did not feel comfortable writing, the course gave confidence to staff and proved a success.

The Welsh Language Officer (WLO) stated that 22 staff members had signed up to begin Welsh Lessons in September. Activities such as Walking clubs and the Tea and Talk sessions were supported by staff. She did however disclose that she was having problems organising activities for all levels, but current activities were suited to the members of staff.

The TLCCM advised members of one particular thing that the Welsh Language Champions had raised was something that Conwy had already introduced. A setting on emails could be activated to allow users to choose options such as, Welsh Speaker, Learner etc. on their email. He explained that there were many simple technological changes that could be made to promote the use of Welsh language.

Members were advised that within the Welsh Language Commissioner report any Welsh language complaints should be reported. The previous report had only 2 official complaints, one being the naming of SC2 and the second was a temporary out of order poster on a parking machine.

He advised members that when complaints were received the team would resolve them and plan to ensure further complaints would not be received.

Other areas that were reported on were;

- Number of Welsh speakers in the Contact Centre
- Number of staff members receiving Welsh lessons
- Welsh education strategic plan

The TLCCM advised that they receive an annual report on the progress of staff attending the Welsh lessons. With the report they would review whether the course was appropriate for the member of staff or if another course would benefit them more.

To conclude his presentation before members had the opportunity to comment he said that if members were happy then the report would be published on the website.

Councillor Emrys Wynne raised a concern regarding road signs. He explained that there was a problem with external companies using bi-lingual road signs. He acknowledged that it wasn't a massive problem however complaints did arise due to it.

The TLCCM confirmed that when a problem is reported to them, they would contact the department and ask for the signs to be removed. Currently the team were trying to get a system in place that all translated signs are sent to them for checking. He added that third party contractors must follow the Authority's Welsh Language Standards.

He highlighted that internally there were some issues also, staff create their own paper sign without realising the Welsh Language Standards apply. However Denbighshire as a whole were very good. The TLCCM acknowledged that members of staff could have worked in other Local Authorities previously and were not aware of Denbighshire's Welsh Standards, due to this they had suggested that the Welsh Language Standards be part of the induction process, so that they were aware from the beginning.

In response to a query regarding support staff within schools, Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts – Lead Member for Education, Children and Young People explained that he had reviewed this already. The county and the teachers decided to spread the budget between the schools to ensure there was someone with the knowledge in the school every day. He advised members that Denbighshire had the highest Welsh language standards in junior schools in Wales, therefore he felt the statistics reflected how well the current process was working.

Councillor Ann Davies raised an issue regarding A-Level students. She asked how students could be encouraged to stay in Welsh schools to study their A-Levels.

Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts highlighted that Welsh Sixth Form classes were small in numbers, which resulted in schools working together and opening their courses for students from other schools. Unfortunately, he advised that transport

had become a problem and that posed risks for sixth form students getting to and from their classes.

Councillor Meirick Lloyd-Davies suggested that the issues of signs and the Welsh language standards be returned to scrutiny for review, as he felt there had been no change since the previous time it was raised. To conclude, he commended the 'Denbighshire Today' and the sections in Welsh.

The chair asked fellow members whether they perceived things as getting better, no change or worsening in terms of the Welsh language in Denbighshire.

Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts noted that it had improved. He continued to say that the Welsh Language Standards had made people more aware, the result of it being that phone messages were now bilingual, front line staff spoke Welsh. He did however acknowledge that the authority could not provide everything, the individual must be willing to follow the standards.

Councillor Emrys Wynne suggested that during a member of staff's 6 months probationary period the Welsh Language Standards should be monitored as part of their probationary period.

Councillor Ann Davies felt that there had been no improvements and that more had to be done.

The chair acknowledged that it was incredibly difficult to monitor Welsh language standards especially with the pressure of jobs etc.

**RESOLVED: that members agree the contents of the report.**

## **7 BRIEFING PAPER ON PARTNER ORGANISATIONS**

The TLCCM presented the report on partner organisations. He explained that 'Partner Iaith' was organisation that worked together towards the Welsh Language as one body. Page 2 of the report explained the role of their work.

As a partner of the language, they want to review the activities in Welsh and see where more could be added, review areas that don't get enough attention etc.

**RESOLVED: that members note the contents of the report.**

## **8 DRAFT STREET NAMING AND NUMBERING POLICY**

The Performance and Programme Systems Administrator (PPSA) presented the report of the Draft Street Naming Policy.

The reason the report had been brought to the Welsh Language Steering Group was due to an issue regarding the translation of the policy. The draft policy was written in English with no recognition in the way the grammar would change once translated; therefore it was requested that the group review the document from a Welsh Language perspective before returning to Scrutiny in November.

In response to a query regarding the naming of streets, the PPSA advised that the current policy, 1925 Public Health Act stated that when a street was named whether that be English or Welsh then that would be its official legal title.

She continued to explain that they discourage the change of legal names as it would could problems for residents and Emergency Services. The only time a name would be legally changed was if an emergency service were having trouble locating the address.

The PPSA advised that residents must propose any changes. A recent resident's proposal had proven successful; a street in Dyserth had named houses rather than numbered. This had caused issues for the ambulance service. A petition was made by the residents which meant the change could be approved, since the change there had been no reported issues.

Councillor Emrys Wynne expressed his concern that with the current process important names would be lost. He suggested that if there were a chance to use the Welsh Language then it should be done without any complications.

Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts agreed that in some cases, English names could not be translated. He proposed that the policy be reviewed once again. He queried why there should be bilingual names in Wales where other countries did not do this. He proposed that policy be reviewed and where possible Welsh names were used instead. He felt that technology, post codes, GPS etc today should mean that any address was located at ease, whether or not it be in Welsh or English.

Councillor Arwel Roberts seconded Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts' proposal.

Councillor Graham Timms also agreed. He felt that any new estates, roads etc should be named in Welsh. He agreed that the policy should be relooked at and shared for wider consultation.

The Corporate Director: Communities (CDC) advised members that the committee could not make any formal decisions however could make a recommendation based on the discussions and debate of the committee that further review be undertaken of the policy to suggest that all new houses, streets etc were named in Welsh.

The policy would be returning to Scrutiny in November, followed by Cabinet. The decision would be whether to take the considerations and recommendations from the Welsh Language Steering Committee and Scrutiny forward or not.

Councillor Meirick Lloyd-Davies highlighted the issue that some data bases may have incorrect street names as people would use the incorrect name out of habit. He suggested that the committee had a thorough review of the entire policy.

**RESOLVED: that the Welsh Language Steering Committee recommend a review of the Welsh Language Street Naming Policy.**

## 9 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee's Forward Work Programme was presented for consideration and members agreed the following additions –

- Partner Iaith – Mapping Work
- Welsh Language Commissioner to attend the next meeting

***RESOLVED:*** - that subject to the above, the Committee's Forward Work Programme be received and noted.

Meeting closed 12.06pm.