

WELSH LANGUAGE STEERING COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Welsh Language Steering Committee held in by video conference on Tuesday, 8 March 2022 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Ellie Chard, Ann Davies, Arwel Roberts, Graham Timms (Chair) and Emrys Wynne (Vice-Chair)

ALSO PRESENT

Corporate Director: Communities (NS), Welsh Language Officer (MC), Commissioning Officer (HE), Planning Officer (BM), Committee administrators (RTJ) (KJ – Host)

1 APOLOGIES

None.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Arwel Roberts and Emrys Wynne declared a personal interest in agenda item 7 as they both took part in assisting for the preparations for the Eisteddfod yr Urdd.

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

Councillor Emrys Wynne highlighted concerns with translations errors in some committee documentation, and queried whether the Corporate Director: Communities could shed light on the concerns. In response the Corporate Director: Communities would look into the matter and raise it with the appropriate service to be dealt with formally.

4 MINUTES

The minutes of the Welsh Language Steering Committee held on 8 March 2022 were submitted.

Matters arising –

- Members highlighted that they had not received the update which was raised during the last meeting, the committee administrator responded by reassuring members that the committee members had received the update, but any observers had not. Any future updates would be circulated to observers as well.
- Members wanted to reiterate their praise of all the work that all officers associated with 'More than Words' had carried out.

RESOLVED that, subject to the above, the minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 March 2022 be received and approved as a correct record.

5 WELSH LANGUAGE JOURNEY IN THE COUNCIL

The Welsh Language Officer (WLO) introduced the Commissioning Officer (Localities) (CO) who has been learning Welsh whilst working for the Council.

The CO thanked the WLO for the introduction, she informed the committee that she had been working for the local authority for numerous years. The Welsh Language was very important to her personally as her father was a Welsh speaker however, due to work commitments they travelled the world as a family and couldn't learn the language. Although her father would always use terms such as 'cariad' whilst she was younger.

The CO had attended two Welsh Language courses and had found them beneficial to her learning journey, as well as the coffee and chat sessions which the WLO hosted, as it was good to discuss the learning journey with other learners.

The CO made the committee aware that during the pandemic she worked at the Dolwen residential care, she understood the vital importance that residents could converse through the medium of Welsh, especially for those who were suffering from dementia.

The committee praised and endorsed all the hard work and commitment the CO had carried out through her Welsh language journey. They queried whether there was anything additional the Council could do to assist with the learning process. The CO responded that there was nothing additional which could be done to assist with learning the language.

The Corporate Director: Communities thanked the CO for being both an excellent officer but also for her assistance through the pandemic on behalf of the Council.

RESOLVED that the Welsh Language Steering Committee note the Commissioning Officer (Localities) Welsh Language Journey in the Council.

6 WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS - STANDARD 94

The Welsh Language Officer (WLO) presented Welsh Language Standards - Standard 94 (previously circulated).

The WLO informed the committee that the Council had a duty to fully comply with the Welsh language Standards, to have a Policy on Awarding grants (Standards 94). The Council currently did not have one therefore were in breach of the Standards.

The Welsh Language Standards were introduced in Denbighshire in 2015, as part of a roll out to public sector organisations in Wales. The Standards were created in direct response to the creation of the Welsh Language Measure (2011) and the role of the Welsh Language Commissioner.

The Council seems to be complying with the majority of the Standards across the Board.

The work of monitoring the compliance rests with the Corporate Communications team, who have corporate responsibilities for the Welsh Language. They are supported by a team of Welsh Language Champions who act voluntarily to promote the corporate approach. The compliance is also subject to random testing by other organisations, including the Welsh Language Commissioner's office.

Even though it seems that we're complying with the majority of the Standards, the Welsh Language Commissioner regularly carries out spot checks on all public services and recent research shows the majority don't have a Policy on Awarding Grants. Therefore it's our duty to produce the policy as part of our efforts to comply with the standards.

Not an area which the council were not complainant with, and thanked the WLO with the advice for CET. The matter would hopefully be resolved in summer of 2022.

The committee queried grants, as people who applied for grants usually did not understand the importance of the Welsh Language. Should there be a element within grants to ensure that the Welsh Language was not forgotten and given its providence, it was also raised why was the wording regarding the Welsh language in grants 'less favourable' rather than equal.

The WLO responded that the term favourable was used as the term was used throughout the Welsh Language Standards.

RESOLVED that the Welsh Language Steering Committee note the information with regards to Welsh Language Standards - Standard 94.

7 EISTEDDFOD YR URDD - UPDATE

The Welsh Language Officer (WLO) presented the members with an update on preparations for the Eisteddfod and the Council's role in the event (previously circulated).

The WLO guided members through a short presentation on work carried out in preparation for the Eisteddfod.

- The Council, as a critical partner, would have a marquee on a prominent site on the Eisteddfod field. The theme for the marquee was all about Welsh language, culture, heritage, tradition, recycling, climate change, and the countryside.
- The Council's activities would be carried out through the medium of Welsh (Urdd rule)
- Welsh speakers and learners would staff the Marquee throughout the week.

- The layout of the tent was through, Schools were encouraged to use the theatre prior to any performances. Previous school students had been invited to perform at the theatre was well.
- The theatre pack timeline would be shared closer to the date.
- Local produce would hopefully be using the Tourism/business at the site, there were plans for a virtual shop window at the tent, which would promote Denbighshire.
- Plant bulbs would be shared with people attending the tent.
- Local heritage would be shared.
- The third space will be allocated to art and craft and an artist in residence, Mari Gwent, will work there during the week. Sian Fitzgerald, Denbighshire's Community Arts Officer is leading on this area an art/Welsh language project is underway in 11 schools with Eleri Jones and Catrin Williams. The finished work will be displayed in the council marquee at the Eisteddfod.
- The tent would be located at the entrance which would be good for the tent.
- Tickets would be free if they were pre booked.

The following points would be discussed –

- The committee endorsed all the hard work which was carried out by the WLO during the preparations for the Eisteddfod.
- Councillor Gwyneth Kensler, encouraged that the Denbigh Plum be included on the local produce at the Council's tent. The WLO thanked Councillor Kensler for the suggestion.
- The committee were happy to see that that the tickets would be free, especially during the difficult financial times.
- Some committee members felt uncomfortable with the title of the children's show as it was in reference to '50 Shades of Grey' and felt it was inappropriate. The WLO understood the concerns and could pass the information onto short plays who were organising the show, however, the preparations were well underway.

RESOLVED that the Welsh Language Steering Committee note the content with the report.

8 WELSH LANGUAGE CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE LDP 2018 TO 2033

The Planning Officer (PO) introduced the Welsh Language Considerations for the LDP 2018 to 2033 Background Paper (previously circulated)

Members of the Strategic Planning Group (SPG) discussed an initial report on the Welsh Language Background Paper on 17th January 2022, see Appendix 1. It was felt crucial to seek the view of the Welsh Language Steering Committee early in the process of formulating the forthcoming local policy for the next LDP 2018 to 2033

- In process of preparing LDP 2018 to 2033
- LDP guides new development
- LDP has to align with national policy
- LDP has to be supported by evidence

- Background papers point to evidence and sources, the information can be shared, and wanting the WLC members any have input on the matter.

The SPG recognised the difficulty in supporting the Welsh Language in the new LDP and particularly the difficulties in linking new development to the impact on Welsh Language. SPG members did not consider it appropriate in the LDP to allocate parts of Denbighshire as sensitive in terms of Welsh Language. The SPG accept a policy requesting a formal linguistic assessment with every planning application cannot be included in the LDP 2018 to 2033. LDP policies that require financial contributions for maintaining the Welsh Language were accepted by the SPG as being difficult to evidence; as any financial contributions must be directly linked to the impact of the new development, its structure. There was no evidence available in Denbighshire that links new building construction or its impact, to residents' linguistic abilities. The SPG supports officer recommendations to broaden the linguistic background paper to include social and cultural identity of settlements. SPG members recommend noting the number of speakers when presenting linguistic data rather than just using percentage figures.

National guidance on developing Welsh Language LDP policies was provided in Technical Advice Note (TAN) 20. It states that the impact on Welsh Language and the sustainability of communities has to be considered when preparing an LDP. Since TAN 20 was introduced, in 2017, the focus of incorporating Welsh Language into LDP's has shifted. It was recognised that creating and sustaining communities, so that they have a strong social and cultural fabric, enables the Welsh Language to thrive. National policy now recommends that as part of place making policies consideration was given to encouraging cohesive communities with a distinct sense of place and identity, which would support the Welsh Language.

It was therefore recommended that any background paper in support of the LDP 2018 to 2033 collates information on the cultural and social fabric of settlements as well as its built local character and linguistic data. Reference to the identity and cultural aspects of the community were recommended so that they can be cross referenced to other reports detailing information on settlements.

The background paper can also recommend how policies in the LDP 2018 to 2033 should be drafted. It was suggested that the background paper promote consideration of the social and cultural fabric of the community. The LDP can support community groups.

The committee discussed the following in further detail –

- The committee queried the powers that they had in regards to the report, officers clarified that the report aimed to receive suggestions from the committee which would then be fed back to the SPG which could then impact on the LDP.
- The committee were uncomfortable with the length of the LDP as many aspects with the Welsh Language could change in 15 years. The committee suggested that planning policies could be implemented to further safeguard the Welsh Language.

- The committee suggested that a Welsh language assessment be carried out on all planning applications.
- The committee highlighted that it would be beneficial to highlight the Welsh language to those moving into the area, such as a welcome pack highlighting the language and culture, the Welsh Language Officer informed the committee that work was ongoing on creating a pack.
- The committee highlighted the importance of assessing the impact on planning applications as larger developments as they could change the percentage of Welsh speakers in the area.

The committee suggested the following for the LDP process –

- A methodology be found to enable Language assessments to be carried out for planning applications.
- That more housing is developed for the local community and to address local needs.

RESOLVED that the Welsh Language Steering Committee make the above suggestions for the LDP.

9 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The committee's forward work programme was presented for consideration.

Members raised the following matters –

- The appointment of chair and vice chair would need to be decided upon.
- Officers agreed to discuss any additional items for the committee outside of the meeting.

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