

## **WELSH LANGUAGE STEERING COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Welsh Language Steering Committee held in Via video conference on Wednesday, 15 November 2023 at 10.00 am.

### **PRESENT**

Councillors Ellie Chard (Chair), Ann Davies, Gill German, Huw Hilditch-Roberts, Carol Holliday, Arwel Roberts, Cheryl Williams and Emrys Wynne

### **ALSO PRESENT**

The Corporate Director: Governance and Business (GW), The Team Leader - Communications & Campaign Management (CH-O), Committee Administrators (KEJ & RTJ [Webcaster])

#### **1 APOLOGIES**

None.

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

None.

#### **3 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR**

The Corporate Director: Governance and Business; sought nominations for the position of chair.

Councillor Ann Davies proposed that Councillor Ellie Chard be appointed as chair, seconded by Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts. Councillor Chard thanked members for the proposal however stated she did not want the position of chair.

Councillor Emrys Wynne proposed that Councillor Arwel Roberts be appointed as chair, seconded by Councillor Ellie Chard.

As There were no other proposals, therefore Arwel Roberts was appointed as chair, all present agreed

***RESOLVED*** that Councillor Arwel Roberts be nominated as chair for the municipal year.

#### **4 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR**

The chair queried with the committee whether they had any nominations for the position of vice chair for the municipal year.

Councillor Arwel Roberts proposed that Councillor Ellie Chard be appointed as vice chair, seconded by Councillor Cheryl Williams. There were no other proposals, therefore Ellie Chard was appointed as vice-chair, all present agreed.

**RESOLVED** *Councillor Ellie Chard be appointed as a vice chair for the municipal year.*

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

None.

## **6 MINUTES**

The minutes of the Welsh Language Steering Committee held on 15 March 2023 were submitted

**RESOLVED** *that subject to the above, the minutes of the previous meeting held on 15 March 2023 be received and approved as a correct record.*

## **7 WELSH LANGUAGE COMMISSIONER REPORT 22-23**

Prior to allowing officers to introduce the report Councillor Arwel Roberts wanted to thank the previous Welsh Language officer who had since left the Council and all the hard work and dedication she put into her role, and the Council would sorely miss her, all members agreed and wished the officer all the best in her future endeavours.

The Team Leader - Communications & Campaign Management presented the Welsh language commissioner report 22-23 (previously circulated) the report sought to provide an update on compliance checks carried out by the Welsh Language Commissioner.

The results of the report were overall good report, and the good practices were continuing. The targets which were set these had been met by the previous Welsh Language Officer, there has been self-assessment documents set to allow people to achieve their own language skills.

The recommendations which were set by the commissioner were as followed –

- Standard 1 - If you receive any correspondence in Welsh from a person, you must reply in Welsh (if a reply was required), unless the person has said that there is no need to reply in Welsh. During the surveys it was found that the Authority did not fully comply with this standard. A Welsh response to an email was not received on 1/3 occasions. A response in Welsh was received after indicating this to the relevant officer.
- Standard 136 - When you assess the needs for a new job or vacancy, you must assess the need for skills in the Welsh language, and categorize it as a job when one or more of the following apply –
  - a) skills in the Welsh language are essential.

- b) that it is necessary to learn skills in the Welsh language when someone is appointed to the post.
  - c) skills in the Welsh language are desirable; or
  - d) skills in the Welsh language are not necessary.
- During the surveys it was found that some jobs continue to use "empathy for the Welsh language" and "show awareness of the Welsh language and Welsh culture in the work environment".

Members were reassured again that these findings had been dealt with by the previous Welsh Language Officer.

Members discussed the following further –

- Members restated how they would miss the previous Welsh Language officer, and stated they wish another officer would be in post as soon as possible to ensure the great work was carried forward.
- The committee thanked officers for the report, they stated that there needed to be continued support for those who are learning the language in the Council, the authority needed to maintain the nurturing environment for the Welsh language for the staff and also to ensure the Language standards were met and maintained.
- Members highlighted that officers who could speak the Welsh language were using it more in meetings which was good to see, and they encouraged it carry on.

**RESOLVED** that the Committee note the content of the Welsh Language Commissioner Report 22-23.

## **8 WELSH LANGUAGE COMMISSIONER ASSURANCE REPORT 2022-23- RAISING THE BAR**

The Team Leader - Communications & Campaign Management introduced the Welsh Language Commissioner Assurance Report 2022-23- Raising the Bar (previously circulated). Members were informed the report was for information purposes; however the committee were made aware the biggest challenge facing the Council was the requirement of Welsh speaking staff, and the Welsh language services of the Council required an increase, and the work which was planned by the previous Welsh Language Officer would hopefully allow this occur whether the be followed.

Members thanked officers for the report, it was suggested that the needs to be comfortable with the Welsh language and the Council needed to raise confidence with Welsh speakers to allow people to use the Language more often.

**RESOLVED** that the Welsh Language Steering Group note the content of the Welsh Language Commissioner Assurance Report 2022-23- Raising the Bar.

## **9 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

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

The Corporate Director: Governance and Business apologised for the empty Forward work programme, he would work with the Team Leader - Communications & Campaign Management would work together to populate the forward work programme, however, he was happy to have any suggestions by the committee.

The committee discussed the following further –

- The committee suggested a potential update on both the on the Eisteddfod both international and Urdd, and whether there were any updates, Councillor Emrys Wynne highlighted the committee that, Denbighshire were keen to host the Eisteddfod in North of the County and wanted to keep the organisers aware of this.
- The committee proposed an update on the number of Welsh speaker staff in the Council.

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

***The meeting concluded at 10:40am***