

WELSH LANGUAGE STEERING COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Welsh Language Steering Committee held in Cabinet Room, County Hall, Ruthin on Wednesday, 2 May 2018 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

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

ALSO PRESENT

Corporate Director: Communities (NS)
Team Leader- Communications and Campaign Management (GW)
Welsh Language Officer (MC)
Democratic Services Manager (SP)
Committee Administrator (RHT-J)

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Paul Penlington and Anton Sampson.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

There were no urgent matters.

4 MINUTES

The minutes of Welsh Language Steering Committee held on 18th December 2017 were submitted.

Matters Arising:

The chair raised an issue in regards to item 7, Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2017 – 2020. It was clarified that members could attend the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) meetings, but the committee requested that could invites be sent out to ensure that members would be aware of the dates of the meetings.

RESOLVED that minutes from the previous meeting held on 18th December 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the chair.

5 WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS

The Lead Member for Education, Children and Young People and the Welsh language, presented a report on the Welsh language standards in Denbighshire.

The Team Leader- Communications and Campaign Management (CCM) reiterated to members that the standards that were introduced in the Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011.

The CCM informed members of areas which the Council had been working to implement the Welsh language standards:

- The intranet which was a hub for all Council employees was now bilingual.
- Welsh lessons were offered to staff of the Council and meeting sessions were offered for the staff to develop their Welsh outside of the lessons.
- A welcome pack to the Council was also highlighted that would be sent to people moving to the area to inform them about Denbighshire but to also encourage them to learn Welsh.

The following points were raised in discussion:

- Members praised that the Councils aim to deliver above what the standards require.
- Concerns were raised regarding how the council would deal with complaints towards the language. The CCM responded stating that the amount of complaints were low. However the Council would deal with any complaints that were received. The lead member also replied stating that the Council use mystery shoppers to ensure that the standards were being adhered to.
- In regards to the theme of correspondence in the standards, it was raised whether answerphone responses were clear in Welsh. The CCM informed members that Welsh language champions have helped by ensuring that the Welsh answerphone messages were clear and correct.
- Welsh lessons were raised in regards to staff who couldn't speak Welsh and wished to. The CCM stated that Welsh lessons were offered throughout the Council to those who wished to learn Welsh. The CCM informed the committee that the new Chief Executive would be having Welsh lessons soon. Members asked for their congratulations to be sent to her.
- The committee praised the chair for opening the meeting in the medium of Welsh, and queried whether all Council meeting could be started in the medium of Welsh. The CCM stated that the Council could do this and go above what the Welsh Standards have outlined.

Following the debate the CCM informed members that the Council aims to hire more fluent Welsh speakers and was working closely with Human Resources to ensure this would be carried out, though it was difficult to recruit Welsh speaking Welsh speaking staff in some areas.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

6 WELSH LANGUAGE STRATEGY

The Team Leader - Communications & Campaign Management (CCM) presented the report to brief the Committee on the Council's Welsh Language Strategy.

The CCM stated key themes which were highlighted in strategy which were highlighted in the report (previously circulated):

- Theme 1: Strategic planning of the Welsh Language in Denbighshire
- Theme 2: Children and Young People
- Theme 3: Community
- Theme 4: Business and the economy
- Theme 5: Internal administration within the Council

The CCM informed members that the Strategy was for 5 years a relative short term plan and the council would be looking to develop a longer term strategy.

The CCM highlighted several areas where Denbighshire are working to the themes within the Strategy:

- The council offered Welsh lessons to staff who wished to learn.
- The council's internal intranet was bilingual.
- People who move to live in the Council would be given a welcome pack to the council and encouraged to learn Welsh.
- Human Resources would be advertising more jobs with the Welsh Language in mind.

After the CMM outlined the areas which were being done in-line with the Strategy the members debated the following:

- It was beneficial that the Council had bilingual staff especially in rural areas with high numbers of Welsh speakers, but members queried whether hospitals have sufficient bilingual staff to cater for vulnerable residents whom wish to converse in Welsh. The Corporate Director: Communities responded stating that the Council could not stipulate what other organisations did.
- The 0.5% target increase of Welsh speakers was highlighted as being too low of an increase, and with such a low level Denbighshire wouldn't help enough to achieve the plan to have a million Welsh speakers by 2050. In response the CCM stated that the number of Welsh speakers in the County was decreasing and a realistic target was required. The set increase could be increased in the future.
- The new waterpark SC2 was raised members agreed that acronyms rarely translate well into Welsh. They recommended that future site names or projects should be discussed to ensure that the name could be shortened in Welsh and English.
- Members raised some concerns about the lack of Welsh being taught in some schools. They were asked to pass on any concerns onto the education team.

The chair asked for the officers to take on board the concerns that were raised by members.

RESOLVED – That subject to the above mentioned points, the report be noted.

7 WELSH LANGUAGE OFFICER ROLE

The Corporate Director: Communities (CDC) introduced the item by welcoming the new Welsh Language Officer (WLO) to the council and informed members that the WLO would help the Council comply with the Welsh language standards.

The WLO thanked the CDC for the introduction and showed a presentation to the committee in regards to the duties and role of the WLO:

- Provide advice and support for senior officers, members and departments to act and continuously comply with the Welsh Language Standards and provide day to day guidance and support.
- Use innovative and creative ways to promote the use of the Welsh Language and to raise the language's profile in a way that created a positive attitude towards the Welsh language within the County Council and the wider community.
- Provide Welsh Language Awareness and Welsh grammar training and sessions
- Work closely with the HR team to develop workforce planning in relation to the Welsh Language

Following the presentation a discussion followed:

- **Welsh translations** – it was queried whether the WLO would translate some internal work for the Council. It was clarified for members that the WLO's role was to ensure that Denbighshire County Council followed the Welsh Language Standards rather than translate work.
- **Welsh Language Officer Duties** – The committee requested a full list of the WLO duties to allow them to send the appropriate queries. The confirmed that a list of duties would be circulated.
- **Signage** – The use of Welsh or bilingual street names was raised, and why there wasn't any conformity across Denbighshire. Members requested that the Head of Planning and Public Protection attend a future meeting to clarify the signage process across the Council.

RESOLVED - that the contents of the report be received and noted.

8 EISTEDDFOD YR URDD - UPDATE

The Team Leader - Communications & Campaign Management (CCM) presented a report on the Eisteddfod yr Urdd 2020 to update the Committee on progress with discussions regarding the National Urdd Eisteddfod returning to the county in 2020 and to outline the resource implications for the Council.

The CCM informed members that the location would be Kilford Farm, on the outskirts of Denbigh. This was the site of the National Eisteddfod in 2013. This site had been chosen as it has been 'tried and tested'. The site had infrastructure in place, as well as plenty of open land for the festival, associated parking and caravan site.

It was also raised that the council would be setting up a strategic group to co-ordinate discussions with Urdd Eisteddfod organisers. The first meeting of the

Strategic Group would need to take place in June 2018 and on a quarterly basis thereafter. The strategic group would be chaired by the leader of the council.

The CCM informed members that there were plans in place for Denbighshire as a whole to be promoted and attract people who will be attending the Eisteddfod to visit other areas in Denbighshire. The CCM highlighted several benefits that the Eisteddfod could bring to the local economy:

- £6m- £8m would be spent in the local area.
- 30% of visitors stayed overnight
- 78% of people spend money with local businesses
- 60% Visit the Maes for at least two days
- 45%-60% travel up to 90 minutes to visit the Eisteddfod.

The CCM also informed members of the figures that Flintshire benefited from when they hosted the Eisteddfod; the data was collected by Beaufort Research:

- 54% of the visitors went to local shops
- 52% visited local restaurants
- 33% visited local pubs
- 52% used local petrol stations.

Members reported that it would have been nice for the Eisteddfod to have gone to another area within Denbighshire. The CCM replied that the choice of location was due to the success of the National Eisteddfod that was held there previously.

Signage and promoting Denbighshire as the host for the Eisteddfod yr Urdd 2020 was raised. The CCM stated that signage would be displayed to advertise Denbighshire as the host of the Eisteddfod and Denbighshire would have a presence at the 2019 Eisteddfod in Cardiff advertising Denbighshire as the next host. It would also show what Denbighshire as a county had to offer to visitors.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be received and noted.

9 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The chair suggested that another meeting could be arranged for July, and officers agreed to look for an appropriate date.

It was proposed that a Welsh language champion could be invited to inform members on the work they carry out.

The chair also recommended that the individual themes of the strategy should be looked in detail in each meeting, rather than the whole strategy in each meeting.