

Panel Ymgynghorol yr Iaith Gymraeg

Welsh Language Advisory Panel

25 September 2018 at 2pm

Democratic Services' Committee Room, County Hall, Carmarthen

MINUTES & ACTION POINTS

Present:

Cllr. Peter Hughes-Griffiths	PHG	Plaid Cymru (Chair)
Cllr. Edward Thomas	ET	Independent (Vice-chair)
Cllr. Carys Jones	CJ	Plaid Cymru
Cllr. Alun Lenny	AL	Plaid Cymru
Cllr. Sue Allen	SA	Independent
Cllr. Carys Jones	CJ	Plaid Cymru
Cllr. Dorian Williams	DW	Plaid Cymru
Officers		
Jonathan Morgan	JM	Head of Homes & Safer Communities
Gareth Jones	GJ	Digital Business Transformation Manager
Llinos Evans	LIE	Policy & Partnership Manager
Bethan James	BJ	Welsh language Promotion Officer

Item	Discussion and action points:	Responsible:
1.	Welcome and Apologies Councillor Peter Hughes-Griffiths welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Councillors Tina Higgins and Joseff Davies, Wendy Walters, Gwyneth Ayers and Myfanwy Jones.	
2.	Minutes of the last meeting 19.7.18 The minutes were accepted as a correct record of the meeting. It was confirmed, following a discussion in the Executive Board on September 24 that Councillor Rob James will replace Councillor John Prosser on the Panel. Councillor Prosser was thanked for his support for the Panel. It was noted that the Yr Egin Centre had now opened and that a viewer evening was to be held there on September 26th.	

	<p>It was noted that it would be positive if the Council gave further attention to the Centre, ensuring that all Elected Members are aware of the development, which is part of the Swansea Bay City Deal.</p> <p>It was noted that discussions have been held with Marc Griffiths in terms of Welsh Medium and bilingual Music and the establishment of a specialist stream for the Council. The IT division will meet Marc in the next few weeks to understand the systems in place at the sites and to resolve any problems, before formally launching the music stream.</p>	
<p>3.</p>	<p>Report on the progress within the Housing Division - Jonathan Morgan</p> <p>Jonathan Morgan was welcomed to the meeting to give an update from the Housing division and the actions in relation to the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy. JM had also presented an update to the Carmarthenshire Welsh language Strategic Forum on September 18.</p> <p>An update was given regarding the new allocation methodology which is now based on choice. This work will provide a much more accurate, current and comprehensive picture of local needs.</p> <p>JM explained the work in conducting a rural needs survey in the villages of Trelech and Cynwyl Gaeo. The division is currently undertaking a survey analysis and work is underway in the village of Meidrim to meet local need by piloting that local people can buy from 'plan'. The division continues to look at options for Cynwyl Gaeo.</p> <p>The Affordable Homes Scheme is now in its third year of operation and 500 additional homes have already been returned to use in the county.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the 'Cartrefi Croeso' housing company had been established and that the new company offers new opportunities for funding and also in terms of offering more extensive housing provision, depending on the need in a local area.</p> <p>The Welsh Government is targeting an investment of £30 million towards empty properties in the private sector across Wales. Currently, Carmarthenshire administers an allocation of £1.9 million which has already brought 61 units of accommodation back into use. Following discussion in the County Strategic Forum, the Housing division will look at the profile of the individuals who have taken these vacant units to assess the local impact.</p> <p>JM explained that there are numerous opportunities in promoting the Welsh language and bilingualism among our tenants, whether through Tenant to Tenant newsletter or through our Housing Officers' visits and there will be an opportunity to develop further actions to support the work of the Promotion Strategy.</p> <p>CJ asked if it would be possible to encourage young people to register their interest and it was agreed that a publicity campaign was needed to encourage local people to register and in order to meet local needs.</p> <p>AL quoted from Technical Note 2 which provides practical guidance on the role of the planning system in the provision of affordable housing. The key areas where the local planning authorities, housing authorities, registered social landlords and private developers should work together are noted as:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confirm the need for housing in the local housing market / local housing markets; • set targets for the provision of affordable housing through the planning system (across the authority's area and on specific sites); • monitor any changes in housing need; • updating planning and housing policies and the targets for affordable housing; • identify potential sites for affordable housing (including random sites and rural exception sites); • use planning conditions and planning obligations to secure affordable housing; • ensure that there is an appropriate range of housing types and tenures that will contribute to meeting the need identified for affordable housing and to achieve the objective of creating mixed and sustainable communities; • build and manage affordable housing; • managing who is able to occupy the affordable housing, so that people who are in need categories that occupy those houses. <p>It was also agreed that the division will circulate further information regarding Simple Lettings and the opportunities for landlords to transfer responsibilities in terms of renting to the company.</p> <p>Members discussed the definition of 'Affordable Housing' and that it varied from area to area in the county. The idea of 'First Stage Home' rather than affordable housing was proposed as a means of promoting the opportunities.</p> <p>JM and his department were thanked for their work in relation to the Housing Strategy and in promoting the bilingualism of the county.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Information Technology - Gareth Jones</p> <p>Gareth Jones was welcomed to the meeting from the Council's IT services. The division is keen to promote the support available in terms of using and promoting the Welsh language.</p> <p>There was a discussion about changing email addresses to @sirgar.llyw.cymru It was agreed to prepare a paper for discussion at the Executive Board to formally determine this, to be presented by Councillor Peter and Councillor Mair Stephens.</p> <p>It was also agreed to discuss the idea of changing the reference to Councillors on the address book from Cllr to Cyng.</p> <p>GJ explained that the Language skills box had now been removed from the internal address book, as the email system moved to Office 365. It was noted that the 'Iaith Gwaith' logo could be included as part of an officer / Elected Member profile on skype and e-mail. Further inquiries need to be made regarding the use of staff photos and gaining consent to do so.</p> <p>Members discussed the commissioning / purchase of new systems and the difficulties which can emerge when commissioning. It was noted that support could be sought from the Welsh Government and the Welsh Language Commissioner in terms of putting pressure on companies to provide bilingually.</p> <p>Gareth was thanked for his presence and the support from the IT division, across the Council.</p>	<p>Policy/ TG</p>

<p>5.</p>	<p>Promote and increase the use of Welsh language services (Standard 81)</p> <p>BJ explained that the Welsh Language Standards place a responsibility on the Council to promote Welsh language services through Standard 81. The Standards have now been introduced across the Council so it is timely to have a discussion on opportunities to encourage people to use Welsh when contacting us.</p> <p>BJ outlined the opportunities available through the various departments and the different methods of contacting the council (e.g. website, phone calls, face to face contact and forms).</p> <p>BJ highlighted some possible services from each department, including Social Workers and Educational Psychologists, Youth Services, Road Safety and Social Care.</p> <p>It was noted that there are a number of examples where members of the public do not use Welsh and it is essential that we understand the rationale and barriers faced by our customers.</p> <p>It was emphasised that there was a need to monitor progress and in order to do so, we need to have a baseline of where we are at present.</p> <p>It was proposed that work should be started with all vulnerable and older people, people would be more comfortable to receive services and care through the medium of Welsh. The More than Words Strategic Framework would have a key role to play in this.</p> <p>There remains a mode of thinking that official issues need to be conducted through the medium of English. It was also noted that the public are not aware that a high number of Council staff are bilingual and more can be done to promote this.</p> <p>It was noted that the expectations of Welsh speakers are low as a number of broader services are not available bilingually and examples such as Natural Resources Wales and BT were cited.</p> <p>Comments were made regarding the Council's corporate website and it was difficult to find the exact information needed.</p> <p>It was agreed to look at Adult Services and the Youth Service by collating data on the availability of Welsh and the skills among staff. Further details will be presented at the next meeting.</p>	<p>BJ</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Update</p> <p>Details of the National Population Survey published on Friday 21st September were circulated. The results show an increase in the number of Welsh speakers across Wales, and in Carmarthenshire, to 91,200, which is 51.5%.</p> <p>The sample was held across Wales held so care needs to be taken when referring to the data.</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p>Any other business</p> <p>CJ noted that the Welsh medium option on the parking machine at Wilkinsons was not working and that this could provide misleading data on users.</p>	

8.	Date of the next meeting 19 December 2018 at 10am	
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