
LANGUAGE COMMITTEE 18 OCTOBER 2018

Present:

Councillors: Alan Jones Evans, Aled Evans, Alwyn Gruffydd, Judith Humphreys, Charles Wyn Jones, Elin Walker Jones, Elwyn Jones, Eric M. Jones, Kevin Morris Jones, Cai Larsen, Eirwyn Williams and Elfed Wyn Williams.

Officers: Gwennliân Mair Williams (Welsh Language Services Manager) and Annes Siôn (Member Support Officer).

Others invited: Councillor Nia Jeffreys, Cabinet Member for the Welsh Language, Councillor Edgar Wyn Owen (Vice-Chairman of the Council)

For Item 8: Arwel Williams (Bangor University)

1. APOLOGIES

Cabinet Members and officers were welcomed to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Cllr John Pughe Roberts

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received from any members present.

3. URGENT ITEMS

No urgent items were received.

4. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 10 July, 2018 as a true record.

5. REPORT BY CABINET MEMBER FOR THE WELSH LANGUAGE

The Cabinet Member submitted the report noting that following a meeting of the Full Council, the Welsh Language Promotion Plan had now been adopted. She expressed that a £2m grant for Arfor had been announced by the Government. It was added that initial discussions on the scheme had begun. It was reiterated that the Welsh language was central to the Arfor Scheme. It was noted that the Cabinet Member and the Welsh Language Service Manager were now part of the discussions.

It was noted that the Hunaniaith Scheme had been given additional funding for two years and they were in the process of forming a plan for 2020/21. It was expressed that the previous plan was a three year plan and that the three year period was now drawing to an end. The need for a new plan was noted, one that would look at long-term projects and it was an opportunity to ponder how Hunaniaith could proceed.

Observations from the discussion

- It was noted that the Arfor scheme had been in discussions for five years and the fact that the grant had been announced was very pleasing. It was discussed that

the TWF Scheme and Arfor would run alongside each other, but would not work together, and the TWF scheme should not affect the dynamics of the Arfor Scheme.

- It was added that the Arfor Scheme needed to be developed and there was a need to discuss plans within the four counties that Arfor would cover.
- The differences between the Arfor scheme and Twf were expressed noting that culture was not a central part of TWF and that the Welsh language was a central part of Arfor.

6. WELSH LANGUAGE PROMOTION PLAN WORK PROGRAMME

The report was submitted and it was noted that this was an opportunity to look in greater detail and to hold a discussion on the work programme. It was added that this was an initial work programme and that developments would be carried out to the work programme once all partners had come together to develop projects jointly.

It was added that the work programme had five priority areas and each of those priorities were considered individually.

a. Language of the Family

A partnership with Mudiad Meithrin was discussed noting that they were already collaborating but that further discussions were required. It was added that Mudiad Meithrin were changing their projects and consequently there had been no intensive discussions with Mudiad.

It was noted that transferring language within the family was a usual occurrence in Gwynedd, but it was added that there was a need to understand where the gaps were in areas where transferring the language was not as high. It was asked whether it was possible to get data, and it was expressed that it may be possible to get the data from the Education Department. A discussion was held on the information collected at schools and it was noted that parents assessed children's language levels before they started at school.

It was discussed that children absorbed language in the early years and it was asked if there were any apps available in the Welsh language for this age. It was reiterated that a student through the Coleg Cymraeg had undertaken research over a ten day period at the council and that the results showed that there was a high number of apps targeting the primary and nursery age. It was added there was a need to develop more apps for secondary age. It was expressed that there was a need to promote the apps more in society.

It was discussed how it could be ensured that breakfast club staff and after school clubs adhered to the language policy. It was expressed that schools' commitment to the language charter also involved the clubs. It was added that GwE had carried out a language assessment on staff at schools. It was reiterated that there may be a need to ensure that the Language Charter was included on Governing Body meeting agendas regularly to ensure that the Welsh language could be included in all aspects of clubs also.

b. The Language of Learning

It was expressed that the education system was one that worked within the county but two weaknesses had been identified. The first was a reduction in the number of children speaking first language Welsh in years 6 and 7 and the second was the reduction in the number of children who studied subjects through the medium of Welsh. It was noted that these weaknesses had been identified under the secondary schools Language Charter. It was expressed that an update was needed from the department.

c. The Language of Work and Services

It was noted that there was a need to retain data of how many received a service through the medium of Welsh specifically when looking at youth, leisure and care services. It was noted there was a need to keep an eye on this.

d. Language and Community

A discussion was held on the language used at Community Council meetings and it was added that there was some money available to pay for translation services at meetings in the community. It was noted that the money was available in order to demonstrate the value of simultaneous translators.

e. Research and Technology

No comment.

DECISION

The report was accepted.

7. WORK PLAN OF THE WELSH LANGUAGE COMMITTEE

The report was submitted noting that the item followed on from the previous item. It was expressed that the purpose of the item was to have specific themes and areas for the Committee to consider. Attention was drawn to workforce development noting that the plan was in action. It was added that there were more training opportunities.

It was noted that it would be possible for Hunaniaith staff to attend the Committee meetings often to present case studies of the projects they were involved with. It was added that this would raise the Committee's awareness of the work that Hunaniaith was doing.

A question was asked about the priority of the Committee's work programme. It was expressed that it would be good to learn from others working in the Welsh Language field. It was reiterated that it would be good to look at what other people could learn from the Council. It was noted there was a need to develop a relationship with the Welsh Language Committees of nearby counties.

It was noted that there was a need to prioritise while emphasising that some of the fields involved more work than others. The workforce's skills were discussed noting that it would be good practice for the Council to work through the medium of Welsh only. It was enquired whether the policy included staff who are contracted, such as taxi drivers. It was

expressed that the policy did not include the staff who were contracted and maybe there was a need to highlight the policy in these fields.

DECISION

The report was accepted.

8. CHANGING BEHAVIOUR AND LANGUAGE PRACTICES

A presentation was received from Arwel Williams who outlined the research Changing Behaviour which investigated the use of the Welsh Language at work. He gave details of the investigation and that they had been focussing on changing behaviour and language practices specifically within a department of the University. Details were provided of the research methodology and how the data was gathered. It was added that the Council would be the second phase of the research that would commence in the next months.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was noted that the research was interesting but that every workplace would be unique as it depended on the number of people speaking the Welsh language in the offices. It was added that there was a tendency if someone was non-Welsh speaking for conversations to turn to English.
- It was expressed that there were lessons to be learnt for other locations from the first step of the investigation.
- The Committee noted its interest to see the results of the second part of the investigation with Gwynedd Council and the Health Board.
- A discussion was held on the long-term impacts of the scheme but it was noted that the data had not been analysed in full and that the Psychology Department would be part of the work to analyse the data.

9. LANGUAGE COMPLAINTS

Submitted - the report noting that one complaint had been received during this period namely a household's questionnaire. It was added that this questionnaire had not been sent out by the Council and had been released without the Council's knowledge.

It was added that there was one investigation currently in the pipeline and more information would follow. The Language Commissioner's complaints procedure was discussed, and that the Language Department was seeking to refer things to the Commissioner to ask for support it was unable to comply with the language requirements. An example was submitted which had been referred to the Commissioner, namely a textbook for training in a specialist field that was available in English only.

Attention was drawn to some specific complaints relating to the Council's Language Policy which had been received. In the field of environment, there were some documents that were available in Welsh only; this was because of tight schedules within the department. It was added that when the complaint was received the English documents were ready to be published. Attention was drawn to the fact that a 'Google' search for the Council directed the individual to the English website. It was noted that the department was seeking to contact Google to look at the matter and that it had not yet been resolved. It was expressed

that a complaint had been received after the Business Loans Fund Terms and Conditions had not used the Welsh language, but the department looked into this after receiving the complaint and had created new terms and conditions. It was added that there was a complaint about the lack of Welsh Language forms for Communities for Work, but that specific location had run out of their Welsh language forms and therefore obtained more copies from the relevant department.

DECISION

The report was accepted.

10. MEASURE OF SUCCESS: A SUMMARY OF THE WELSH LANGUAGE COMMISSIONER'S ASSURANCE REPORT 2017/18

The report was submitted noting that the summary was a last minute appendix. It was expressed that the report noted the outcomes for the year. It was noted that the analysis for Gwynedd was needed and there would be a need to revisit the item at the next meeting.

CHAIR