

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>LANGUAGE COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>16 January 2020</b>
<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member's Report</b>
<b>AUTHOR:</b>	<b>Councillor Nia Jeffreys</b>
<b>PURPOSE OF THE REPORT</b>	Update on the key developments in the Welsh language field since the previous Committee meeting.

## 1. Consultations

Recently, a number of consultations have been conducted on national plans and policies where there has been input and response regarding the Welsh language.

- **Welsh Government National Development Framework Consultation**

General observations from the Language Unit include:

- ✓ Need to ensure that the wording and guidance given by the Government do not permit authorities to consider education alone as their contribution to the promotion and development of the Welsh language.
- ✓ Need to ensure that the Welsh language is a key consideration in any plans relating to the job creation economy and community prosperity - across all counties, and without exception in areas where less Welsh is spoken.
- ✓ There is a need to highlight that the Welsh language is also a factor and a material consideration in towns and cities, and that it does not apply to rural areas alone.
- ✓ Each of the regional policies need to have the intention of realising the outcome of creating "places where the Welsh language is thriving".
- ✓ In terms of the regional plan for the North - it should be ensured that the attention on civic centres and the north east does not have a negative impact on more rural areas in the North West, where the language and social context is very different.

- **Welsh Government Equality Strategy Consultation**

This was a consultation on the principles and the strategic equality objectives. There was not much that could be disagreed with, however, the point was made that the Government need to take the opportunity to give clarity in terms of the Welsh language in this area. The document referred to the Equality and Human Rights Act, and did not make it clear under which one of these the Welsh language fitted. In the Council's response it was noted that more clarity was required for all on how the Welsh language fits in, either as a human right, as an aspect of race characteristic (identity) or as an element that stands on its own. Guidance such as this would strengthen the position of the Welsh language in the equality field and would ensure that everyone operates in the same way.

- **A More Equal Wales Consultation - Commencing the Socio-economic Duty**

There wasn't much to say in terms of the Welsh Language, other than to emphasise the point made above about the need for Welsh Government to give some guidance on the status of the language within equality. We also offered comments on the definition given of socio-economic deprivation. The definition given emphasised the economic factor, and low income, as the main driver and cause of deprivation. While we do not disagree with this, we did feel that there needed to be more balance, and inclusion of the social factors – which are the same factors that have an impact on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language within communities to some extent.

## **2. Adra/CCG Meeting**

A constructive meeting took place between Council members and officers and Senior Adra officers on the 25th of November. Present were Councillor Elin Walker Jones, as Chair of the Language Committee, and Gwenllian Williams, Language Consultant. A discussion took place on the new requirements for assessments or language statements for planning applications under the new SPG, and how can Adra as one of the county's main developers contribute to the evidence base required to move forward. It was agreed that it would be useful to get clear and concise guidance from the Language Unit on the evidence required and the Language Consultant reported that she was already working on this and would be shared with relevant officers in the new year. Further to this, opportunities for cooperation at a community level were discussed between Adra community officers and Hunaniaith officers and Menter Iaith Bangor, and a question was raised regarding the support available to support Welsh learners and develop language skills linked to the workplace.

## **3. Day to Promote Rights**

In December, the Council participated in the first Welsh Language Commissioner's Day to Promote Rights. The aim of this day was to draw the attention of residents to the services they can receive from organisations through the medium of Welsh - and this was to try and encourage them to use more Welsh when using services. A short video was created and shared on social media.

Trying to get more people to use the services available is an area of interest to the new Commissioner as well, and we within the Council should think how we can do more of this type of activity during the year, in order to try and increase the use of the Welsh language for our own services.

## **4. Mental Wellbeing and the Welsh language**

Andrew Tamplin from Canna Consulting conducted workshops in the Council to draw attention to the importance of looking after our mental wellbeing. This is an area that has recently received considerable attention, and is very important in terms of language as it is essential that individuals can receive support and services through the medium of Welsh when they need this. We will hear more about this area of interest during the meeting.

## **5. Technology and the Welsh language**

Following recent conversations about problems that arise while trying to get systems and apps that work bilingually, I have sent a letter to the Minister for the Welsh Language, asking about Welsh Government's plans in regards to promoting the use of the Welsh language in technology. They have an Action Plan for the Welsh Language in Technology, but so far we have no information about any work or schemes deriving from that plan. I will report back to the Language Committee on any response.