

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 31ST OCTOBER, 2016

REFERENCE FROM LEARNING AND CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:
17TH OCTOBER, 2016

“ CONSULTATION ON WELSH GOVERNMENT DRAFT STRATEGY: “A MILLION WELSH SPEAKERS BY 2050” (HDS) –
(Urgent by reason of the need to respond to Welsh Government by 31st October, 2016)

The Committee was requested to consider a proposed response to Welsh Government’s draft Strategy “A Million Welsh Speakers by 2050” and to refer any comments to Cabinet for consideration.

On 1st August, 2016 Welsh Government had published a consultation document on a draft strategy with the deadline for responses by 31st October, 2016. Appendix B to the report provided a proposed response to the Strategy addressing the questions asked in Welsh Government’s consultation.

During the discussion a Member considered that an awareness-raising and publicity drive should be undertaken to encourage members of the public to send their children to Welsh Medium schools. It was also suggested that the Vale Council should establish a centre for Welsh language and cultural issues and that the Urdd Eisteddfod should be invited to the Vale.

The Chairman referred to the need for the Council to foster the normalisation of Welsh and to make the necessary changes to encourage people to speak and learn Welsh. He stated that the development of social media in Welsh by the Council was great but that the Council needed to consider further developing the use of Welsh through this means and via education. He considered that the education system and schools needed to promote the Welsh language and suggested examples such as the promotion of a Welsh newspaper, which could be provided on a monthly basis via electronic or paper means. The Council should also consider giving Welsh a higher priority in relation to the workforce by considering more employment positions where Welsh was a requirement. The establishment of an Immersion Centre similar to those that had been set up in Gwynedd and Ceredigion should also be considered for pupils to provide rapid immersion into Welsh speaking. He further considered that welcoming the Urdd Eisteddfod to the Vale of Glamorgan would be an excellent move for pupils in the Vale. The Chairman requested that such issues be recommended to Cabinet for consideration.

However, some Members stated that although they were advocates of the Welsh language, they considered it was not their role to make it a priority for parents to send their children to Welsh Medium schools. It was an aspiration from Welsh Government to have a million Welsh speakers by 2050 but they felt that the Council would need to be careful how it was promoted. A Member stated it was apparent

that fewer than 1% of users contacted C1V in Welsh and that Council forms completed in Welsh also equated to less than 1%.

The Head of Performance and Development stated that it was incumbent on the Local Authority to make it possible for people to do things in Welsh where possible and that the Council had to comply with legislation which contained those obligations. Of relevance too, was the fact that the 2011 census had shown the figure of 11% in the Vale of Glamorgan who spoke Welsh, and their needs should be met.

The Interim Director for Learning and Skills advised that as an education department, the Council had developed a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and had established two new seed schools to encourage growth in the number of children being educated through the medium of Welsh. The Operational Manager for Strategy and Resources further advised that a revised version of the Strategic Plan was currently in the process of being drafted, which would be reported to the Scrutiny Committee for further consideration in due course.

Councillor S.T. Wiliam, not a Member of the Committee, with permission to speak, stated that the Council should be involved in creating a demand for Welsh and should therefore be promoting Welsh Medium education. He stated that if the Council was serious about substantially increasing the number of Welsh speakers by 2050, it had to promote Welsh, and the establishment of an immersion centre similar to the one in Cardiff would be an excellent way forward for pupils and one which would assist in providing parents with more choice.

Although supporting the ambitions of Welsh Government, some Members stated that in their view it was up to parents as to whether or not they sent their children to Welsh Medium schools and that the Council should not be in the business of encouraging parents to do that. This, they considered, could become an equality issue with regard to English medium education.

Following the discussion, the Chairman recommended that his suggestions as outlined above, be forwarded to Cabinet however, upon being put to a vote, the motion was not carried and the Committee subsequently

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the proposed response attached at Appendix B to the report be accepted and referred to Cabinet for consideration together with the comments made at the meeting.

Reason for recommendation

In light of the comments made at the meeting and the timescale of 31st October, 2016 to respond to Welsh Government consultation.”

Attached as Appendix – [Report to Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee: 17th October, 2016](#)