

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 20TH DECEMBER, 2021

REFERENCE FROM CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 17TH NOVEMBER, 2021

DRAFT WELSH LANGUAGE PROMOTION STRATEGY (REF) –

The report from Cabinet on 8th November, 2021 had been included within the agenda, however, as the reference had been unable to be included within the agenda at the time at despatch this had subsequently been uploaded to the website and circulated to the Committee prior to the Scrutiny meeting.

The Head of Policy and Business Transformation, in presenting the report, advised that the Welsh Language Standards (Standards 145 and 146) required Local Authorities to:

- produce and publish a five-year Strategy setting out how they intended to promote the Welsh language and to facilitate the use of Welsh more widely in their area;
- include a target for increasing or maintaining the number of Welsh speakers in the area by the end of the five-year period;
- include a statement explaining how the organisation intended to reach that target;
- review the Strategy and publish a revised version of it on the website within five years of the date of publication of the strategy (or the date of publication of a revised version of it);
- after five years, assess the extent to which the Council had followed that Strategy and met the target it had set;
- publish the assessment on the website, showing the number of Welsh speakers in the Local Authority's area, and the age of those speakers;
- note in the assessment a list of activities arranged or funded by them to promote the Welsh language during the previous five years.

Appendix A to the report provided an assessment of the 2017-22 Promotion Strategy and a draft of a new five-year strategy for the 2022-27 period. The report sought Cabinet approval to consult on the documents in order to inform and finalise the 2022-27 Promotion Strategy and to inform the development of an action plan to pursue its commitments.

Mr. David Thomas, External Consultant, had been engaged to undertake the assessment and was present at the meeting. Mr. Thomas informed Committee that the actions within the future five-year Strategy for the Vale of Glamorgan should mirror the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2022 – 2032. The Consultant drew Committee's attention to one of the Standards around whether a Local Authority had increased or maintained its number of Welsh speakers. Mr. Thomas

advised Committee that the Vale had maintained the figures over the years but noted that pupil figures had increased by 11%. He also mentioned that in his view the Council was underselling itself on the work it had undertaken to date. The Action Plan would also be key to the work going forward and would be developed over the coming months. It was noted that an 8-week consultation was to take place with the intention that a further report be presented to the Scrutiny Committee in the new year.

During the consideration of the report the Chair requested that a table of data be provided in future documentation referring to the number of Welsh speakers in deprivation areas. The Chair also suggested that Early Years Education was also important in promoting the Welsh language and that such promotion could also be enhanced via social media and that the need to include encouraging conversational Welsh within the business community within the Action Plan.

Councillor Dr. Johnson commented that in his view it was also important to have a sense of fun, humanity and interaction to encourage and develop the Welsh language within communities. The importance of reflecting real life experiences and how people lived their lives through the medium of Welsh was considered to be an essential element for the Action Plan.

Councillor Sivagnanam echoed the importance of consulting with communities and requested that further information and the perspectives of English speaking families who had moved into the area and who had placed children in Welsh Medium Schools be reflected in the work.

The External Consultant drew attention to the fact that the latest Census information when available would also be included in the Strategy as well as the need for case studies to be incorporated. He was due to attend a Forum meeting on 22nd November, 2021 and would seek to obtain such information from that arena.

Scrutiny Committee, having considered the reference, report and all the issues and implications contained therein

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T Cabinet be informed of the comments of the Committee as part of the consultation process.
- (2) T H A T a further report and accompanying Action Plan be presented to the Scrutiny Committee following the consultation period.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) To ensure that the comments of the Committee are included within the consultation report.
- (2) In order that the Committee can consider the matter further following the consultation.