

**Caerphilly County Borough Council - Welsh Language Scheme Monitoring Report
2007-08**

The Welsh Language Board's Comments July 2008

Section	Comment
1. Compliance with the Welsh Language Scheme	
	<p>We believe that the information regarding the timescale shows definite progress and action in relation to the Language Scheme.</p> <p>Therefore it is clear that the Council is succeeding in meeting the targets set out in the Scheme. So, a priority for revision would be to reconsider the targets and put in place a revised implementation plan.</p>
2.5.1 – 2.5.5 pg. 3	<p>The Assembly Government's new statutory guidance on achieving community strategies requires the Board to draw up supplementary advice on the Welsh language in a community strategy. The Board is currently drafting the advice with a view to introducing the final draft to the Assembly by the end of the Summer. The supplementary advice will provide practical guidance to community strategy partnerships on how to incorporate the Welsh language into their schemes and provide a number of examples of good practice. We are pleased to note that Caerphilly Council will consider the advice and work together with organisations such as the local <i>menter iaith</i> to undertake some activities.</p>
6.2.1 – 6.2.2 pg. 5	<p>It is important to promote the use of Welsh language services; therefore we commend the Council's efforts to this end. We would note that it is important, when undertaking such exercises, that data is kept so that it is possible to track the success of a campaign; i.e., the use of a Welsh-medium service, before and after a marketing campaign.</p> <p>We will also remind you of the Welsh Language Board's ongoing marketing campaign, "<i>Mae Gen ti Ddewis...</i>" If you have a specific service that can be guaranteed to be available in Welsh, then by all means please do not hesitate to contact us in order for us to consider a campaign.</p>
2. Welsh Frontline Services	
i) <i>Children and Young People Partnerships</i>	<p>A "Report on the Quality of Youth Support Services in Caerphilly" carried out by Estyn (January 2007) noted: "There is a very limited provision for services through the medium of Welsh, or which actively promote the Welsh language and Welsh culture, and there is very little bilingual provision available." [35, page 12].</p> <p>It is clear from this evidence and from the Welsh Language Board's experience from working with the Partnership that this is changing and that the Council is playing a role in striving toward improvement.</p> <p>We consider the existence of the Welsh Language and Culture Group</p>

	<p>Strategy to be an important step and we approve of the contacts made and the mainstreaming of the Children and Young People group's work.</p> <p>I would like to note that the relationship between the Policy Officer's (Welsh Language) and the Children and Young People's Partnership framework has been particularly effective. Collaboration between the two has ensured that the Language Scheme's objectives and priorities and the framework are able to work jointly to create change.</p> <p>Also to be commended is the work of mapping the needs of young Welsh speakers, towards meeting the needs of those young people by incorporating the comments of those who took part in the county schemes. As well as the statistical mapping that shows the actual numbers of young Welsh speakers by area. This is a piece of work which will be sure to pay dividends in the future.</p> <p>Another piece of good and effective work was the Interact Event, which raised provider awareness in the form of a workshop.</p>
ii) <i>DIG 2</i>	<p>We welcome the developments with regards to the payroll system which now enables the Council to record and use detailed data on language skills, and information which can be broken down according to different criteria. The next important step has been recognised by you in the report, namely the development of those areas where progress needs to be made with regard to Welsh language provision.</p> <p>We are also pleased to note that the Council has historical information, and data which shows the number of staff who have received training and not only in the monitoring year. Tracking this, whether it is specific training or language awareness, is important.</p> <p>We accept that temporary arrangements need to be made to deal with Welsh language calls when no Welsh speaker is available to take the call, although you acknowledge that this is not ideal. We welcome your commitment to investigate new ways of attracting recruits with Welsh language skills and we will be happy to offer help and guidance as required.</p>
iii) <i>DIG 6</i>	<p>It is pleasing to note that the Council has identified cases of complaints involving the Welsh language, although the Council's corporate complaints procedure failed to record them. We look forward to working with you in conducting our Risk Assessment in 2009 which will concentrate on the corporate complaints procedure. A methodology will be ready later in the year for consideration.</p> <p>We are satisfied that the Council has dealt with the complaints appropriately.</p>
3. Managing and Administering the Scheme	
i) <i>DIG 5</i>	<p>We reiterate our comments under DIG 2, and we welcome the commendable development of a payroll system recording and using data on staff with Welsh language skills. Certainly the availability of dynamic data is an important development for workforce planning in order to meet the needs of the Borough's Welsh speakers.</p>

	<p>We agree that it is important to ensure a high response to requests for language skills information. Several methods of increasing responses to requests for information could be considered. For example, it is possible you may wish to consider focussing on departments individually, targeting specific areas to begin. Where applicable, it would also be possible to introduce language skills to performance management discussions. One must be sensitive in this respect, but it is a way of identifying skills and then considering training needs for example, where possible. From experience, we see success in organisations - a good recovery rate - when an organisation's leadership has a clear and strong message that this is a priority practice for the organisation.</p>
ii) <i>Corporate Equality</i>	<p>We agree with the comment made, namely that your new systematic process shows a structured and regular method of focussing on Welsh language issues. As has already been noted, the thorough process the Scheme went through before it was presented to the Board shows how responsibility for Welsh language issues has been mainstreamed across the organisation, on strategic and operational levels.</p>
iii) <i>DIG 1</i>	<p>It is a pity that there is no data available to report this year for this indicator. We agree that this is a matter which should be one of the Policy Officer's (Welsh Language) priorities for this year. We wish to discuss this with you in our feedback meeting in order to progress this.</p>
4. Linguistic skills	
i) <i>DIG 4</i>	<p>We see that the Council holds detailed data on training and over a period of time. We are pleased to note the monitoring taking place which allows the Council to find out who is attending training, according to grade, ethnicity etc. We agree that it is important to track the numbers leaving training and learning, when they leave, where possible, in order to deal with any trends.</p> <p>Does the Council have a monitoring method which shows the success of training and the positive effect on the Council's work?</p> <p>Encouraging figures are reported here for senior managers awareness training.</p>
5. Mainstreaming	
i) <i>General</i>	<p>We note the question included in the Equality Impact Assessments. Is there additional information available to those who will be holding the impact assessments? That is, equal access in all respects (personal interface as well as bilingual documents for example) and how the obstacles could be overcome?</p> <p>Do you have examples of mainstreaming the Welsh language to policies where this lead to potential change and progress with regards to provision and use?</p>
ii) <i>The Welsh language in the community and</i>	<p>We recognise the role the Council plays in liaising with other partners on a community level, especially the constructive relationship with the local Menter Iaith.</p>

<i>the workplace</i>	
6. Performance Analysis by Priority and Target	
i) <i>Service Improvement Schemes</i>	Corporate Improvement Schemes certainly need to include an essential section on the Welsh language; in order to identify deficiencies and help record progress. It is good to see this being mainstreamed in such a way to the Council's general, corporate way of managing performance.
ii) <i>Thematic Monitoring</i>	We accept that it was not possible to include these thematic reports as part of the reporting process, if the Council was to report on time. We look forward to receiving copies of these surveys when they become available.
7. Publishing Information about Performance	
	We commend the Council for ensuring that information about the Welsh language and the Language Scheme is detailed and accessible.
8. Other Information	
	<p>We welcome the fact that Caerphilly Council has purchased a Welsh language domain, www.caerphilly.gov.uk, an important step in ensuring a truly bilingual website. As does expanding the range of the Council's general e-mail addresses to also include Welsh names. We also recognise that these are additional developments to the Scheme's commitments and targets. It would be good for the Council to promote and advertise these positive developments. We could discuss possibilities in our feedback meeting.</p> <p>We also agree with the approach to developing the site's bilingual website, namely that there is a focus on the pages receiving the greatest number of hits.</p> <p>It is a positive thing that the translation memory system has lead to a reduction in the expenditure on external translation, money which can be channelled towards other developments for Welsh language services.</p> <p>We would like to ask what system you use, whether you have had any problems with it, for example, with quality?</p>