

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 23RD OCTOBER, 2017

REFERENCE FROM LEARNING AND CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:
16TH OCTOBER, 2017

“ “STRIKING THE RIGHT BALANCE: PROPOSALS FOR A WELSH LANGUAGE BILL” WHITE PAPER CONSULTATION DOCUMENT – PROPOSED COUNCIL RESPONSE (DLS) –

The report drew the Committee’s attention to the White Paper on proposals for a Welsh Language Bill (attached at Appendix A) and sought endorsement for the proposed Council response at Appendix B.

The Head of Performance and Development in presenting the report advised that the Welsh Government was proposing to amend the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 as a result of a two-fold concern:

- that there was too much emphasis on regulation and not enough on promotion;
- that the way the Welsh Language Standards were currently made and enforced was too bureaucratic and time-consuming.

The aim of the White Paper, currently out for consultation, was to strike the right balance and responses were required by 31st October, 2017.

In referring to the proposals, the Head of Service also advised that it covered the following broad areas:

- What should be the Welsh Government’s role in promoting the Welsh language and what national governance arrangements should be adopted, in relation to promotion and regulation?
- What changes should be made to how the Welsh Language Standards were made and enforced?

The White Paper made ten broad proposals which covered the above two areas and Appendix B detailed the list of those proposals with a suggested Council response for each one. The Head of Service further stated that much of what was proposed was indeed welcomed, in particular the reduction in bureaucracy as regards the Standards. However, there did remain concerns about how the different elements of promotion and regulation of the Welsh language were to be treated, which national agency should be responsible for each and the confusion that might still arise if

these powers continued to be split between Welsh Government and the proposed new Welsh Language Commission.

In considering the report, it was the consensus of the meeting that the tone of the response was appropriate but Members considered that it would be a challenge to obtain Welsh Government's ambition to achieve one million Welsh speakers by 2050. It was recognised that the document was trying to encourage and improve the situation, but noted that for the Council, the Education Department would no doubt bear the brunt of the challenge. In order to achieve this, Members felt that it would be important for Welsh Government to ensure that there were enough Welsh medium teachers in positions to help achieve the goals.

The Lead Officer for Improvement and Senior Challenge Advisor informed Committee that currently there were three teachers from the English medium sector who were undertaking intensive training in the Welsh language.

The Chair concurred with Members' sentiments in relation to training teachers and said that encouraging and promoting the use of Welsh was also important. In that regard the Council's efforts in working with organisations such as Menter Bro Morgannwg on events like the annual Gwyl Fach y Fro, now attracting thousands of people, was significant. It was subsequently

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the response attached at Appendix B be endorsed and together with the report be referred to Cabinet for approval with a request that Welsh Government be asked, in addition, to address the issues of teaching capacity and promotion as outlined above to support the development of the Welsh language.

Reason for recommendation

To ensure that the views of the Council are made clear to Welsh Government and that capacity to support the development of the Welsh language is considered and addressed.

Attached as Appendix – [Report to Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee: 16th October, 2017](#)