

Appendix A - Caerphilly County Borough Draft Welsh Language Strategy 2022-27 **Engagement Report**

Introduction and Context

In accordance with the requirements of Welsh Language Standard 145 under the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015 Caerphilly Council has a [Five Year Welsh Language Strategy 2017-2022 in place](#). The strategy sets out actions to promote the Welsh language, increase the number of Welsh speakers and the use of Welsh in the county borough.

Our existing strategy builds on our past successes to meet the needs of Welsh speakers and learners in the county borough and to meet legislative requirements. The actions within the Strategy are meaningful, appropriate and achievable for all involved and are split into 6 Strategic Areas:

1. The Family
2. Children and Young People
3. Communities
4. Welsh Language Services
5. The Workplace
6. Infrastructure (Policies and Practices)

Building on our ongoing commitment, the Welsh Language Strategy has been reviewed and updated for 2022-2027. The Council has undertaken a range of evidence gathering and pre-consultation engagement to develop a revised set of actions of the draft Five Year Welsh Language Strategy 2022-2027. These actions will enable us to plan how we will promote the Welsh language and facilitate the use of the language locally to increase the Welsh speaking population over the next five years.

- A review of legislative requirements
- A review of external reports and guidance, including Welsh Government's '***Cymraeg 2050: our plan for 2021 to 2026***', and the Welsh Language Commissioner's guidance '***Standards relating to promoting the Welsh Language***'
- A review of the Council's current Five Year Welsh Language Strategy 2017-2022
- An analysis of local and national datasets
- Engagement with service delivery managers within the Council
- Engagement with Caerphilly Welsh Language Forum and Welsh in Education Forum

Methodology (What we did)

Engagement took place in two distinct stages:

Stage 1 – informal engagement with stakeholders to review the draft actions and suggest amendments

Stage 2 – a formal consultation to seek the views of residents, elected members, staff and other stakeholders in relation to the draft actions.

These are detailed below:

Stage 1 - Stakeholder Focus Groups

The draft Action Plan within the Strategy was discussed in detail through a number of focus group discussions.

The purpose of the focus groups was to give an opportunity to key stakeholders to discuss the draft actions outlined, to identify if anything was missing or required revision or merging with another action.

Four focus groups were held during September and covered the following:

Group 1 – Children and Young People	Thursday 16 September - 10:30 – 12:00
Group 2 – The Community	Thursday 16 September - 13:30 – 15:00
Group 3 – The Family	Monday 20 September - 13:30 – 15:00
Group 4 – Welsh Language Services and Workforce	Tuesday 21 September - 10:30 – 12:00

A full list of key stakeholders is available in **Annexe 1**.

This approach has helped identify meaningful actions to enable the council deliver against the requirement of Standard 145 and in line with the three themes outlined in Welsh Government's '*Cymraeg 2050: our plan for 2021 to 2026*', which are:

1. Increasing the number of Welsh speaker
2. Increasing the use of Welsh
3. Creating favourable conditions - infrastructure and context

To enable all those who wished to give their views to take part, all documents were made available bilingually and simultaneous translation facilities were available at each focus group. The information regarding the focus groups were sent by invite to all key stakeholders.

It should be noted that Focus Groups 3 was merged with Focus Group 4 due to low numbers and the actions for both Strategic Areas are similar.

To view the responses made during the focus groups please see **Annexe 2**.

Next steps

The outcomes of the focus group discussions were considered alongside feedback from staff and service managers and helped to inform a revised draft Five Year Welsh Language Strategy 2022-2027 Action Plan, before being considered as part of a formal public consultation.

Stage 2 – Public Consultation

The formal consultation took place from 20 October to 24 November 2021.

The formal consultation sought to identify:

- Whether the actions outlined will help meet the intended outcomes for the Family, Children and Young People, Communities, Welsh Language Services, the Workplace and Infrastructure (Policies and Practices)
- Reasons for disagreement with any of the actions outlined
- Suggestions for any additional actions that should be included to make sure that there are positive impacts or increased positive impacts on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
- Any views on the impact that this draft action plan would have on opportunities for people to use Welsh and to make sure that the Welsh language is treated the same as the English language

A copy of the survey can be found in **Annexe 3**

To enable all those who wished to give their views to take part, all consultation documents were made available bilingually and in a variety of formats. The consultation was promoted in a variety of ways and made available across a range of platforms. The primary consultation tool was an online questionnaire but paper copies were also made available.

The consultation was promoted in a variety of ways:

- Residents and the wider audience - To reach as wide an audience as possible the consultation was highlighted on the front page of the Council's website with a link directly to the consultation documentation and an online survey. A paper version of the survey was also available for printing from the Website or on request in a variety of formats.
- Paper copies of the survey were made available in our libraries.
- Details of the consultation were shared via the Council's Twitter feed and Facebook page
- Welsh speaking residents were e-mailed directly through Menter Iaith and shared via other stakeholder groups involved and wider networks.

- Stakeholder groups - those who had been invited to/involved in Stage 1 engagement were e-mailed directly during the first week of the formal consultation period. A reminder was sent the week before the closing date.
- Council service areas were also emailed the consultation documents.

Results

Responses and respondent profile

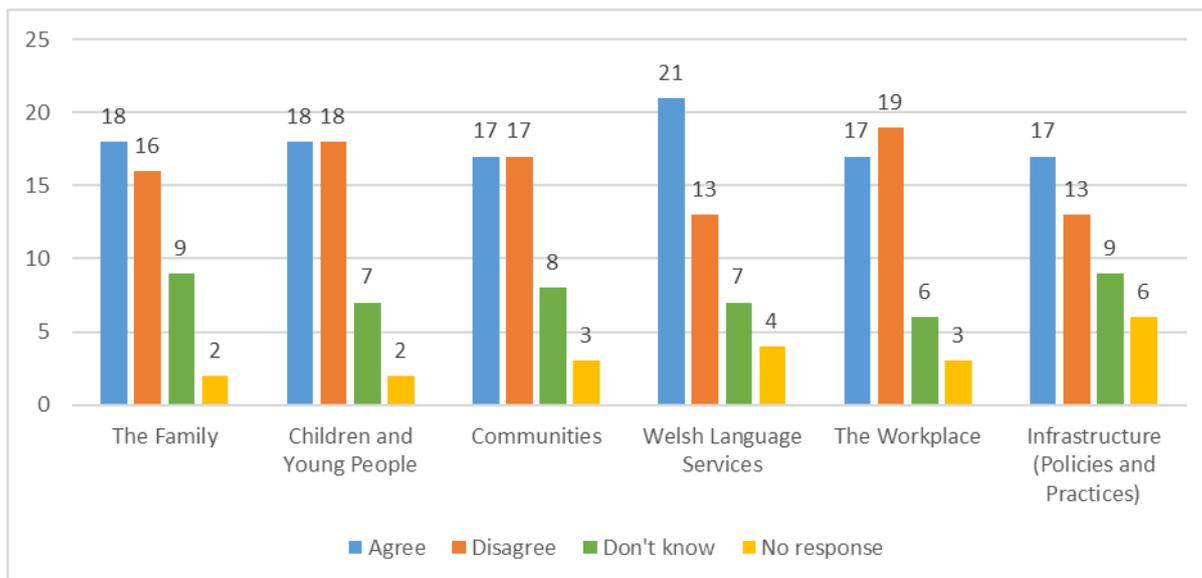
Overall, 45 respondents completed the questionnaire online. Of these:

- 37 indicated that they were residents of Caerphilly county borough
- 33 identified that English was their preferred language whilst 4 respondents identified Welsh as their preferred language. A further 2 respondents said that they were bilingual (Welsh and English) with no preference for either language
- 23 indicated that they were female, 17 were male
- 27 of those who responded were 50+, 12 were aged between 26 – 49 and 2 were aged 16-25

Respondent views and emerging themes

Respondents were asked to identify whether they felt that the actions outlined within each strategic area help meet the intended outcome for the family, children and young people, communities, Welsh language services, the workplace and infrastructure (policies and practices). There were mixed views in relation to each area as shown in Graph 1. Slightly more people agreed than disagreed with the actions for the family, Welsh language services and infrastructure but this was the reverse for children and young people, communities and the workplace.

Graph 1: Do the actions outlined achieve the intended outcomes?



Reasons for disagreeing with any actions outlined

Respondents were asked to outline their reasons for disagreeing with any of the actions outlined and these are summarised below.

General comments

- Unrealistic targets for the timescale.
- I don't disagree as such, as any efforts to support and promote the Welsh language are to be applauded, but I think more consideration needs to be given to how some of these actions can be realistically achieved.
- A number of comments referenced that Caerphilly borough is a predominantly English speaking area

The Family

- Need to engage with new parents earlier (e.g. baby pack with newborns) as many are put off Welsh medium education fearing they will not be able to help their child.
- No amount of promotion will help attract new Welsh speakers if they don't have an interest in the first place. You need to promote earlier e.g. baby groups/play groups etc.

Children and Young people

- outlined strategy does not appear to be significantly different to current strategy
- People will continue to use their first language in the home and at work and it is well known that use of Welsh by school children stops at the school gate or when they are out of hearing of their teachers. Nothing in the strategy seems likely to change this

Communities

- Whilst there are some good intentions in this strategic priority, such as improving Welsh language input and provision during big events such as the Big Cheese, Christmas markets, etc., for any of this to work there needs to be a huge amount of awareness raising for people to even know that they can use Welsh within the borough and that this won't in itself prove to be a barrier.

Welsh Language Services

- The number of complaints relating to non-compliance doesn't mean much if people don't even know what compliance is required; how will they know if it's not being upheld? The annual report on compliance with the Welsh language standards must be more prominent, and more widely promoted - perhaps an infographic version, or slimmed down version for the public facing website? Welsh speakers in particular are interested in this stuff

The Workplace

- outlined strategy does not indicate monitoring methodology within workplaces and whilst I want an increase in use in the Language, the strategy does not indicate funding support, especially for very small businesses

Infrastructure (Policies and Practices)

- This is a vitally important area which underpins all of the other functions of the Council. Sadly, Welsh is often seen as an "add-on" when considering new areas of

work or when reviewing policies and procedures. It **must** become part of the initial planning process for any project, not just in terms of making it bilingual, but in terms of how it can meaningfully support the Welsh language.

Additional Actions identified

The survey identified a number of additional actions that should be considered for inclusion in the action plan as detailed below:

General comments

- I don't see anything to help learners of the Welsh language to be confident in speaking and putting their learning to use.
- Actions to bridge the gap between casual Welsh and literary Welsh for learners to give more of a feel for the basic structure of the language than the usual (but vital) speech patterns taught on early learner courses.
- No mention of opening more Welsh-medium schools and the lack of specific recruitment of Welsh speakers to the council. Encouraging instead of enforcement means that many companies will not use Welsh.
- The language will be more visible but that does not mean that it can be used further in public life if those working with the public do not speak the language.
- Hopefully more people will learn the language and use it!
- Hopefully it will give people the confidence to use Welsh in a wider range of situations. We also hope that they will always be positively received even if the person spoken to cannot speak Welsh

The Family

- With regards to parent and baby groups, for example, Welsh should be introduced little and often rather than a Welsh /English language group exclusively, so parents get used to Welsh in small doses and don't get overwhelmed or intimidated. Parents should be offered Welsh lessons in small groups as evening classes rather than large groups to build confidence learning and speaking Welsh.

Children and Young people

- Children and young people is very comprehensive but it seems geared to what Council Corporate can do, not what Education itself can do. Early years is an area undergoing considerable transformation, so there maybe opportunities here to expand. Welsh Government for example could visit older pupils to tell them about opportunities to work in the medium of Welsh in terms of career guidance, although it maybe covered 2.3
- Children: Open more Welsh-medium schools to normalise Welsh-medium education. There is currently one county-wide secondary school.
- There should be greater emphasis on Welsh History matters in the way History is delivered in Schools. We've seen that the way British history traditionally is taught that it needs and is being revisited to perhaps look differently at the way Colonialism and actions in the past have adversely affected many minority groups

Communities

- Creation of areas in communities where use of Welsh is encouraged and a range of levels is present to support learners

Welsh Language Services

- A dedicated web page for all things Welsh language would be helpful. This could include news items, links to strategic documents, events, or opportunities for people to get involved in supporting and promoting the Welsh language within the borough

The Workplace

- The workplace could include more informal opportunities such as 'lunch time cafe' or welsh speaking 'meet for lunch, after work, or social opportunities to encourage a fun, informal aspect as much of it will be about 'compliance' to the standards, so something that suggests its fun could be more motivational than the message of 'you have too' .
- Not sure I saw anything in the mass of information about the possibility of Welsh being taught in the workplace specifically around the vocabulary needed for the job in hand and any public facing roles.
- Should there be something about promoting the use of Welsh in customer services in the private sector e.g. through the Business Forum? Do local businesses advertise that they can interact with customers through Welsh, are local shops highlighting that they have Welsh speaking staff for example.

Impacts on opportunities to use the Welsh language

A number of comments were received in relation to how the plan will impact on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and how could positive impacts could be increased, or negative impacts be mitigated. These are summarised below.

- A perennial problem is non-use of Welsh after pupils leave Welsh education. People often lose the language. School leavers need to be encouraged to support initiatives after school/university to help young pupils and learners and keep their own Welsh alive
- Anything which aims to support and promote the Welsh language can hopefully only have a positive impact on language skills and use within the borough. My main concern is the implementation of the action plan on an ongoing basis. It takes a lot of effort and work to continue to promote, support and include Welsh in a region that is traditionally less Welsh-speaking.
- Ensure that materials produced are accessible to all
- Encourage more people to wear the Iaith Gwaith badges to indicate to others that they are able to speak Welsh.
- Encourage businesses with Welsh speakers to greet people in Welsh
- Making groups for practice speaking readily available will help learners of all levels, not having confidence to speak is probably one of the biggest problems for learners. I know I am a learner.
- It will be good for more people to learn the Welsh language and it be used a lot more.

- It will hopefully increase places where Welsh is spoken maintain the language for many who learnt it in school and normalise its usage within the community.
- More people in the communities being aware of the opportunities to learn and use Welsh as well as English
- By following the action plan, Caerphilly County Borough Council will ensure more opportunities for people to use their Welsh. By demonstrating clear and strong leadership for the Welsh language when working on joint projects with partner organisations, the positive effects of the strategy could be increased.
- The action plan is very good, comprehensive and if able to be delivered will make a difference and will help to expand the language. However some impacts for those who do not speak Welsh could be to feel threatened or limited opportunities in the job market for not speaking Welsh, so important to bring those who do not speak Welsh in, in a way that is encouraging and not 'compliance'.
- Some of the measures need work as they are not necessarily reflective of what you are trying to achieve. For example some qualitative survey type measures as to whether people feel more confident in using Welsh and enjoyed events rather than number would give a broader picture of success

How the draft plan could be changed to increase positive impacts on the use of the Welsh language

Comments relating to how the plan could be improved to increase positive impact on the use of the Welsh language are summarised below:

- That the action plan should be flexible, and should changes be needed, these can be made during the life of the current strategy, rather than waiting for the review.
- recognition that this is a long term plan
- Having more free courses available for people
- I believe there needs to be many opportunities for learners to come together to practice speaking and listening to the Welsh language. Then once they are confident they can use the language in their day to day dealings.
- It needs more emphasis on opportunities to learn and use Welsh in a social context.
- Possibly a campaign to show the benefits of having two languages. Heritage family culture business wherever you have originally come from. Maybe highlighting innovative use of Welsh or families that have learned Welsh together or how businesses are using Welsh with customers.
- To start cross working with English and Welsh medium schools so eventually all schools would converse in English & Welsh equally and there will not be the need for Different medium schools with competing priorities. This would mean equal funding.
- Welsh is being used more locally than previously as we predominately English speaking. Draft gives people more opportunities to learn Welsh and hopefully more access to employment that require Welsh speakers
- see above. The response to those seeking to communicate in Welsh is vital

- There are plenty of positive actions in the action plan, you don't want to change or add anything.
- Ensure that Welsh-medium education is readily available and locally. Ensure bilingual staff when providing services so that no Welsh speaker is required.

Next steps

The outcomes of the consultation will be considered and the draft Action Plan will be amended accordingly before a final revised version of the Council's Welsh Language Strategy for 2022-2027 is approved by Cabinet in March 2022.

Revisions made to action plan based on respondent views:

University of South Wales added as a partner organisation

Action 1.7 – to include language champions and ambassadors across partner organisations

Action 2.1 – to include all partner organisations

Action 2.6 – to include volunteering and Caerphilly Cares

Action 2.8 – Reworded to: *Develop a webpage on the Council's website with links to all the partner organisations and DEWIS and all the available resources.*

Action 2.10 – to include language champions and ambassadors across partner organisations

Action 2.11 – added the following text: *Link with the delivery of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and the Siarter Iaith and Cymraeg i Blant school leaders.*

Action 2.13 – emphasis on working regionally to develop different methods of communication positive messages about the Welsh language to years 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11.

Action 2.14 – emphasis on working regionally.

Action 3.1 – expand text to say *across all partner organisations.*

Action 3.2 – reword to say: *Encourage and support local businesses to use more Welsh when delivering services, including the distribution and promotion of displaying the Iaith Gwaith signage, badges or lanyards to encourage Welsh speakers and learners to actively access services through the Welsh language.*

Action 3.5 – expand text to include: *and develop opportunities where there are gaps.*

Action 3.7 – text merged with Action 3.2.

Action 3.7 – add text: *Promote Welsh courses for refugees.*

Action 3.8 – expand text to include *work regionally* and also *Develop a 'Freshers' Event and information pack for parents sending their children to Welsh school for the first time.*

Action 3.9 – New Action: *Work on a regional basis to actively raise awareness of the general public of the Welsh language, including why we are doing so, the rights of Welsh speakers to receive goods and services through then medium of Welsh, and live their daily life through the medium of Welsh.*

Action 3.9 – New Action: *Work with Caerphilly Business Club to raise local businesses' awareness of opportunities and resources available for them to provide a Welsh language service.*

Action 4.2 – include *working in partnership.*

Action 4.6 – state *the Council's Staff Recognition Scheme.*

Action 5.3 – emphasis on *work regionally*.

Action 5.8 – New Action: *The Council and partner organisations to undertake a linguistic skills audit of their staff to understand what capacity there is. Opportunities to work in partnership should any gaps be identified.*

Action 5.9 – New Action: *Work regionally to develop a good practice guide on how to use Welsh effectively e.g. bilingual greetings at the start of meetings etc.*

Action 5.10 – New Action: *Ensure the Welsh language is considered and included as part of any induction process for new starters.*

Action 5.11 – New Action: *Develop a Linguistic Skills Strategy to support the council's commitment to the Welsh language and the implementation of the Welsh Language Standards.*

Action 5.13 – New Action: *Work regionally to develop opportunities for Welsh speakers and learners to have use their Welsh language skills in an informal setting, such as lunchtime café, coffee mornings etc.*

Annexes:

Annexe 1: Stage 1 Engagement Stakeholder List

Annexe 2: Notes of stakeholder focus groups (Stage 1)

Annexe 3: Stage 2 Formal Consultation Survey

Annexe 4: Digest of comments from survey (Stage 2)