

Report To: Board of Management – 30.06.16

Report From: Nia Bennett, Director of Corporate Services
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Title of Report: Welsh Language Scheme Progress

Purpose of Report: For Approval/Scrutiny

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- advise Members on the progress of Taff Welsh Language Scheme (WLS) commitments;
- inform Board on the progress of the new proposed Welsh Language Standards;
- approve submission of this report to the Welsh Language Commissioner.

2.0 Delivery Outcomes

2.1 The following Delivery Outcomes are associated with the WLS:

- We place the people who want to use our services at the heart of our work – putting the citizen first.
- We live public sector values, by conducting our affairs with honesty and integrity, and demonstrate good governance through our behaviour.
- We engage with others to enhance and maximise outcomes for our service users and the community.
- We can demonstrate that we treat the Welsh and English languages on the basis of equality.

3.0 Background

3.1 A draft Welsh Language Scheme (WLS) was prepared during 2007/2008, and approved in May 2008 by the Welsh Language Board (WLB). A revised WLS was approved by Board in June 2011 and approved by the WLB on 22nd August 2011. One of the requirements of the WLS is that we report progress to Board and Tenants annually and signpost to the public where the report is available in our Annual Report.

3.2 The role of Welsh Language Commissioner was created by the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, which also provided statutory status for the Welsh Language in Wales and establishes the principle that the Welsh language should be treated no less favourably than the English language. In April 2012, the Commissioner's role became statutory with its principal function being to promote and facilitate the use of Welsh.

3.3 The two principal aims of the Welsh Government for ensuring prosperity of the Welsh language are to increase its acquisition and use. Whilst the Welsh Government itself has the responsibility for language acquisition through its Welsh medium education strategy, the responsibility for increasing use is a responsibility shared with the Commissioner.

3.4 In the summer of 2012, the Commissioner consulted with organisations in Wales on the introduction of set standards. If Board recall, Registered Social Landlords had specific

standards presented at that time and Taff presented our response to the consultation expressing our concerns about timescales and proportionality. The results of the consultation proved varied and the then Minister for Education who also had responsibility for the Welsh Language, did not approve the standards as presented.

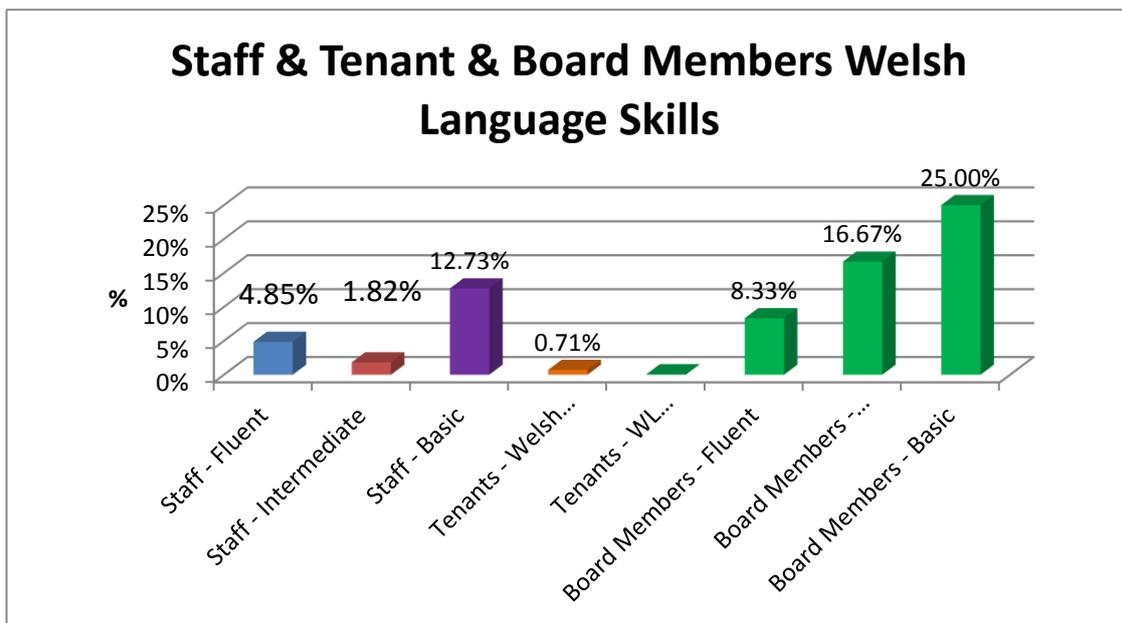
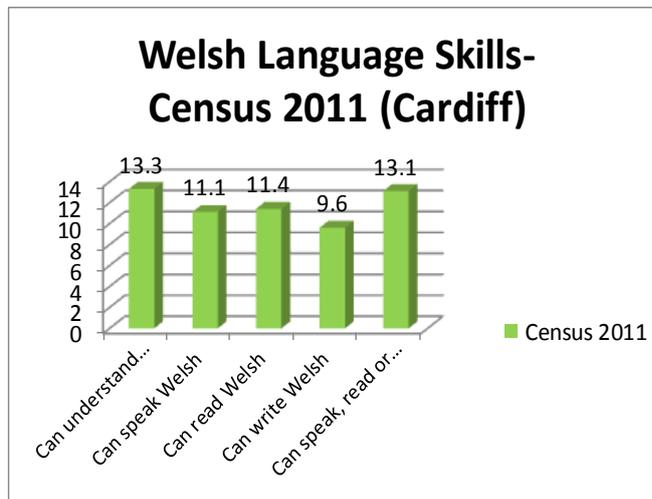
- 3.5 The Commissioner subsequently re-started the consultation process, divided into three tranches based on the different levels of expected requirements in terms of Welsh language delivery. This consultation was conducted through a process of standards investigation. Organisations were invited to answer a set number of questions and provide comment with supporting evidence on the suitability and proportionality of implementing each Standard.
- 3.6 *'The Welsh Language Standards Regulations (no1) 2015'* were passed in the National Assembly for Wales Plenary Session on 24th March 2015. Although these regulations have been developed to impose duties on Local & Welsh Government Organisations, Welsh Ministers and National Parks these are the standards that the Welsh Language Commissioner considered when determining the second and third round of standards investigation.
- 3.7 Taff was part of the third tranche and completed the required information for the Commissioner' in August 2015. On 30th October 2015, and the Commissioner subsequently published comments received and is in the process of compiling a standards report that will set out the conclusions of the standards investigation.
- 3.8 The Welsh Government's Welsh Language Unit (WLU), which is separate from the Welsh Language Commissioner, is meeting with a number of individual housing associations in order to understand the nature of our work and customer base so that proportionality is applied. I will meet with the Welsh Language Unit on 5th July 2016.
- 3.9 The WLU has informed that they are using the Welsh Language Standards (No. 2) Regulations 2016 that came into force on 16 February 2016 as a guide to the new regulations that will apply to housing associations.
<http://www.cynulliad.cymru/laid%20documents/sub-ld10488/sub-ld10488-e.pdf>
The 168 standards listed in the regulations are the options from which the Commissioner can choose. Our responses to the Commissioner's investigation along with information we present at any meeting we have with the WLU will inform their decision on the standards that will apply to us. Furthermore, we will also be able to liaise with the Commissioner if we find that some standards set would be unreasonable to implement, or if we think that some standards aren't strong enough.
- 3.10 It is envisaged that the standards report will be published in the Autumn, presented to the Assembly early in the New Year, and pending their decision, implemented in the following months.
- 3.10 Until new Standards are implemented, organisations are advised to continue with the process of providing an annual progress report on current WLS to the Commissioner. This monitoring report contains information and provides evidence of the main elements implemented from our agreed Welsh Language Scheme and Implementation plan. This report will be published on our, and the Commissioner's web sites along with the Commissioners' response.

4.0 Progress June 2015- June 2016

Action	Lead Officer	Target Completion Date	
Maintain information based on which of our customers prefer to be dealt with in Welsh. Establish appropriate 'field' on Taff HA's computer system to store information; dovetail with community languages monitoring.	Head of Housing and Community Services	December 2011 – completed and on-going thereafter	Tenant Profiling Exercise completed 2014 – (this is a live database). Specific questions included about Welsh Language within the profiling questionnaire. Information collated for new Tenants added to the database, leavers taken off data base. Statistics noted below.
Re-inform current staff about the Scheme and explain what is required of them.	Director of Corporate Services	March 2012 - completed then periodically	Information included as part of Corporate Induction Day for new staff Scheme publicised to Staff via new Intranet November 2015
Continue to include scheme details and question and answer session at staff induction programme so that all new starters are aware of the scheme and what is expected of them.	Human Resources Team	On-going	Our Corporate Induction Day continues to include details of the Welsh Language Scheme and highlights staff responsibilities for its implementation. Questions about the Welsh Language Scheme are included as part of the quiz that is undertaken as part of the training and a copy of the Welsh Language Scheme is included in the packs sent to all attendees in advance of the day.
When re-ordering headed paper and business cards etc. ensure that headings are bi-lingual	PA/Office Co-ordinator	On-going	We now use electronic templates for each office all of which are bi-lingual. Business cards are bi-lingual. The main logo has also been amended and shows the company name bi-lingual
Conduct biennial staff language skills survey.	HR Assistant	December 2011 – completed; ongoing thereafter	Information captured at appointment stage for all new starters. Staff can access to amend details through self-service.
Asses Welsh language training to meet the needs of the service	Line Managers/ Human Resources Team	ongoing	Assessment of skills indicates that Taff has Welsh language capabilities to meet the current needs of the service. We have 2 staff members attending Welsh Language classes.
As jobs are reviewed and advertised consider	All line	On-going	All jobs advertised during 2015/16 were advertised

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whether Welsh should be a desirable or essential criterion for the job.	managers		as Welsh Language desirable. There was no requirement for any role to be advertised as Welsh language essential.
When considering Board membership, have regard for the need for Welsh language skills.	Chief Executive	September 2011 (AGM) and annually	We have 1 fluent, 2 intermediate and 3 basic Welsh speaker(s) on our Board. Language information is now captured as part of ongoing equality monitoring
Review use of Web and consider introducing Welsh Language headings	IT Manager	April 2012-ongoing	We launched our new website in June 2015. Static pages are fully bi-lingual Welsh/English
Publish Welsh Language Monitoring Report on Taff website	IT Manager	November 2011 and annually	Our Welsh Language Scheme and Monitoring report is available on our website in Welsh & English. Our annual report is now electronic and is published bilingually in Welsh and English.
Review Taff HA's Welsh Language Scheme in line with policy/strategy review schedule.	Director of Corporate Services	July 2013	Advised by Commissioner's office to continue with current scheme pending implementation of agreed new standards



- From the information provided in the Tenant Profiling exercise (2014) which is updated as new Tenants join and others leave, 9 Tenants state that they speak Welsh at home. We have 1262 tenants.
- We have 1 Tenant who has stated that they would prefer to be contacted in Welsh but has not expressed a preference to receive their correspondence in Welsh.
- No e-mails or letters have received or sent to Tenants in Welsh.
- We have had no telephone conversations in Welsh with Tenants.
- We have had no request for meetings to be conducted in Welsh.
- We have had no requests for public meetings to be conducted in Welsh or for translation at any public events.
- We have not received any complaints about the operation of our Scheme. We have received one comment via Twitter about the signage at Saint Canna Court.
- We have 8 staff members who speak Welsh fluently, 3 at an intermediate level and 21 can have a basic conversation in Welsh.
- We have not received any complaints about the operation of our Scheme.
- We have named one new site during 15/16 – the former Canton Police Station. We referenced the scheme to Saint Canna, a 6th Century Female Saint. Discussions and correspondence with Cardiff Council Highways regarding the proposed name of

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Cwrt Santes Canna concluded that it sounded too similar to Cwrt Treganna, which is one of our previous schemes further up on Cowbridge Road East. It was decided to keep the reference and call the scheme Saint Canna Court. There was an error in the initial signage associated with this scheme. As all of our other schemes have Welsh names, we have erected Welsh only signage. The initial signage was produced in English only. A translation of the scheme name has been provided and new signage ordered. Upon inspection, the health & safety associated signage for this scheme had also been erected in English only – new bi-lingual signage has been ordered. The temporary signage produced during the development stage was bi-lingual in Welsh and English. The road markings have been painted bi-lingual.

- We have not erected any permanent signage in our offices during the last 12 months.
- We sent bi-lingual invites to Annual General Meeting
- Our new Staff Charter was produced in Welsh and in English
- Our on-line Annual Report and the Annual Report summary document was published bi-lingual in Welsh and English
- We issued a bi-lingual Welsh/ English advertisement to support the Big Issue magazine.

5.0 Recommendation

- 5.1 Board Members note the progress on the Scheme and approve the submission of this progress report to the Welsh Language Commissioner.