

**Report To:** Board of Management – 25.06.15

**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

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## **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 22<sup>nd</sup> 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. The First Minister now has responsibility for the Welsh Language.

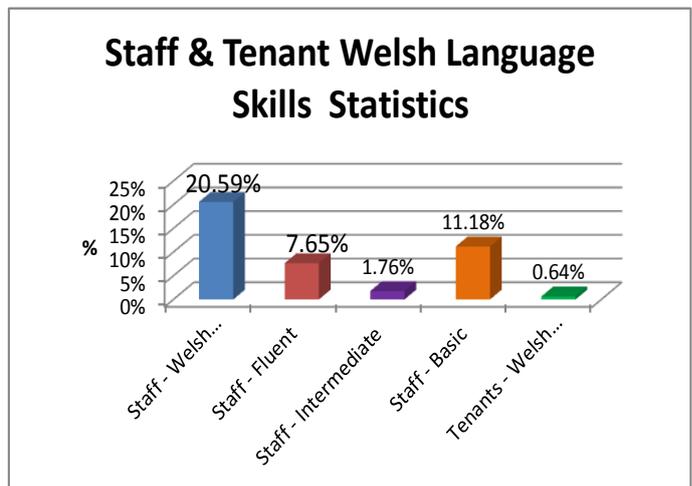
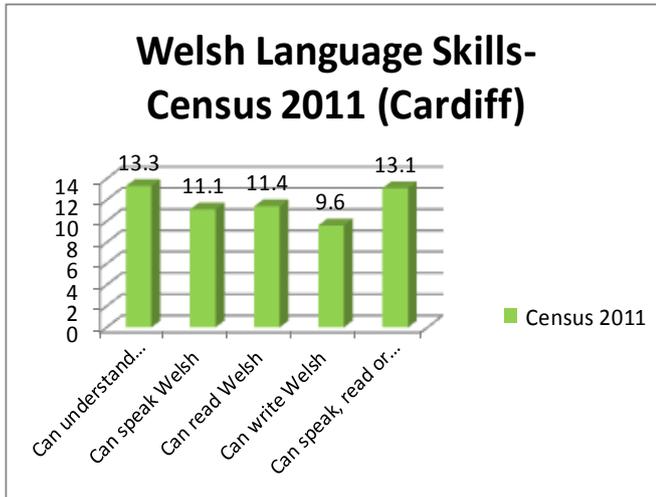
- 3.5 The Commissioner subsequently re-started the consultation process, divided into three tranches based on the different levels of expected requirements in terms of Welsh language delivery. This consultation is conducted through a process of standards investigation. Organisations are invited to answer a set number of questions and provide comment with supporting evidence on the suitability and proportionality of implementing each Standard.
- 3.6 On 24<sup>th</sup> March 2015 '*The Welsh Language Standards Regulations (no1) 2015*' were passed in the National Assembly for Wales Plenary Session, although these regulations have been developed to impose duties on Local & Welsh Government Organisations, Welsh Ministers and National Parks. The Welsh Language Commissioner will consider the standards specified in these regulations when determining the third round of standards investigation.
- 3.7 The Consultation/ Standards Investigation of the second tranche of 119 organisations included Universities, Health Boards and Further education institutions, has finished. Registered Social Landlords form part of the third and final consultation group of 64; that also includes government agencies, water companies, the Royal Mail and the Post Office. This process started on 26<sup>th</sup> May. Taff will be providing a response. The Commissioner is also consulting with the public and presenting conclusions to the First Minister in October 2015.
- 3.8 Until new Standards are implemented, organisations have been 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 July 2014- July 2015

Action	Lead Officer	Target Completion Date	
Maintain information base 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 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	Full presentation about the scheme to all staff at briefing November 2011. Leadership Team aware that they have responsibility for ensuring compliance for their service area. Commitment to the Welsh Language Scheme highlighted in staff briefings in July 2013. Information thereafter included as part of Corporate Induction Day for new staff – see below.
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. We will be developing an on-line training module on our Welsh Language Scheme as part of our E-Academy
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	Initial survey in June 2011 – further survey in July 2013. This information is now held and updated on an internal HR system. Information captured at

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			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	Human Resources Team	June 2012	<p>Assessment of skills indicates that Taff has Welsh language capabilities to meet the needs of the service. Some staff have indicated that they would like Welsh Language lessons, as this is a long term commitment on the part of staff and the requirements are at a variety of levels. We have 2 staff members currently attending Welsh Language classes.</p> <p>Website for learning Welsh has been promoted to staff during the year via Intranet :Link to a few websites where you can start on your journey to learn Welsh  <a href="https://site.saysomethingin.com/welsh/course1">https://site.saysomethingin.com/welsh/course1</a> (IPhone App also available)  <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/learning/learnwelsh/">http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/learning/learnwelsh/</a>  <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/learnwelsh/bigwelshchallenge/">http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/learnwelsh/bigwelshchallenge/</a>            Launching this week is Cariad@Iaith where 8 celebs try and learn Welsh  <a href="http://www.s4c.co.uk/cariadaiath/e_index.shtml">http://www.s4c.co.uk/cariadaiath/e_index.shtml</a></p> <p>The regular feature called 'Y Gornel Gymraeg' (The Welsh Corner) continues in the bi-monthly E-zine - this provides key words and phrases to staff.</p>
As jobs are reviewed and advertised consider whether Welsh should be a desirable or essential criterion for the job.	All line managers	On-going	All jobs advertised during 2014/15 were advertised 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 2 fluent, 2 intermediate and 1 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	We launched our new website in June 2015 which is 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 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) and in relation to current Tenants, we have 8 stating that they speak Welsh at home.
- We have 1 Tenant who has stated that they have a preference to receive their correspondence in Welsh.
- No e-mails or letters have been 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 13 staff members who speak Welsh fluently, 3 at an intermediate level and 19 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 2014/15, Cwrt y Bragdy (Formerly known as The Maltings Public House)
- The two other developments that we completed were built in existing streets - Earl Lane and Albert Street.
- All permanent signs erected in our offices and our developments during 2014/15 are bi-lingual (4 signs erected in total).
- We sent bi-lingual invites to our scheme opening.

## 5.0 Recommendation

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