

**OFFICIAL ATTENDANCE OF RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCILS WELSH LANGUAGE CABINET
STEERING GROUP**

Minutes of the meeting of the Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group on Monday 1st December, 2014 at 10am at the Council Headquarters, Clydach Vale.

County Borough Councillors in attendance:-

G Hopkins – Chairman

R Bevan

(Mrs).E Hanagan

(Mrs) M Webber

Officers in attendance

Mr C Hanagan –Service Director, Cabinet & Public Relations

Mrs W Edwards – Head of Community Learning

Mr S Gealy – Head of Welsh Language Services Unit

Mrs E Wilkins – Cabinet Support Officer

Mr Rhys George – Simultaneous Translator

1. Welcome & Introductions

The Chairman welcomed both Members and officers to the inaugural meeting of the Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group and commented upon the future intentions of the group going forward, following the introduction of the Welsh Language Standards and the corresponding standards that the Council would need to adhere to, where appropriate. The Chairman referred the Steering Group to the amended papers that had been circulated, with both the agenda and report available bilingually, which was the intention for all future meetings.

The Chairman advised the group of the apologies received from Cllr C Davies and added that in future the meeting dates would try to accommodate all Members diaries. It was also advised that apologies for the day's meetings had been received from the Director, Education & Lifelong Learning and from the Chief Executive, Menter Iaith.

2. Terms of Reference & Membership

The Service Director, Cabinet & Public Relations advised the Group of the overall role of the group, as intended within the Leaders Scheme of Delegation, referring Members to the responsibilities of the Council in respect of the Welsh Language Standards and commented that the role of the group, would be to consider matters of strategic significance, with any

recommendations of the group being reported back to Cabinet. The Service Director, commented that this process would further promote the Welsh language Scheme, including publication of papers through the Councils website.

The Cabinet Support Officer proceeded to take Members through the report before them, advising of the Terms of Reference of the Group and its purpose as outlined within the Leaders Scheme of Delegation for Executive Functions. Details in respect of the group's Membership was also outlined, with it being advised that substitution for the group was not applicable.

For clarification purposes the title of the group was addressed, with the Cabinet Support Officer recommending that with the approval of the group all future reference for the Group would be 'the Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group'.

The Chairman thanked the officers for the report and opened the item to Members.

One Member queried how well the Council currently complied with the Welsh Language Scheme and the Head of Community Learning advised the Group that the Council had in general some very good areas of compliance and best practice, although this was not a consistent picture across the whole of the Council Services. Members were advised that the Welsh Language Commissioner would issue a Compliance Notice for each Authority advising them of the standards they will be required to meet in the New Year, which would assist the Authority going forward.

The Vice Chairman, Councillor (Mrs) Hanagan asked to put on record her thanks to all the staff at the Welsh Language Services Unit for their guidance and hard work during her period as Chair of the former Welsh Language Taskforce. The Chairman of the Cabinet Steering Group also extended his thanks to the Vice Chair for her previous role in this area.

Following discussions the Group **RESOLVED** :-

- a) To note the contents of the report
- b) To agree the Terms of Reference as detailed within the Leaders Scheme of Delegation
- c) That all future references for the Group would be the 'Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group'.

3. Next Steps.

The Chairman commented on the need for the group to devise a Work Programme going forward, and commented upon the future report of the Commissioner which would be used as the main framework. Officers in attendance commented further on the compliance notice and the 5 year plan that would need to be published, addressing any compliance issues identified.

These minutes are subject to agreement at the next meeting of the Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group.

The budget implications to the Council with the implementation of the Welsh Language Standards and its 179 regulations was queried and the officers confirmed that there would be capacity issues within the department although commented upon the Welsh Language Skills framework developed through Human Resources, which would reduce cost implications, through the up skilling of staff currently working within departments.

The Head of Welsh Language commented that of the 179 standards within the regulations, not all would be applicable to the Authority and commented that the Commissioner had based the standards on what was deemed 'reasonable and proportionate'.

Members of the group discussed the receiving of communication, in particular emails through the medium of Welsh and the current process of responding to such communication. The Chairman added that due to the discussions in this area, that this could be a potential item for the Groups forward Work Programme.

The Chairman continued by providing insight into some further areas for incorporation on the Work Programme and the Service Director, Cabinet & Public Relations requested that the revised Social Media Policy also be added to the Work Programme.

Following discussions the group **RESOLVED** to:-

- Utilise the Compliance Notice from the Commissioner and forward project plan as the basis of the forward Work Programme.
- That the following items be added to the programme at an appropriate time – More than Just Words, Welsh Language Skills Framework, Street Naming, Communications & Responses, Annual Monitoring Report (complaints), Social Media Policy.
- That the Head of the Welsh Language Services Unit provide Group Members with the figures illustrating the percentage of Welsh Speakers within the County Borough.

The Chairman thanked all the Members and Officers for their attendance and contribution to the meeting.

This meeting closed at 10.40am

Cllr G Hopkins

Chairman.