

My Ref: T: Scrutiny/PRAP/Comm Papers/Correspondence

Date: 05 June 2019



County Hall  
Cardiff,  
CF10 4UW  
Tel: (029) 2087 2087

Neuadd y Sir  
Caerdydd,  
CF10 4UW  
Ffôn: (029) 2087 2088

Councillor Chris Weaver,  
Cabinet Member Finance, Modernisation & Performance,  
Cardiff Council,  
County Hall,  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW

Dear Councillor Weaver,

### **Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee: 8 May 2019**

As Chair of the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee, thank you for attending Committee to update Members on the progress being made with the Bilingual Cardiff Strategy Action Plan which had been drafted to enable Cardiff to play its part in achieving the vision of the Welsh Government to have a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

Members would also like to thank Ffion Gruffudd the Operational Manager of Bilingual Cardiff for her clear presentation. We offer the following comments and observations for your consideration as you progress the Bilingual Cardiff Strategy Action Plan.

The Committee acknowledged that the Bilingual Cardiff Action Plan was actually a major change programme and that the Bilingual Cardiff team considered themselves in a good position to successfully deliver the action plan. The effective delivery of the existing action plan was acknowledged by the Welsh Language Commissioner who had indicated that the changes that had been made were “already plain to be seen”. It was identified that clear governance arrangements needed to be put into in place but those partners essential to achieving the expected outcomes had already agreed the draft action plan and were committed to realising its objectives. However, there were some concerns that the duty for Welsh Language Standards which provided the basis for the draft Bilingual Cardiff Action plan was primarily the responsibility of Cardiff Council. Monitoring the action plan would be undertaken at quarterly meetings with partners, but ensuring everyone continued to support the Authority in the achievement of the action plan would still be a significant challenge.

The committee queried the introduction and development of a bilingual school in Plasdwr. It was suggested that the introduction of bi-lingual schools could be a dilution of the Welsh language in education. It was explained that the proposal in the Plasdwr development would be to provide Welsh Medium Education and English Medium Education with a heavy use of Welsh. Having a bilingual school provided an opportunity for parents living in the new development to have their children attend a school where Welsh is spoken from the outset. This also prevented any adverse demand impact on nearby Welsh and English medium schools and would provide some stability in terms of the number of school places. That would not be the case if a single language school was established. However, with the growth of the Plasdwr development it was anticipated that other schools would be opened which would then enable the provision of Welsh and English medium schools.

The committee acknowledged the achievements that had already been made with the current action plan and the variety of activities being delivered through the medium of Welsh. The aim of developing bilingual young people during their educational years was seen as positive. However, there were challenges regarding the transition points between primary and secondary schools and again into the workplace where opportunities to maintain the use of the Welsh outside of the school gates were more difficult to locate, deliver and maintain. An example of this was that there was not a Welsh Language Youth Centre in Cardiff to support the use of the Welsh language for young people outside of the educational environment. Members requested further information on the establishment of the Youth Centre which it was allocated funding in this year's budget.

Another challenge was measuring the overall use of the Welsh language, to enable the investment being made in Welsh education to be professionally assessed.

The committee welcomed the recruitment of a Welsh tutor to continue the increase of Welsh speakers within the Authority and the introduction of Welsh word of the day to encourage the use of Welsh in the day to day business of the authority.

The committee asked whether difficulties were experienced for those seeking employment with mathematics or science based roles when taught in Welsh

particularly when looking for employment outside of Wales. The subjective view expressed was that people learned in their own language and this should not be seen as a barrier to employment. Whether employers see the matter differently was not clear and we suggested that this be investigated further.

Members expressed concerns that the procurement of software and other facilities necessary to achieve the Welsh Language Standard was constrained by the reduced pool of providers and services able to meet the demands of these requirements. The committee was informed of some positive outcomes that have been achieved including the provision of a bilingual Next Bike service.

It was acknowledged that there were challenges with bilingual computer services. One such challenge is the potential provision of “chatbot” for customer services enquiries. This matter is presently being addressed in Wales in consultation with Microsoft.

Overall, the Bilingual Cardiff Strategy Action Plan was reported as providing positive outcomes and that, as part of the ongoing monitoring of the progress of the strategy, it was agreed that this item be reviewed next year in accordance with the requirement for ongoing scrutiny including monitoring the outcomes achieved against the plans submitted and approved.

Finally, as Councillors, Members have considerable experience of accessing the Council’s frontline services, and we urge you to engage with all Members and utilise their expertise to assist in the development of services.

Once again, on behalf of the Committee, my sincere thanks for attending the PRAP Scrutiny Committee.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Walker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**COUNCILLOR DAVID WALKER  
CHAIR, POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Cc: Members of the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee.  
Councillor Huw Thomas - Leader of the Council and Portfolio holder.  
Ffion Gruffudd the Operational Manager of Bilingual Cardiff  
Cabinet Support Team