

Fy Nghyf / My Ref: CM41690

Eich Cyf / Your Ref: Scrutiny/PRAP/Comm Papers/Correspondence

Dyddiad / Date: 16th July 2019

Councillor David Walker
Chair - Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee
County Hall
Atlantic Wharf
Cardiff Bay
CF10 4UW

Annwyl/Dear David

Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee - 8 May 2019

Thank you for your letter dated 5th June 2019 and for considering the Bilingual Cardiff Strategy Revised Action Plan in the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee on the 8th of May 2019.

As you will be aware the revised Action Plan was approved by full Council in June and the Bilingual Cardiff team will now be liaising with all of the Strategy's many partners in order to implement the numerous and wide-ranging objectives, all with the intention of increasing the number and percentage of Welsh speakers, as well as the use and visibility of the Welsh language, in the city.

I am pleased that the Committee acknowledged that the Bilingual Cardiff Action Plan was a major change programme and that the Bilingual Cardiff team considered themselves in a good position to successfully deliver the outcomes. It must be noted that even though the Bilingual Cardiff Strategy was developed as a statutory requirement, partnership working in this regard was already well underway prior to the introduction of Welsh Language Standards. In 2014, the Council organised the Bilingual Cardiff conference in City Hall, bringing together over 40 partners from a variety of organisations with a view to working together to develop a truly bilingual Cardiff and as such many of the partners were already on board prior to the drafting of the Strategy and were crucial in its development.

ATEBWCH I / PLEASE REPLY TO :

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GWEITHIO DROS GAERDYDD, GWEITHIO DROSOCH CHI

Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg, Saesneg neu'n ddwyieithog. Byddwn yn cyfathrebu â chi yn ôl eich dewis, dim ond i chi roi gwybod i ni pa un sydd well gennych. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

WORKING FOR CARDIFF, WORKING FOR YOU

The Council welcomes correspondence in Welsh, English or bilingually. We will ensure that we communicate with you in the language of your choice, as long as you let us know which you prefer. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay.



Having built some highly effective partnerships over a number of years, and bringing new partners on board as implementation progresses, I am confident that when PRAP consider the item again next year, we will be in a position to report that significant/steady progress has been made regarding both the implementation and monitoring of the outcomes achieved against the plans submitted and approved.

In response to the other points raised I would note as follows:

Plasdŵr

The proposal for primary education at Plasdŵr is for a dual form of entry school, one stream Welsh medium and the second stream English medium – but with significant use of Welsh. In practice it is anticipated that this will mean up to 50% of education in the English stream being through the medium of Welsh which would be a significant departure for the English language primary sector in Cardiff.

It is anticipated that this will dovetail with future WG re-categorisation of schools in Wales and could be seen as a pioneering approach that has the potential to serve as a model of linguistic excellence, able to support new practice in other Cardiff schools as well as the demands of the new Education Curriculum.

This model would enable close partnership working of the streams through sharing a site, staff and facilities, would facilitate full language immersion for children within the Welsh-medium stream on the one hand and would also enable the children within the predominantly English-medium stream to build more secure Welsh language acquisition. The ambition being that many of those pupils, if the parents were confident and so wished, would be more able, with the necessary support in place, to go on to Welsh medium secondary education at Ysgol Plas Mawr or elsewhere, than happens at present.

Currently pupils in both mediums in Cardiff can go on to their secondary medium of choice, utilising the excellent immersion unit for those pupils wishing to transfer to Welsh medium secondary education. However, this primary school model could better facilitate that process for a comparatively greater number of pupils, and in so doing the model -would be a positive contribution to the 1 million Welsh speakers 2050 target set by Welsh Government.

As was noted, this would also avoid any adverse effect on current provision in the area, in both Welsh and English medium schools, it offers parents in the area some linguistic choice and it doesn't preclude opening single language schools at the Plasdŵr development in future.

Youth Provision

I can confirm that the allocation in this year's budget of £30k, as in previous years, is granted to the Urdd and Menter Caerdydd for the provision of youth services within the community and not for the establishment of a Welsh medium Youth Centre. For your information, the Bilingual Cardiff Cross-Party Member Group (BCMG) had invited the Council's Achievement Leader (Targeted Support) and youth services budget holder to its meeting held on 1st of July 2019 with a view to establishing percentage spend on Welsh medium provision, priorities going forward and opportunities to work in partnership in order to maximise the current WM budget allocation. In addition, they have asked for an

overview of current Council-led Welsh Medium youth provision in the city and the opportunities for young people to use the Welsh language and access Welsh medium youth provision outside the school gates. The BCMG will be writing to the Cabinet with their recommendations.

Employment

We are awaiting a response from Central South Consortium officers on attainment levels of Welsh Medium pupils studying STEM subjects (compared to English Medium) at key stages and at both GCSE and A level. When we receive that information in due course we'll pass it on to the Committee.

However, we are not aware of any specific information available as to how employers view Welsh Medium STEM qualifications, nor if Welsh medium pupils have faced any particular difficulties in gaining employment in STEM roles – both in Wales and further afield.

However I would observe that Welsh medium pupils in general seem to fare at least as well in the employment market, both here in Wales and further afield. Businesses both here and elsewhere after all do employ people with English, Slovenian, Spanish, Finish, French, Czech as well as Welsh medium STEM qualifications from internationally recognized qualification awarding bodies - and in addition, employers also seem to value the extra skills that another language brings to their business.

Procurement of Software

The Welsh language standards issued to local authorities are also applicable to third parties contracted to provide services on our behalf and all procurement contracts have included standard terms and conditions requiring all third parties to comply with the requirements of any relevant standards for a number of years.

A 'Welsh language screening test' is now part of all tenders, and must be completed by officers during the pre-tender stage. The aim of the screening test is to identify which Welsh language standards are likely to apply to the contract, so that these can be included as part of the service specification from the outset. The Contract Award Report also includes reference to the Welsh Language Standards in order to ensure that legislative requirements have been communicated clearly from the outset.

Whilst I acknowledge that it can sometimes be challenging to procure certain 'off the shelf' software and apps in Welsh, I am committed to leading the way with regards to the development of Welsh within software and systems as this area of work is crucial as we strive towards a million Welsh speakers by 2050. We have, for example, worked with partners to ensure that the Next Bike, MiPermit and Park Cardiff apps are fully bilingual and have, more recently, been working with Microsoft on the development of a bilingual Customer Service Chatbot. The bilingual capacity of the chatbot was tried and tested earlier this month and I am pleased to report that it passed with flying colours. The development of a fully bilingual chatbot was particularly challenging as this technology did not exist elsewhere, but demonstrates the importance of outlining specific requirements as part of the tender process and ensuring that the successful contract is awarded to a company that can demonstrate delivering bilingual capabilities.

Finally, I am unclear as to what the Committee had in mind when asking for 'the investment being made in Welsh education to be professionally assessed' and will respond to this point once I receive further clarification.

Once again, my sincere thanks in considering this item and for your contribution in the formulation of the revised action plan. I look forward to reporting positive outcomes in your Committee within a year of its approval by full Council.

Yn gywir/Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Weaver', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Cyghorydd/Councillor Chris Weaver
Aelod Cabinet Dros Gyllid, Moderneiddio a Pherfformiad
Cabinet Member Finance, Modernisation & Performance