



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL
MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council

#SHWMAERONMENT

**FIVE YEAR WELSH
LANGUAGE
PROMOTIONAL
STRATEGY FOR
MERTHYR TYDFIL
COUNTY BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

July 2017

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SECTION 1

FOREWORD

In 2011 the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure replaced the Welsh Language Act 1993 and as part of the new legislation in Wales the Welsh language has equal legal status with English and must not be treated any less favourably. Public bodies are no longer required to develop and implement a Welsh Language Scheme, but must comply with a set of Welsh Language Standards instead.

The Welsh Language Commissioner issued all local authorities with their Compliance Notices on 30th September 2015. As a Council we are endeavouring to comply with the Welsh Language Standards which came into force on 30th March 2016 and are making every effort to respond to them in a positive manner.

One of the duties imposed upon the Council by Standards 145 and 146 is the need to produce a five year Promotional Strategy, and to publish that on its website, and to report on it at the end of the five years.

As well as our duty to comply with the requirements of the Measure, the Strategy also reflects the requirements to facilitate the use of the language in line with the Welsh Government's Welsh Language Strategy 2012;17 and the Million Welsh Speakers Strategy. It also reflects our obligations under the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, where one of the Wellbeing Goals is "A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language". The provision of Welsh medium education is key to this, so it is our aim to continue to provide good quality Welsh medium education.

This Strategy also contributes to the following requirements of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:

- Improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales by contributing to achieving the Wellbeing Goals set out in the Act.
- Making public bodies consider how they work better with people and communities and each other in the longer term, and adopt preventative and collaborative approaches to ensure long-term sustainability.

With reference to; the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act, which came into force in 2014, the Act highlights the duty on Local Authorities, Health Boards and Welsh Ministers to promote the wellbeing of those who need care and support, or carers who need support as embodied in the Welsh Government's Health and Social Services Initiative "More Than Just Words."

This Strategy also reflects the Welsh Government's ambition for "enabling the Welsh language to thrive" as outlined in the Qualified for Life ; A curriculum for Wales ; a curriculum for life document (2015). This has been written in order to reflect the recommendations as set out in "Un Iaith i Bawb/One language for All" with the focus on the need to use the National Literacy Framework as a basis for the revised curriculum so that there is one continuum for learning the Welsh language with clear expectations for pupils.

Councillor Kevin O'Neill
Leader of the Council

Gareth Chapman
Chief Executive

Councillor Andrew Barry
Cabinet Member for Governance,
Performance, Business Change & Corporate Services

Councillor Chris Davies
Council's Welsh Language Champion

WELSH LANGUAGE (WALES) MEASURE 2011

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council received its final Compliance Notice from the Welsh Language Commissioner on 30th September 2015. This outlined the Council's duty to meet the statutory Welsh Language Standards established by the Welsh Government under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

This Measure gave equal status to Welsh and English so that Welsh cannot be treated less favourably than English. The recent introduction of the Welsh Language Standards is designed to ensure that those in Wales who wish to live their lives in Welsh can do by obliging local authorities, and other public sector bodies, to deliver their services in Welsh.

As a Council we are endeavouring to comply with the Welsh Language Standards which came into force on 30th March 2016 and are making every effort to respond to them in a positive manner.

Welsh Language Promotional Strategy

Standard 145 of the Council's Compliance Notice states:

"You must produce, and publish on your website, a 5;year strategy that sets out how you propose to promote the Welsh language and to facilitate the use of the Welsh language more widely in your area; and the strategy must include (amongst other matters) –

- (a) a target (in terms of the percentage of speakers in your area) for increasing or maintaining the number of Welsh speakers in your area by the end of the 5 year period concerned, and
- (b) a statement setting out how you intend to reach that target; and you must review the strategy and publish a revised version on your website within 5 years of publishing a strategy (or of publishing a revised strategy)."

Standard 146 further states:

- "Five years after publishing a strategy in accordance with standard 145 you must –
- (a) assess to what extent you have followed that strategy and have reached the target set by it, and
 - (b) publish that assessment on your website, ensuring that it contains the following information –
 - (i) the number of Welsh speakers in your area, and the age of those speakers;
 - (ii) a list of the activities that you have arranged or funded during the previous 5 years in order to promote the use of the Welsh language."

Bore da – shwmae?

When Wales play rugby, many of us feel that we need to identify with the team or with the country in some way; lots of us will wear red shirts, others will wear scarves or hats with the Welsh colours on them. Some of us change our social media identities to reflect our support for our team, many will sing the anthem, and others will buy Welsh food to eat on the day of a match. Some sing hymns, others join in with chants at the game, in the pub or club or even in the sitting rooms of our houses. Doing something to align ourselves with our national identity is something that comes naturally and spontaneously to most of us.

Now the team have to wear the shirts, they are expected at least to acknowledge the anthem if not to actively sing it, they accept a cap to denote their selection for their country, and they are expected to follow very closely defined behaviours in terms of how they train and how they live leading up to and even following a match.

When it comes to the Welsh Language, the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 puts many of us on to “the team” – there are certain things we have to conform with if we’re going to perform properly. However, we can all be supporters of the team if we want to. We don’t have to wear shirts, we don’t have to sing anthems, and we don’t have to eat seaweed to support the team. There is something very simple we can do immediately, at no cost to us, to be part of the team – we can say “bore da” and “shwmae” to our colleagues when we come into the office every morning. We can say “Diolch” when someone makes us a cup of coffee or offers us a chocolate, and we can say “Nos da” when we leave the office every night. Then after a while, if we want to add “wela’i ti fory” to that, all the better. However, we don’t have to. That’s the joy of the Welsh language – we don’t have to have any special powers to use it, we don’t have to be rich to be a part of it, and we don’t have to seek permission from anyone before we speak it – it belongs in equal part to every one of us, and we can cash in our share any time we want to. Try it now – catch the eye of a colleague, a friend or a family member and ask him or her “shwmae?”J.

Will this make us richer? No, not in material terms. But in an ever homogenised world, it allows us that special bit of unique identity with our friends, family and neighbours. It’s a reminder to all of us of who we are, where we live and why we’re proud of it. It’s not something we do 9 times a year (or a few more in a World Cup year), it’s something we can do 365 days of the year, and once more when there’s a 29th February – and that’s “Y nawfed ar hugain o Chwefror” before anyone asks!

Any building has to be built from the bottom – it’s a cliché, but if a building is going to last, it has to be based on firm foundations. By normalising the Welsh language, by each and every one of us claiming the stake in what already belongs to us, we are creating a firm foundation for the growth of the language within the County Borough. By saying “shwmae” to one another, we’re enriching our own identities, and we’re enriching the identity of the environment around us – and giving the Welsh language the firmest foundations on which to thrive for generations to come.

Throwing money at things, creating sticking plaster solutions and seeing one clever initiative after another flounder due to lack of sustainability and grounding within the communities they were intended to serve will not change things over the long term. What we want to do in Merthyr Tydfil is to lead the way for the rest of Wales by taking what is rightfully ours anyway – our language – and making it a part of our everyday identities.

Merthyr Tydfil has a proud history of changing the world for the better, of being the first to speak out against inequality, of being the first to show the rest of the world how good things should be done right. There is nowhere historically or culturally better equipped to change the future than Merthyr Tydfil – a future which starts, every day, by us all saying “Bore da ; shwmae” to each other, thus creating a “Shwmaeronment” throughout the County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil.

SECTION 4

GUIDING PRINCIPLES, VISION AND OUTCOMES

Guiding Principles

Welsh Language is a key element of the Council's Equality agenda. The Council promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language by observing the following Guiding Principles:

- Individuals have the right to deal with us in Welsh.
- Welsh must be positioned to be read first (to the left or above the English)
- Respecting staff language rights.
- The quality of service and a positive attitude are important.
- We must offer Welsh language services to give language choice.

Welsh Language Vision for Merthyr Tydfil

These Guiding Principles will support the Council in delivering the following Welsh language Vision for Merthyr Tydfil:

“A place which promotes the use of the Welsh language and treats the Welsh and English languages on the basis of equality.

This will be achieved by enabling and encouraging:

- The broad provision of Welsh language education throughout the County Borough.
- The opportunities for people to use Welsh at work, at home and at play.
- The perception of languages as life skills, which enriches the lives of those who use them.
- People throughout the County Borough to feel pride in their language, and confidence to use it.

These are deliberately stretching ideals – they will not be achieved overnight, but over the long term; it is our vision to encourage a cultural change in the way that the two languages of Wales are perceived in this County Borough. We want to make a difference.”

The Council will observe these Guiding Principles and work towards achieving this Vision through our role as a community leader, service provider, commissioner and employer working in partnership through and with our stakeholders in the County Borough.

Welsh Language Promotional Strategy

This Vision will be achieved through the Council's Welsh Language Promotional Strategy, which will aim to deliver the following **Outcomes** for the County Borough:

1. As a minimum target, to maintain the number of Welsh speakers in the area but we need to increase the % of Welsh speakers by approximately 0.3% per annum to meet the national target.

In order to achieve the Welsh Government target of a million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050, there would need to be a doubling of the percentage of Welsh speakers i.e. an increase from 8.9% to 17.8% in Merthyr Tydfil. In order to achieve this by 2050, an increase of approximately 0.3% per annum is required. (This equates to an additional 177 people in Merthyr Tydfil being able to speak Welsh per year based on current population of 59,000).

The main areas through which these challenging figures could be achieved would be through:

- a) Promoting Ti a Fi (parent and toddler groups) and Meithrin Groups (pre; school classes).
 - b) Encouraging more parents to send their children to Welsh medium education.
 - c) Encouraging and supporting provision of post 16 learning opportunities through the Welsh Language.
 - d) Encouraging adults to learn Welsh.
 - e) Encouraging the use of Welsh in the workplace.
2. To normalise the Welsh language in the way we go about our daily lives in Merthyr Tydfil:
 - a) To make bilingualism a natural sight and sound on the streets of Merthyr Tydfil.
 - b) To increase the use of spoken Welsh throughout the County Borough.
 3. To encourage our young people to make more use of the Welsh they are being taught in our schools and to give them more opportunities to use Welsh.
 4. Parents and children know and understand the economic and health advantages of bilingualism.
 5. Encourage and support opportunities to use Welsh in the workplace.

How will we achieve this?

1. By addressing the challenges set by the Standards emanating from the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 in a creative, positive and thorough manner.
2. By working in partnership through and with other stakeholders active in the County Borough; these will include, but will not be limited to, Coleg Merthyr, Menter Merthyr/Canolfan Soar, the Fforwm Sirol, the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP), Welsh for Adults, Cwm Taf University Health Board, Mudiad Meithrin, RhAG, Urdd Gobaith Cymru, Colegau Cymru and Grwp Deddf.
3. By aligning our actions with the 4 areas of strategic development identified by the Welsh Government's Welsh Language Strategy 2012–17: A living language: a language for living. These are:
 - Strategic Area 1: The Family.
 - Strategic Area 2: Children and Young People.

- Strategic Area 3: The Community.
- Strategic Area 4: The Workplace.

Strategic Area 1: The Family

Our Ambition is that:

1. Welsh language is used by families across the County Borough on a more regular basis.
2. Families regard the Welsh language as important to their identity as a family, living in Merthyr Tydfil, living in Wales.
3. Welsh language education becomes a consideration for all families across the County Borough.

Actions to deliver this Ambition:

1. Deliver consistent messages across the community in order to promote the benefits of transferring the Welsh language within the family, and giving children and young people the opportunity to become confident bilingual adults.
2. Encourage and promote the opportunities for parents to develop their Welsh language skills to assist their children to acquire and gain confidence in their ability to use the Welsh language.
3. Increase the provision of Welsh;medium activities for families to ensure that there are many opportunities for families to attend and use the language together.
4. Promote the benefits of pre;school and Welsh Medium education to all County Borough communities.
5. Promote organisations such as Menter Merthyr/Canolfan Soar, Mudiad Meithrin and the Urdd in Welsh and English medium schools to raise awareness of their Welsh language family activities.
6. Work closely with and through the Fforwm Iaith Sirol to maximise opportunities to increase Welsh usage within the family.
7. Create Sport, Leisure and Cultural opportunities through the medium of Welsh; provide opportunities for families to participate and socialise in Welsh around these activities – and tie these activities into the second point above – increasing opportunities for parents to develop their Welsh language skills.

Measures of Success:

1. Number and % of Families using Welsh as a family language (Source: Parental Survey).

2. Number and % of children in Welsh Medium Nursery and Primary education (Source: Education Department).
3. Number of Families participating in Welsh language family activities (Source: Menter Merthyr/Canolfan Soar and Urdd).
4. Welsh Language Family activities (Source: Menter Merthyr/Canolfan Soar and Urdd)
5. Parents learning the Welsh language (Source: Cymraeg i Oedolion).

Strategic Area 2: Children and Young People

Our ambition is that:

1. The Welsh language is used by more young people across the County Borough – in particular, in addition to the school and family environments.
2. Young people believe that the Welsh language is an important part of their self; identity.
3. Young people have a greater understanding of how the Welsh language can improve their Further / Higher Education and Employment opportunities (ties in specifically with Areas 4 and 6 below).

Actions to deliver this Ambition:

1. Promote the provision of Welsh;medium extra;curricular activities and opportunities for children and young people.
2. Encourage and promote the development of opportunities for children and young people in English medium settings to connect with the Welsh language through positive experiences.
3. Promote the benefits of Welsh Medium education.
4. Work closely with the Higher Education and Further Education sectors to establish baselines and encourage the improvement of rates of progression of students to post;16 Welsh language education, and to encourage the offering of Post 16 Welsh language Education opportunities.
5. Work closely with and through the Fforwm Iaith Sirol to maximise opportunities to increase Welsh usage by younger people.
6. Promote the Welsh language as a valuable skill for training and employment.

Measures of Success:

1. Number and % of young people speaking Welsh in the County Borough (Source: Census).

2. Number and % of young people completing their education through the medium of Welsh (Source: Education Department).
3. Numbers of young people using Welsh as they enter the world of employment (Source: Private sector partners).
4. Number of entry level jobs advertising the need for Welsh language skills (Source: Internal research).
5. Recognition that the Welsh Language is part of the self;identity of young people (Source: School Survey).

Strategic Area 3: The Community

Our Ambition is that:

1. Welsh language becomes seen and heard across the County Borough as a normal part of everyday life.
2. There is a culture in the shops, streets, leisure centres and other public places of people greeting each other (even amongst non;fluent Welsh speakers) with Welsh terms such as “bore da” and “Shwmae.”
3. More bilingual community activities will develop and bilingualism is accepted as normal across the community.
4. The position and visibility of the Welsh language in the community is strengthened and supported.

Actions to deliver this Ambition:

1. Promote the Welsh language as a unique selling point for Merthyr Tydfil as a town steeped in Welsh history – much of which took place in Welsh.
2. Increase the use of the Welsh language in all high profile and public events hosted in the County Borough, support existing Welsh;language community events and share good practice.
3. Promote and develop environments where both languages can be used equally and celebrated by all cultures and backgrounds promoting ownership of the language and community cohesion.
4. Introduce the Welsh language to new and emerging communities as a way of promoting Welsh culture and encouraging Welsh language learning and Welsh medium education.
5. Work closely with and through the Fforwm Iaith Sirol to maximise opportunities to increase Welsh usage within the family.
6. Support Canolfan Soar – Merthyr Tydfil’s Welsh Culture Centre to increase outreach activities and develop opportunities to showcase Merthyr Tydfil’s extensive Welsh language history and heritage.

Measures of Success:

1. Number and % of people speaking Welsh in the County Borough (Source: Census).
2. Evidence of Welsh language being seen and heard in public places (baselines and methodologies need to be established).
3. Opportunities to participate in community activities bilingually (Source: Fforwm Iaith Sirol)

Strategic Area 4: The Workplace

Our Ambition is that:

1. More workplaces in Merthyr Tydfil become increasingly bilingual.
2. More employers advertise for Welsh speakers.
3. Staff are supported to improve and use their Welsh language skills.
4. There is a clear link created between education, training and employment.
5. Welsh is seen and heard more widely in the workplaces of Merthyr Tydfil.

Actions to deliver this Ambition:

1. Increase recognition of the Welsh language as a highly valuable skill in the workplace using different initiatives and campaigns.
2. Support bilingual staff to use the Welsh language at work.
3. Foster a “learning culture,” using the Welsh language as an accelerator.
4. Ensure that staff within the County Borough are able to access Welsh language awareness training.
5. Increase the number/percentage of Welsh speakers within the workforce across the County Borough.
6. Work closely with and through the Fforwm Iaith Sirol to maximise opportunities to increase Welsh usage within the workplace.
7. Enable and support fluent staff, as well as staff who are learning, to use the Welsh language in the workplace, for example by using Welsh in the Workplace.
8. Extend Welsh language training opportunities to all staff across the County Borough – face to face and online.

Measures of Success:

1. Evidence of Welsh language being seen and heard in public places (baselines and methodologies need to be established).
2. Employers conduct language skills audits – and measure numbers via this mechanism, if feasible (Source: Private Sector Partners).
3. Workplaces in Merthyr Tydfil are bilingual – staff use of Welsh language (Source: Private Sector Partners).
4. Employers advertise for Welsh speakers / Increase in the number of jobs advertised where Welsh is needed or preferred (Private Sector Partners).
5. Language skills training courses accessed by employees – face to face and online (Welsh for Adults).

This information is not readily available and will need development.