

MEETING:	LANGUAGE COMMITTEE
DATE:	14 January 2016
TITLE:	Update on the meeting with Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd
AUTHOR:	Gwenllian Williams Language Development Officer
PURPOSE OF REPORT	Update the committee

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In the meeting of the Language Committee held in January 2015, a complaint was made regarding CCG's implementation of their language plan and their intention to advertise two senior managerial posts without the ability to communicate in Welsh being an essential skill.
- 1.2 Concern was raised about the matter, and it was agreed that further action would be needed and that the Councillors on the Board of CCG should be persuaded to try and influence the matter.
- 1.3 Correspondence was sent to CCG and to the Welsh Language Commissioner, and a meeting was requested between representatives of the Language Committee and the Chief Executive of CCG.
- 1.4 In an update to the Language Committee in April 2015, the Democratic and Delivery Senior Manager reported that the Language Commissioner was in the process of investigating the matter, and that a report would be published later in the month.
- 1.5 The Commissioner's report was published at the end of April 2015. The report was not much more than a record of the correspondence between the Commissioner's office and CCG, but it did make a note of the fact that the Commissioner's officers had not had access to the research documents that CCG had commissioned to the recruitment problems in the field of work, and that they had used to justify their decision not to set linguistic ability as one of the essential skills. The report did not give any recommendations or set out steps for monitoring.
- 1.6 CCG went ahead and appointed two Senior Managers who are non-Welsh speakers, and they both started in post in the middle of 2015.
- 1.7 On November 23rd 2015, a meeting was held between Ffrancon Williams, Chief Executive of CCG and representatives from the Language Committee. Present in the meeting were Councillors Eric M. Jones, Alwyn Gruffydd and Dyfrig Siencyn, as well as Gwenllian Williams, Language Development Officer.

2. SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION

- 2.1 Ffrancon Williams apologies for not being available to meet the representatives at an earlier date.
- 2.2 Ffrancon Williams outlined the circumstances that lead to the current situation, and also the steps they had taken in the past to try and recruit senior managers with the right skill set that could also work through the medium of Welsh. He referred to the research conducted by Trowers & Hamlin to recruitment difficulties in the sector and to efforts to develop skills and experience within the organisation itself. He referred also to the steps they were taking internally to ensure that the Welsh language is still given priority, including providing translating services for internal meetings and a mentoring scheme.
- 2.3 The representatives of the Language Committee acknowledged the difficulties, agreeing that it was becoming increasingly difficult to recruit in some areas and in some sectors, but they were also keen to gain some assurance from CCG that the appointments would not have an adverse affect on the ability of the rest of the staff to work and provide services through the medium of Welsh.
- 2.4 Concern was also expressed that the condition to learn Welsh had not been included in the contracts of the new managers. This contravened clause 7.2.3 of their Language Plan. The Chief Executive reported that one of the new senior managers was already learning Welsh and that the other had shown a commitment to start learning in the new year.
- 2.5 The Chief Executive shared the staffing structure of CCG, stating that all of the managers on the level underneath the senior managers can and do work through the medium of Welsh. The remaining senior manager post – Communities and Customer Director - will be re-advertised in early 2016, with the Welsh language as an essential skill.

3. NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 It was agreed that it had been a productive meeting in so far as it re-established links and communication between the two organisations, but that there was a need to look again at the commitment of CCG to more concrete action.
- 3.2 It was agreed to invite a representative (most probably the Manager with responsibility for the Welsh language) to hunaniaith's Workforce and Welsh Services Group. Some of the group's work could be beneficial to CCG.
- 3.3 There was an interest in having a discussion with hunaniaith about working together to find ways of increasing confidence and skills in the use of the Welsh language in vocational sectors.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Language Development Officer to organise a meeting with the Chief Executive or Manager with responsibility for the Welsh language in CCG early in 2016 to discuss ideas or further concerns.