

Local Planning Guidance Note No 31

The Welsh Language and Welsh Communities

This guidance note reflects national and local objectives and amplifies development plan policies contained in the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan designed to protect the Welsh language and Welsh communities. It provides guidance on how the Council will assess the likely future impact of relevant developments, individually or cumulatively, on the wellbeing of the Welsh language and Welsh Communities. The note will form a material consideration in the determination of all relevant planning applications for development.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Local planning authorities are advised not to discriminate against individuals on the basis of their linguistic ability or control housing occupancy on linguistic grounds. The future wellbeing locally of the Welsh language and its contribution to Welsh cultural heritage is dependent on a variety of key factors such as education, demographic change and community activities as well as economic prosperity. The planning system can also take account of the needs and interests of the Welsh language and its wellbeing by preventing development that could have a significantly harmful affect.
- 1.2 20.8% of the population of Wales can speak Welsh. Within the County Borough, this figure is 14% of the population and they are mainly located in the following wards:
 - Ceiriog Valley, Pant and Ponciau which contain 25% or more Welsh speakers (2001 Census); and
 - Coedpoeth, Johnstown, Penycae and Minera which contain the average number of 20.8% (2001 Census) or more Welsh speakers

2. Planning Policy Context and Guidance

- 2.1 National planning policy requirements are contained in Planning Policy Wales (March 2002) and Technical Advice Note 20 The Welsh Language (June 2000). Guidance is also contained in Planning and the Welsh Language – The Way Ahead (December 2005).
- 2.2 Local policies are contained in the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan. Development proposals will be assessed for their likely impact on the Welsh language and Welsh communities under Policy GDP1, criterion j) which states that all new development should:

have regard to the need to safeguard those areas that poses a strong Welsh cultural and / or linguistic identity from development that could harm this identity

3. Welsh Language and Community Impact Statement

- 3.1 Specific thresholds of development in the language sensitive wards of *Ceiriog Valley, Pant, Ponciau, Coedpoeth, Johnstown, Penycae and Minera* will require

a Welsh Language and Community Impact Statement for the following developments on all applicable outline, full and change of use applications:

- a) all residential applications for 25 or more units;
- b) all employment proposals of 2ha or more or those creating more than 50 jobs;
- c) all retail development greater than 2,000sqm; or
- d) other developments which provide individually or cumulatively for significantly more than local needs ; are relatively large in comparison with local market demand or will attract a relatively significant influx of non Welsh speakers

- 3.2 In the language sensitive wards, development which, individually or cumulatively, is likely to have a significantly detrimental impact on the needs, interests and wellbeing of the Welsh language and identity will be resisted.
- 3.3 The purpose of the Welsh Language and Welsh Communities Impact Statement is to allow the Council to screen the development for likely significant linguistic and community impacts. This will help to decide what measures could be put in place to reduce the impact (planning conditions or section 106 legal agreements) on the language and the community. It will also allow the Council to decide if the proposal would have such an impact on the language and community of the area to warrant a refusal of permission.
- 3.4 Even if the development proposal does not in itself meet the need for a community and language impact statement (criterion a) – c) of paragraph 3.1), developers should be aware (criterion d, paragraph 3.1) of the potential cumulative impact their development could have on the Welsh language and Welsh communities in submitting their application and will need to take into consideration any other recent, relevant developments within these wards.
- 3.5 The statement should address the key issues shown in Figure 1 below. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of considerations and there may be more or less issues to consider depending on the individual nature of each application.
- 3.6 The evaluation of the Welsh language and community impact statement, while not designed to provide a definitive analysis, should lead to a more informed decision about the impact of the development on the social and linguistic aspects of community life in the Welsh wards of the County Borough. The results of the statement and any accompanying commentary will, together with a range of development plan and other national and local policies, aid decision making and the delivery of sustainable development.

Figure 1 Welsh Language and Welsh Communities Impact Statement

Welsh Language and Welsh Communities Impact Statement	<p>1. Explain with evidence how the development impacts on the Population with reference to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attracting non Welsh speakers into the locality; • Migration of Welsh speakers from the community; • Social integration into the Welsh community; • Change in community population age structure leading to movement of Welsh speakers into or out of the area;
	<p>2. Explain with evidence how the development impacts on Housing for local people with reference to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local housing need including the amount and type of affordable housing; • Past rate of residential growth in the area; • Increase the cost of local housing forcing local or Welsh speakers to leave the community or lead to an increase in homelessness amongst local or Welsh speaking households;
	<p>3. Explain with evidence how the development impacts on the Economics of the locality with reference to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The labour skills of local people; • Impact on any Welsh speaking or local businesses; • Job opportunities for local or Welsh speakers; • Creating economic diversity in the locality;
	<p>4. Explain with evidence how the development impacts on Education in the locality with reference to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School capacity in the locality; • Loss or enhancement of education facilities due to an increase/decrease of students; • Altering the balance between Welsh speaking and non- Welsh speaking students;
	<p>5. Explain with evidence how the development impacts on the Infrastructure of the locality with reference to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local services – shops, schools, leisure and health services etc; • Making services more or less accessible to local people; • Adequacy of existing services to serve the new development
	<p>6. Other General considerations (with evidence):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will the proposal create new opportunities to promote the Welsh language and local initiatives within the community? • What mitigation measures including phasing are being proposed to alleviate any likely harmful impacts caused by the development?