

# Welsh Language Impact Assessment & Action Plan

Land West of Heol-Y-Gors, Cwmgors

December 2024



Introduction		
Client	This Welsh Language Impact Assessment and Action Plan has been prepared in support of a Full Planning Application, submitted on behalf of Bluefield Land for re-development of former Swelco Factory for 45 affordable dwellings with appropriate green infrastructure, parking and associated works.	
Context	The assessment highlights the careful attention given to safeguarding the Welsh Language in relation to the proposed development of the former Swelco Factory. This development site, which is allocated within the existing Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan for residential purposes, has been identified as a Welsh Language Sensitive Area according to Policy WL 1, along with the Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) document titled ‘Developments in Language Sensitive Areas’ (July 2017).	
	To ensure a comprehensive evaluation of the scheme’s impact on the Welsh Language, this Community Linguistic Impact Assessment relies on the ‘Welsh Language Background Paper’ (2019) and the Neath Port Talbot ‘Welsh Language Topic Paper’ (2013). These papers form an integral part of the evidence base for the review of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (LDP) and its successor, Neath Port Talbot Replacement Local Development Plan (2023-2038), and serve as the foundational resource for this assessment.	
	Furthermore, Policy WL 1 (Development in Language Sensitive Areas) of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan offers valuable insights into the significance of the Welsh Language within the communities of Neath Port Talbot. This policy establishes a contextual framework for understanding the role and importance of the Welsh Language, emphasising its integral presence within the social fabric of the county’s various communities.	
	For the purposes of the assessment methodology, the development will be scored as a negative, neutral, or positive in impact to each criterion in line with the ‘Planning and the Welsh Language: The Way Forward’ (2005) Appendix B and C. This rationale is acknowledged as representing an accurate and up to date guideline for undertaking linguistic assessments in Wales.	
	This assessment further relies on data derived from the Office of National Statistics, as per the latest available Census data.	
	Numerals are inserted as the answer to each checklist question, with numerical +1 representing a perceived positive impact, numeral -1 a perceived negative impact, and numeral 0 for a perceived neutral impact.	
Assessment		
1. Population Characteristics		
Is the development likely to lead to a population increase/decrease?	<p>The proposed development of circa. 45 dwelling houses may result in minor population increase, however with the entirety of the proposal being for affordable housing, the new occupiers will likely be local people who are on the social housing register.</p> <p>Of the current population of Neath Port Talbot, over 13.5% of residents (aged 3 and over) speak Welsh (as per 2021 Census).</p>	+/- 0

	<p>The proposals encourage the local community to remain in the area.</p> <p>The development may cause a slight increase in a small number of English speakers but not cause a proportionate decline in the number of Welsh speakers.</p>	
<b>Is the development likely to lead to increased in-migration?</b>	The nature of the proposed occupier drives in-migration from local populations only.	+/- 0
<b>Is the development likely to lead to increased out-migration?</b>	The implementation of the proposal will not result in out-migration from the area due to the purpose of the new development changing from industrial to residential use.	+/- 0
<b>Is the development likely to lead to a changing age structure of the community?</b>	<p>The highest proportion of Welsh speakers are in age groups 16 – 24, 25 – 34 and 35 – 44. As such, these are likely to be the ages of people who have families and will occupy these new dwellings (National Survey for Wales 2017 – 2018).</p> <p>Moreover, the provision of a mix of unit types throughout the entirety of the scheme will ensure a balanced age demographic is maintained.</p>	+1
<b>2. Quality of Life</b>		
<b>Is the development likely to have an impact on the health/finances of local people?</b>	<p>The proposals do not involve any risks which would cause undue harm to the health/finances of local people. The site will also be remediated of its current contamination due to the development.</p> <p>The scheme provides a 100% contribution of affordable dwellings for local residents on the social housing waiting list. This helps to prioritise individuals and families who are facing financial challenges and are actively seeking social housing.</p> <p>The scheme recognises the significance of affordable housing in preventing displacement and ensuring the stability of families. By providing affordable dwellings for local residents facing financial challenges, the proposals reduce the risk of families having to relocate due to unaffordable housing costs.</p> <p>Furthermore, the development aligns with the aims and objectives of PPW and the Neath Port Talbot Development Plan for creating healthy communities.</p>	+1
<b>Is the development likely to have an impact on the amenity of the local area?</b>	The development site benefits from a lapsed planning permission for residential units and development for its intended use has further been agreed with the Local Planning Authority through pre-application engagement as being suitable in principle.	+1

	<p>The vision for this scheme is to deliver attractive, high-quality affordable homes while transforming a redundant and derelict brownfield site into a visually appealing and sustainable environment. The development presents an opportunity to remediate existing contamination and address invasive species, allowing for the creation of new habitats and thoughtfully landscaped areas. These enhancements will be carefully managed, ensuring long-term ecological and visual benefits that would not be achievable if the site remained in its current neglected state.</p> <p>It is therefore contented that there is a positive impact to amenity as a result of the development.</p>	
<b>Is the development likely to lead to the threat of increased crime or violence in the community?</b>	<p>The scheme has been thoughtfully designed to “design out crime” through ensuring suitable lighting, natural surveillance and safety of pedestrian movement through the site.</p> <p>The scheme will not exacerbate the threat of increased crime/violence in the local community.</p>	+/-0
<b>3. The Economy.</b>		
<b>Is the development likely to have a detrimental impact on local businesses?</b>	<p>The proposed scheme aims to address the pressing social housing needs of Neath Port Talbot, ensuring that residents can access suitable housing options within the area. This will result in increased utilisation of local services and facilities by the new residents, thereby providing valuable support to local businesses. By actively contributing to the local economy, the development will have a positive impact on the sustainability and prosperity of local businesses.</p> <p>In terms of protecting the Welsh speaking workforce, where possible the developer will be supporting the local supply chain including sourcing construction services and operational labour locally.</p> <p>Moreover, the scheme is catered directly to the local population, who are seeking social housing options.</p>	+1
<b>Is the development likely to have an impact on local jobs?</b>	<p>The scheme will create jobs during the construction phase of the development and will thereafter house residents in the local area closer to employment opportunities within the village.</p> <p>The scheme will not threaten any existing local jobs. No local business will be impacted by the proposed development, only supported through additional people living in the local area.</p>	+1

<b>Is the development likely to lead to greater economic diversity?</b>	<p>During the construction phase of the development a variety of both skilled and unskilled jobs will be created including builders, plumbers, project managers and so forth.</p> <p>The introduction of the new homes will create more demand for local businesses, thereby generating a positive impact on the local economy at the micro level. There will be a heightened need for various goods and services, ranging from everyday essentials to professional services.</p>	+1
<b>Is the development likely to have an impact on local wage / salary levels?</b>	<p>The construction jobs created through the delivery of the development will not impact any existing businesses.</p> <p>Furthermore, the development is solely for residential purposes and therefore does not lead to business competition.</p>	+/- 0
<b>Is the development likely to have an impact on the average cost of housing?</b>	<p>The scheme will help to relieve affordable housing need through the provision of 100% affordable homes, with a diverse mix of house types.</p>	+1

#### 4. Infrastructure

<b>Is the development likely to have an impact on local schools?</b>	<p>There is a of Welsh speakers in Neath Port Talbot as a whole (13.5% as per Census 2021). It is therefore likely that some occupiers for new dwellings may be Welsh speaking families.</p> <p>Furthermore, due to the scheme being delivered for social housing, the families who occupy the dwellings will have children who are already be enrolled into the local schools.</p> <p>The scheme incorporates measures to support and encourage local children to remain within the area. This stability allows children to remain in the area and continue attending their local schools.</p>	+/- 0
<b>Is the development likely to have an impact on health care provision?</b>	<p>There may be some minor additional pressure to local healthcare services, however this would be deemed negligible.</p> <p>The site has been agreed with the Local Authority as a suitable area for accommodating new residents.</p>	+/-0
<b>Is the development likely to have an impact on the provision of local community, leisure or recreation facilities / services / participation?</b>	<p>While the development may introduce some changes to the immediate vicinity, our assessment indicates that it will not result in disruptions to the provision of existing community, leisure, or recreation facilities and services.</p> <p>The scheme will contribute positively to the existing community fabric without jeopardising the availability or accessibility of current facilities.</p>	+1

<b>Is the development likely to have an impact on the provision of local services, such as shops / post offices / banks / pubs?</b>	The development is expected to contribute positively by generating potential customers and employees for local services.	+ 1
<b>5. Community</b>		
<b>Will the development potentially lead to social tensions, conflict or serious divisions within the community?</b>	<p>The development would not lead to social tensions, conflict or serious divisions within the community. The proposals target the local population and seek to provide a variety of homes for families of varying sizes at a suitable and strategic location.</p> <p>The provision of a variety of homes reflects an understanding of the diverse requirements and preferences within the local community. This approach promotes social cohesion by accommodating families with varying needs. The availability of different housing types ensures that individuals and families can find suitable accommodations that align with their specific circumstances and lifestyles.</p>	+/- 0
<b>Will the development potentially lead to changes in local – Welsh – traditions/culture?</b>	The development is only for residential purposes, to meet the local demand of social housing for Cwmgor. Therefore, the delivery of this development does not have any adverse impact to local Welsh traditions/culture.	+/-0
<b>Is the development likely to have a potential impact on local voluntary / activity / youth groups?</b>	The proposals seek to cater for a shortfall of social housing for the local area and no voluntary/community/youth groups will be harmed or displaced due to the proposals.	+/-0
<b>Welsh Language Action Plan</b>		
<b>Mitigation and Enhancement</b>	<p>In further support of Neath Port Talbot's Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) (July 2017), it requires the applicant to consider (in the event of negative effects from the proposed development) the opportunity for improvements or upgrading that would positively impact the language. In this case, however, there would be no negative effects from the proposed development on the Welsh Language.</p> <p>The Applicant is committed to supporting the use of the Welsh Language and will encourage practice as part of implementing the proposed development. The following measures will be implemented to enhance the development's positive impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using bilingual signage where appropriate</li> <li>• All external correspondence will be provided in Welsh and English where possible</li> <li>• Supporting the local supply chain (where possible), including sourcing construction services and operational labour locally</li> <li>• Providing Welsh Street names</li> </ul>	

	<p>To respond positively in respect to the Welsh Language, the applicant is committed to supplying a 'Welcome Pack', placing the language in its context and setting out the local Welsh language provision. It will also be able to provide a list of clubs and activities within the Cwmgors area that allow new residents to keep in touch with the local Welsh culture. This will include the activities based at the Cwmgors Community Hall which situates itself at a 12-minute walking distance from the proposed development site. The activities include various walking clubs, Cwmgors Rugby Club, Pony Club and Merced y Wawi.</p>
Conclusion	<p>In conclusion, a thorough evaluation of the proposed development reveals that it will not pose any significant threat to the Welsh language or the cultural heritage of the local community in Cwmgors. On the contrary, the development – entirely dedicated to the provision of affordable housing offers a clear opportunity to support and reinforce the Welsh-speaking population in the area. By ensuring that local residents have access to affordable housing options, the scheme helps to maintain the demographic integrity of the community and actively fosters the continuation of the Welsh language. By facilitating the retention of the local residents especially younger generations who might otherwise be compelled to relocated in search of more affordable housing, the development mitigates the risk of depopulation and, in particular, the erosion of Welsh speakers from the locality</p> <p>Furthermore, the project is aligned with the broader objectives of socio-economic preservation. The availability of affordable housing addresses the need in the area, reducing the pressures of housing affordability that often leads to out-migration.</p> <p>The assessment of the proposals resulted in a total of 10 no. neutral impacts, 9 no. positive impacts, and 0 no. negative impacts.</p> <p>This scheme represents a balanced approach that aligns with the core values of Cwmgors, ensuring that the Welsh language and cultural traditions are preserved, while also addressing housing needs. It is therefore contented that the scheme is compliant with Policy WL 1 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.</p>