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Ystalyfera Commercial Development

Welsh Language Impact Assessment

W Griffiths Architects

Neath Port Talbot County Council



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Location:

Swansea Valley Business Park,
Glanyrafan Roundabout,
Ystalyfera
SA9 2EB

Proposed Development:

Development of Swansea Business Park - proposed rental units for business and industrial use.

Agent:

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Date:

25/09/2020



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

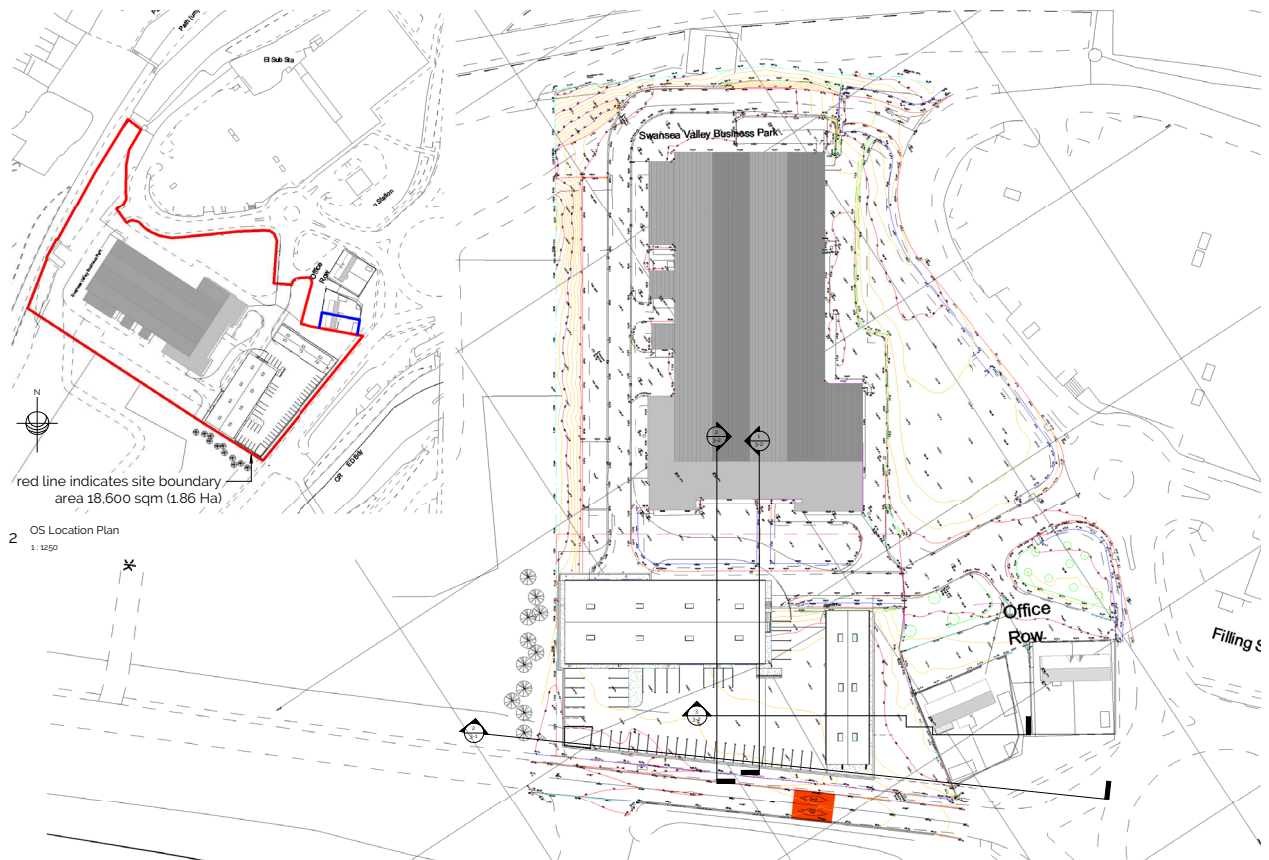
1.1 This Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been prepared on behalf of W Griffiths Architects in respect of Land at Swansea Valley Business Park, Ystalyfera, This report establishes whether the proposed development would have any impact on the Welsh Language, particularly in relation the local community and the steps taken to mitigate the development.

1.2 This assessment has been prepared as required to by Policies SP22 and WL1 of Neath Port Talbot's Local Development Plan. Policy SP22 (Welsh Language) requires the Welsh Language to be safeguarded and promoted in the language sensitive area of Ystalyfera and Policy WL1 (Development in Language Sensitive Areas) requires proposals in language sensitive areas to submit a Language Action Plan to protect, promote and enhance the Welsh Language.



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2.0 SITE CONTEXT AND PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT



2.1 LOCATION: YSTALYFERA

Ystalyfera is a former industrial village and community in the upper Swansea Valley, on the River Tawe, about 13 miles northeast of Swansea. It is an electoral ward and a community in the unitary authority of Neath Port Talbot, Wales, comprising a resident population of just over 3,000 people, approximately 60% of whom speak Welsh.

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2.2 WIDER CONTEXT

Ystalyfera has Welsh language schools at both primary school and comprehensive school level. The Wern (English: Alder) Primary School, which was established at the end of the 19th Century and Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera, the latter having consistently good examination results. These schools reflect the high proportion of Welsh speakers in the area.

Ystalyfera is home to Ystalyfera RFC – a rugby union club, which is an integral part of the village – and a cricket team. The village was home to two cinemas, as well as one just outside the boundary, which were all later demolished.

Ystalyfera is also the home to the Wern Fawr public house, and its famed Bryncelyn Brewery. A Brewery used to exist on site and produced the Champion Beer of Wales in 2002/3 and 2003/4, coming 3rd in 2004/5. All of the beers produced had a Buddy Holly theme, these are now brewed by the '9 Lives Brewing' company which is no longer located on site.

2.3 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Development of Swansea Business Park - proposed rental units for business and industrial use.



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2.4 DEMOGRAPHIC IMPLICATIONS

NPTCBC have calculated the average number of school children/dwelling in their Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG). Below is an extract from the SPG showing the calculation:

Age Group	2011 Census Population	Number of Dwelling Units (2 or more bedspaces)	Average School Age Person per Dwelling
Primary (Aged 3 to 11)	11,893	56,716	0.21
Secondary (Aged 11 to 16)	9,211	56,716	0.16
All	21,104	56,716	0.37

2.5 BASELINE INFORMATION

As part of one of the main towns within NPTCBC's area, Ystalyfera benefits from a number of

Facilities, including:

- Primary Schools;
- Secondary Schools;
- Community/Public Halls
- Places of Worship;
- Library;
- Health Centre/ GP Surgery;
- Dentist;
- Convenience Stores;
- Public House / Club
- Other non-food shop;
- Bank / Building Society;
- Post Office;
- Café/Takeaway;
- Sports Pitches;
- Formal Children's Plan;
- Indoor Leisure / swimming pool;
- Bus Service.



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3.0 LINGUISTIC CONTEXT

3.1 From a national perspective the general trend of the number of people living in Wales with an ability to speak Welsh has declined over the last century.

3.2 Encouragingly, however, following devolution and the introduction of the 1993 Welsh Language Act, Welsh is being taught more in schools and therefore the number of Welsh speakers stands higher than it was in 1991. However, despite this rise, concern continues to be raised over the preservation of the language in the future and this has led to it now forming part of the planning decision making process, particularly since the introduction of Technical Advice Note 20: The Welsh Language – Unitary Development Plans and Planning Controls (2000). This was revised and updated in October 2017 – ‘Planning and the Welsh Language’.

3.3 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 seeks to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. It contains seven well-being goals which certain public bodies (including local authorities and National Park authorities) must seek to achieve in order to improve well-being both now and in the future. One of the well-being goals is to create “A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language”.

3.4 Notwithstanding the above, until the undertaking and publication of the 2011 Census, the current ‘snapshot’ of the Welsh Language on a national level is the number of people who speak Welsh has fallen in the past 10 years. It has been thought that migration trends and education might lead to an increase in speakers in less traditional

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Welsh-speaking areas, but the census suggests otherwise, with just two areas, Monmouthshire and Cardiff, seeing a percentage increase.

3.5 The number of Welsh speakers overall has fallen from 582,000 in 2001 to 562,000 in 2011, despite an increase in the size of the population. This represents a two percentage point drop - from 21% to 19% -in the proportion of Welsh speakers.

3.6 COUNTY LEVEL

3.6 At the 2011 Census it was found that 10.48% of the County Borough's population were either able to read, write or speak Welsh. This compares with a comparable figure of 23.25% in the 2001 Census.

3.7 According to the Council's website 17.85% could speak Welsh in 1991 compared to 17.96% in 2001 and 14.9% in 2011 thus represent a pronounced decline, particularly in the last 10 years. The figures also shows a marked reduction in the percentage of Welsh speakers from within Traditional Welsh speaking communities within the county between 1991 and 2001.

3.8 LOCAL LEVEL

The following table provides a comparison of the Welsh language skills related data collected by the 2011 Census in terms of the Ward in which the site lies, the County Borough of Neath Port Talbot, and Wales as a whole.



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Variable	Pontardawe (% of total)	Neath Port Talbot (% of total)	Wales (%of total)
All usual residents	5,421	139,812	3,063,456
No skills in Welsh	2,994 (55.2)	105,916 (75.8)	2,263,975 (73.9)
Can understand spoken Welsh Only	641 (11.8)	8,820 (6.3)	162,859 (5.3)
Can speak Welsh	1,629 (30)	20,843 (14.9)	568,500 (18.6)
Can speak but cannot read or write Weelsh	329 (6.1)	3,784 (2.7)	85,605 (2.8)
Can speak and read but cannot write Welsh	201 (3.7)	2,201 (1.6)	45,767 (1.5)
Can speak, read, and write Welsh	1,092 (20)	14,664 (10.5)	431,759 (14)
Can speak and other combinations of skills in Welsh.	7 (0.1)	194 (0.14)	5,369 (0.18)
Can read but cannot speak or write Welsh	108 (2)	2,915 (2)	44,327 (1.45)
Can read and write but cannot speak Welsh	41 (0.8)	1,055 (0.75)	18,742 (0.6)
Can write but cannot speak or read Welsh.	8 (0.15)	263 (0.19)	5,053 (0.16)

3.9 Over time the number of Welsh speakers at the local level has reduced. The table below demonstrates the change from 1991, 2001 and 2011 Census data:

Ward	% Welsh Speakers in 1991	% Welsh Speakers in 2001	% Welsh Speakers in 2011	% Change in Welsh Speakers 1991-2001	% Change in Welsh Speakers 2001-2011	% Change in Welsh Speakers 1991-2011
Pontardawe	42.17	37.40	31	-4.77	-6.4	-11.17
Neath Port Talbot	17.9	18	15.3	+0.1	-2.7	-2.6
Wales	18.7	20.8	19	+2.1	-1.8	0.3

3.10According to the Welsh Language Topic Paper, dated 2013, the decrease is partly down to the younger population who are more likely to be able to speak welsh migrating out of the Borough and an increase of older population (who don't have the same linguistic skills) being left and/or in-migrating into the Borough.

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3.11 In terms of Education, in 2018, the local Welsh primary School had 289 pupils enrolled with a capacity of 359.

3.12 In terms of local groups and organisations that operate locally through the medium of Welsh, they are:

- Menter Iaith NPT;
- Merched Y Wawr;
- Ty'r Gwrhyd (Welsh language centre);
- Yr Urdd.

3.13 SUMMARY

Whilst it would appear that there has been a decrease in the number of welsh language speakers in the area, the ward has a higher percentage figure for most of the data groups. Indeed, the percentages of residents who speak Welsh, and who can speak, read and write Welsh are around twice that of the County Borough. This would indicate that the Welsh language plays a larger role in this ward than for Neath Port Talbot as a whole. This is evidenced by the number and range of services provided to the local community through the medium of Welsh.

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4.0 LANGUAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

4.1 It is considered that the proposed development, will have a significantly positive impact on local businesses providing appropriate units to support local growth and expansion.

4.2 IMPACT ON LOCAL POPULATION

The proposed development seeks to support and provide opportunity for local businesses to develop and expand, proving to be a current need within the area.

With many businesses moving elsewhere due to the lack of adequate spaces available, the proposal aims to target and support these local companies to encourage their growth and provide the amenities for them to continue their success. With many of these businesses being of welsh heritage and given the dramatic effects of the current pandemic, has emphasised a need for extra space for these businesses to continue their Professional work.

4.3 IMPACT ON COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

It is considered that the proposed development scheme could provide adequate space for welsh language activities to take place. Encouraging associates such as the Urdd to potentially rent spaces to hold meeting, to support and secure the future of many welsh groups and local companies.

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5.0 ACTION PLAN

5.1 WLAP can be found in NPTCBC's Planning Obligations SPG and Development and the Welsh Language SPG which states that there is a need to mitigate the negative effects from new development through supporting the use of the language in the local communities.

5.2 ACTION PLAN FOR BUSINESSES

The proposed development will aim to support welsh businesses to encourage the growth and development of the language within the area.

5.3 ACTION PLAN COMMUNITY

There are a number of bodies within Ystalyfera that play an active role in promoting the Welsh Language. It is possible that in lieu of a financial contribution, spaces for events to take place could potentially be provided within the development through the activities arranged by the Welsh Language organisation, 'Yr Urdd'.

5.8 ACTION PLAN SUMMARY

The measures proposed above will help protect, promote and enhance the Welsh language as the development will enable local businesses to progress and develop, to stay in the area and may even assist in reversing the decline in the number of Welsh speakers within Ystalyfera. It may also attract welsh businesses to start up and develop within Ystalyfera, supporting the welsh language.

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6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 Overall, it is considered that the proposed development is unlikely to result in material harm on the Welsh language and may actually have a positive impact on the Welsh language by encouraging the development of local welsh businesses.

6.2 The proposed development will provide good spaces/ facilities for local businesses to inhabit, suitable for a wide range of uses. These spaces will support and encouraging the development of many local companies include those of welsh heritage. The proposal will provide space for companies to support and encourage the use of the welsh language.

6.3 In addition, the subsequent increase in local business development will increase the self sufficiency of Ystalyfera, encouraging local support and development.

