



Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

Cornish Minority Working Group Report

February 2017

Summary

The recognition of the Cornish as a National Minority by UK Government in 2014 gives them the same protections as the Welsh, Scots and Irish. The Council has a key leadership role in ensuring the Cornish can access the linguistic and cultural rights accorded by the Framework Convention. It established a Cornish Minority Working Group in early 2015 to put together the first Cornish Minority Action Plan. The Action Plan was formally accepted by the Council's Constitution and Governance Committee (which in turn reports to Full Council) and it is regularly updated by the Working Group. The Action Plan monitors and drives activity to satisfy the provisions of the Framework Convention and gathers evidence to inform the UK Government's compliance reports to the Council of Europe.

This report outlines some of the key activities undertaken by the Working Group in 2015 and 2016. For more information see the Cornwall National Minority webpage where you can find the most recent Action Plan (www.cornwall.gov.uk/community-and-living/equality-and-diversity/cornish-national-minority/).

Engagement

The Council is in regular contact with UK Government and submitted information to support the development of the UK's 4th Compliance Report to the Council of Europe. The Council has lobbied UK Government on several issues to ensure that the provisions of the Framework Convention are addressed.

In March 2016 the Council hosted a visit by the Advisory Committee from the Council of Europe. The Advisory Committee met with the Working Group and senior leaders to discuss all aspects relating to the Cornish and held meetings with community groups. Their Opinion Report is expected in February 2017.



From left to right: Ms Gisella GORI (Council of Europe), Ms Tove H. MALLOY (Council of Europe), Mr Neven ANĐELIĆ (Council of Europe), Cllr Ann KERRIDGE (Chairman of Cornwall Council), Cllr Bert BISCOE (Cornwall Council Cabinet Member), Mr Tomáš HRUSTIČ (Council of Europe).

The Council has raised awareness of Cornish National Minority in Cornwall among local partners and national organisations. The Arts Council England has now included support for Cornish culture and language as a specific objective within the South West Area Appendix to the Arts Council England Corporate Plan 2015-18. This states that Arts Council England will 'work with partners in Cornwall to develop a cultural offer that responds to Parliament's granting of national minority status to Cornish language and identity'. The Council's Cornish Language Lead gave a presentation to the Arts Council England's regional office on the Cornish language programme on 3 October 2016.

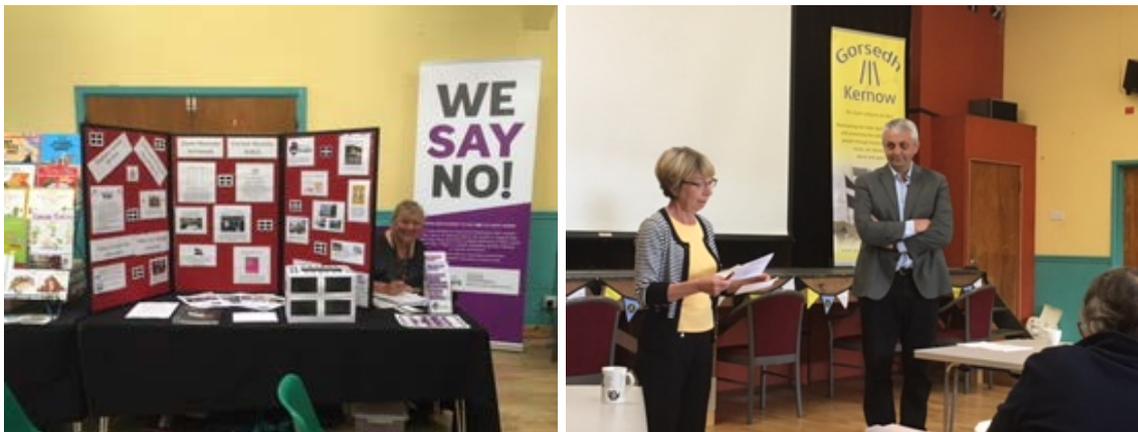
The Council has given presentations about the Cornish Language and Framework Convention to a range of different audiences including the public and voluntary equality and diversity groups and South West Equality network. Advice and guidance has also been given to the Heritage Lottery Fund, Equality Advisory and Support Services and the Royal Institute of British Architects. Following the recognition of the Cornish as a national minority, Devon and Cornwall Police are now collecting data on hate crimes and incidents against the Cornish. The Cornish are also included in the 'We Say No To Hate' crime campaign.

The Council has been actively engaged with community groups on their priorities for Cornish Minority Status, which has been proactive and overwhelmingly positive. The Council's Equality and Diversity Team facilitated a workshop in 2016 to establish the key Cornwall Wide Equality Objectives. A presentation was given about the Framework Convention by Ian Saltern, Cultural Consultant and Cornish Bard, after which the following objective was developed: 'raising awareness of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and guidance around how organisations can contribute to this agenda'. This Cornwall Wide Objective is still in draft and will be signed off in due course.

The Council's Equality and Diversity Team is in the process of developing an e-learning package on Cornish identity, language, culture and history for employees of the Council to raise their knowledge and understanding (available April 2017). Continual promotion of using the Cornish Language in email signatures, in presentations and in letter templates is undertaken by the Council's Equality and Diversity Team and Cornish Language Lead.

The Council has given several presentations to, and with, community groups on the Framework Convention. The Council's Equality and Diversity Team, along with Bewnans Kernow, took a display on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities to the Lowender Perran Festival. The aim of having a display at this event was to raise awareness of the Framework Convention and what this new protection means for the Cornish. The Council's Cornish Language Lead also attended to raise awareness about the Council's Language Programme.

The Working Group has also taken display boards to the 2015 and 2016 Gorsedh Kernow conferences to share information on the Cornish Action Plan and to gather views and opinions. Cllr Pollard (Leader of the Council) and Matt Barton (Strategy and Engagement) gave presentations in 2015. Cllr Cole presented in 2016.



Left: Gail Bishop (Corporate Equality and Diversity Team Leader) at the Cornwall Council stand. Right: Cllr Cole presents at the 2016 Gorsedh Kernow conference.

For the first time in 2016 there was a display in the Council (New County Hall) to celebrate St Piran's Day, organised by the Council's Equality and Diversity Team with interested organisations. The organisations who contributed to the display were Bewnans Kernow, Gorsedh Kernow, Maga, Cornish Quest, St Piran's Trust, Kowethas an Yeth Kernewek, Julie Tamblyn (independent language tutor), Cornish Maritime Trust.

In the coming year we will continue this work by focussing on increasing the number of hits on the Cornish National Minority webpage by promoting the webpage more widely and linking to partner websites. The average time spent on the webpage in 2016 is over 4 minutes.

<http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/community-and-living/equality-and-diversity/cornish-national-minority/>

Monitoring of Cornish Identity

A key priority for the Working Group is developing awareness among public and third sector organisations on the need to monitor Cornish identity. Cornish identity is now included in the evaluation of participants of European Social Fund projects (March 2016); the Cornish are recognised by the Royal Institute of British Architects (Oct 2015); and Royal Cornwall Hospital Trust has amended their monitoring forms following lobbying by the Council's Equality and Diversity Team. The NHS has confirmed that they will be changing their forms across England to monitor Cornish identity.

However, challenges remain. The Council lobbied Job Centre Plus on the importance of monitoring Cornish identity with limited success. The Council also lobbied the ONS in 2016 to request tick-boxes in the next census to monitor Cornish identity and Cornish language. Responses were submitted to two consultations, followed by direct communication by email, with limited success. The Council will continue to work with Job Centre Plus and the ONS to develop opportunities to monitor identity going forward.

The Working Group is keen that analysis is undertaken of the information gathered and that the impact on the Cornish is considered during policy development. During 2016 the Council has taken steps to ensure that the Cornish are considered when it develops policy or projects/programmes of work by including the Cornish in the Comprehensive Impact Assessments.

Support for the preservation and development of national minority identities and cultures

It has been a challenging year for Cornish Language. 2016 saw the removal of all Cornish language funding from UK Government. The Working Group, economic development and partners lobbied UK Government for stable funding for the language and devolution of powers to enable protection and use of the Cornish language. The Working Group will continue to work with government

going forward in order to agree stable funding for the language and a constructive dialogue on protecting and developing the language.

As part of the Cornwall Devolution Deal, the Council established a Heritage Board and Forum. This has opened the door for discussion among national partners on how to better recognise and appropriately manage the cultural distinctiveness of heritage assets within Cornwall.

The Council is actively supporting Cornish culture. One of the most high profile events in 2016 was The Man Engine - a large mechanical puppet promoted the principles of the Framework Convention. Over the summer, The Man Engine was visited by approx. 150,000 people in Cornwall.

Access and presence in the media

The Working Group actively lobbied during the BBC Charter Review (October 2015) for the Cornish to be given the same protection and rights as the other protected national minorities. The Working Group submitted a formal consultation response to the BBC Charter Review requesting that the BBC takes into consideration the status of the Cornish as a protected national minority. However, BBC White Paper did not include the Cornish among the list of national minorities that would have special attention. When the Working Group challenged this, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport responded by saying that 'There is currently no UK legislative requirement for Cornish language broadcasting to be funded by the Exchequer'. The Working Group will continue to work with UK Government to address this disparity.

Use of languages at local level and instruction

The Council places a high value on preserving and promoting the Cornish language and has adopted a Cornish Language Strategy and Plan that set out how the Council promotes and incorporates Cornish at the Council and among partners. The Council leads the Cornish language programme, increasing use of Cornish within the Council's own work and coordinating community projects to develop use of the language.

The Council has established the Akademi Kernewek to research the language and will be publishing a new online dictionary in February 2017. Golden Tree are leading on learning and communications in Cornish and are providing teacher training to six schools in the Penzance area so that those schools can offer Cornish language teaching. The Council has provided interim local funding in order to ensure that the language programme continues and supports the work of the various community groups.

For more information about this, see <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/the-cornish-language/cornish-language/cornish-language-office/cornish-language-strategy-and-plans/>

Devolution

The Council is working to develop opportunities for further devolution of powers to Cornwall, building on the first rural Devolution Deal - signed in 2015.

Boundary Commission Review

The Council opposes the creation of a cross-border MP constituency that would threaten Cornwall's historic border and has lobbied to challenge this. Council Officers in the Legal Team developed a response to the Boundary Commission for England's proposals in conjunction with the Working Group, which were overwhelmingly supported by Full Council. Representations were made to the Boundary Commission for England at their consultations in Truro and Exeter and further submissions were made in writing, opposing the creation of the cross-border constituency. Many Cornish people appeared before the Boundary Commission for England to register their objection to the proposed constituency boundaries, with some giving their evidence in Cornish.

Brexit

Cornish national minority status is recognised under the Council of Europe, not the European Union, and the Working Group is keen that partners and stakeholders understand that the referendum decision in June 2016 to leave the European Union will not have an automatic impact on the recognition of the Cornish as a national minority. The Council is actively assessing the potential impacts of leaving the EU on Cornwall.

Membership

Membership of the Working Group is on a voluntary basis. The Minority Status Working Group is comprised of Cornwall Councillors, Council employees and three Bards from Gorsedh Kernow. The Working Group reports to the Constitution and Governance Committee in Cornwall Council on a regular basis.

Members

Cllr Bert Biscoe	Independent. Cabinet Member for Transport and Waste (Chair)
Cllr Julian German	Independent. Cabinet Member for Economy and Culture
Cllr Ann Kerridge	Liberal Democrat. Chairman of the Council
Cllr Dick Cole	Mebyon Kernow
Cllr Paula Dolphin	Liberal Democrat. Chairman of the Constitution and Governance Committee

Officers

Matthew Barton	Assistant Head of Customers and Communities (Strategy and Communications)
Natalie Russell	Corporate Strategy, Policy and Intelligence Advisor
Gail Bishop	Corporate Equality and Diversity Team Leader

Julie Seyler	Culture Programme Manager - Economic Development & Culture
Mark Trevethan	Cornish Language Lead
Sancho Brett	Legal Officer

Co-opted Bards from Gorsedh Kernow

Note: The Constitution and Governance Committee extended the membership of the Committee's working group by co-opting three Bards from Gorsedh Kernow on 22 September 2015

Ian Saltern	Cultural Consultant
Ed Rowe	Cultural Consultant
William Coleman	Cultural Consultant

Guests

Guests have been invited to attend the Working Group to join discussion on specific issues or topics, as requested by the Chair of the Working Group.

Cllr Malcolm Brown	Insights into the ONS and Census
Julie Wood	Discussion – Cornish in the workplace
Charlotte Ward	Legal Insights