

Bridgend County Borough Council

Report of the Chief Executive

Equalities Committee

21 February 2007

Draft Revised Welsh Language Scheme

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to seek the endorsement of the Revised Welsh Language Scheme (see appendix 1) and provide the Committee with additional information on the specific issues of the development of the Authority's bilingual website and staff training plan.

2. Background

- 2.1** In order to meet its statutory duty to produce a revised Welsh Language Scheme and to achieve level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government in Wales the Authority must put in place a Revised Welsh Language Scheme. The draft Revised Welsh Language Scheme was presented to the Committee on 19 December 2006 with a response from the Welsh Language Board. At that time the Committee requested further information and amendments be made to the scheme.

3. Draft Revised Welsh Language Scheme

- 3.1** The draft revised Welsh Language Scheme attached includes amendments to reflect the points made by Committee Members and incorporate the suggestions from the Welsh Language Board to the revised scheme (see copy attached at Appendix 1).
- 3.2** The inclusion of the Welsh Language Board's language indicators will be referred to the Corporate Management Board and Corporate Customer Care Group for further consideration. The Authority has some discretion about the inclusion of these indicators, however the Board is urging that targets are set to measure improvement in the quality of service delivered to the public. In addition, when the revised scheme has been approved the Welsh Language Board is keen to carry out a risk assessment process with the Authority (see copy of letter attached at Appendix 2). The Corporate Equalities Management Group and the Chief Executive support this proposal but believe that, in the light of the current transformation program being undertaken by the Authority, such an assessment process should be arranged for later in the year when the Authority will be better placed to respond to the requirements of the Board.

3.3 Following discussion with the Corporate Communications Manager the following actions have been agreed:

- **Design and management of website**
 - The PR department will help publicise of the Authority's scheme to the various departments and co-ordinate the development of the website.
 - As a priority the PR department will develop the A-Z of Services section of the Authority's website in Welsh by co-ordinating the translation of all existing service references. This will be undertaken from current budget. The PR department will then remind departments that any new or amended service information posted on the website should be translated and costs met from within departmental budgets.
 - The PR department will develop bilingual department e-mail addresses and circulate reminders to staff on the scheme's commitments regarding dealing with correspondence received by the Authority in Welsh.
 - The PR department will develop a Communication Strategy that will promote the Authority's corporate identity including the Authority's Welsh domain name.
 - The PR department will help gather and maintain baseline data on Welsh material available on line (including standard forms, information booklets, consultation, recruitment adverts etc) through the Stellant system, as all Welsh language information is filed under the Welsh Language site. Design@Bridgend will have an important role to play in reporting this data as they create most of the publicity material for the Authority. This can form part of the on-going management of the website.
 - The Authority's website currently holds approximately 20,000 pages in English and less than 200 documents are available in Welsh language. Examples of good practice include the Authority's Bulletin newspaper, Library Services and the Older People's partnership web-pages. It is proposed that the PR Department work with services to prioritise web-pages that relate to services which are dependent on effective communication in the chosen language and those web-pages that are most visited by the public. This will increase the workload for the PR Department and there is no identified corporate budget available in 2007/8 for on-going translation costs. It is proposed that the PR Department co-ordinate this work on a rolling programme working with the Authority's contracted translation services, but translation costs will be met by the relevant services. This proposal will allow the costs to be spread across the Authority and across the lifetime of the scheme.

3.4 Following discussion with the Corporate Human Resources Department the following actions have been agreed:

- **Language Awareness Training**
 - Corporate Human Resources Department will be able to provide awareness events for members and staff via ongoing event delivery, such as corporate induction, customer care etc.
 - Corporate Human Resources Department will review the council's Management Development Programme to ensure it meets the needs of corporate objectives, including mainstreaming language equality.
 - Corporate Human Resources Department will introduce a specific and tailored induction for managers to include guidance on the Authority's Welsh Language Scheme.
 - All of the above can be achieved from within current resources. The timescales will be dependent on achievement of the current HR restructuring, but work should be completed by October 2007 or timetabled to correspond with the revised scheme being fully adopted by Council and with the work ongoing as part of normal business from then on.
- **Linguistic Skills Audit of Staff**
 - Corporate Human Resources Department will be able to carry out a staff training needs analysis as part of the regular workforce planning process by the Organisational Development arm of the Corporate HR Department. This will enable Corporate HR to identify resources as part of the regular planning process. The training needs analysis information gathering process will commence in May, with delivery of the resultant training plan commencing September. However, these timescales will be subject to review as part of the HR flagship process.
- **Linguistic Skills Audit of Members**
 - Corporate Human Resources Department will undertake a development needs analysis for Members as part of the annual process for Member development. This will include a survey of current language skills and future needs. This will be carried out from within existing resources and will commence in April 2007 and be completed by July 2007.
- **Adoption of Welsh Language indicators on Welsh essential posts and staff training in Welsh and in language awareness**
 - Corporate Human Resources Department report that it should be possible to report on these in terms of those members of staff who have received training and awareness, however, we should consider how this information can be used. The figures need to relate to the gap between the numbers and % staff who need the training rather than simply those who have received -

otherwise we may be training the wrong staff in the wrong posts. It will be important to make a clear connection between training and service need.

4. Legal and financial implications

This report contributes to the authority meeting its statutory duties (see background papers listed below) and the identified financial implications arising from this revised scheme will be assessed by the Corporate Equalities Management Group to support the submission of a report to Cabinet.

5. Recommendations

That the Equalities Committee endorse the draft Revised Welsh Language Scheme and recommend it to Cabinet.

That the Equalities Committee endorse the Authority's co-operation with the Welsh Language Board in carrying out a risk assessment process later in the year.

That the Equalities Committee endorse the proposals set out by the PR Department on the development and management of the Authority's website.

That the Equalities Committee endorse the proposals set out by the Corporate HR Department on staff and Members' training.

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Background papers:

- Equality Standard for Local Government in Wales
- Wales Programme of Improvement Guidance for Local Authorities 2005 (Circular 28/2005)
- Welsh Language Act 1993
- Government of Wales Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998