

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT TO CABINET COMMITTEE EQUALITIES

5 OCTOBER 2009

**REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE – CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT &
PARTNERSHIPS**

**HALF-YEARLY REPORT – IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COUNCIL'S WELSH
LANGUAGE SCHEME 2008-2011**

1. Purpose of Report.

1.1 To update the Committee on progress with implementing the Council's Welsh Language Scheme 2008-2011.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan / Other Corporate Priority.

2.1 The Welsh Language Scheme is a statutory scheme on a cross-cutting issue, and therefore impacts upon the work of the whole Council. It is linked to the equality agenda, and will be a key component in delivering on the Council's Customer Care Programme.

3. Background.

3.1 On 10 September 2008, the Council approved the revised Welsh Language Scheme 2008-2011. The revised Scheme aims to address areas of development suggested by the Welsh Language Board, based on statutory guidance issued by them.

3.2 The Welsh Language Board suggested that the Council must demonstrate improvement in the following key areas:

- The production of a bilingual website
- Bilingual job advertising
- Staff development (i.e. training to support availability of Welsh-speaking staff in key services)
- Performance monitoring.

4. Current situation / proposal.

4.1 Key milestones for delivery during the financial year 2008-09 are attached at Appendix A, with detailed progress updates. Members will note that although some milestones have slipped, considerable progress has been made. Progress against these milestones can be summarised as follows:

4.2 Advice & Guidance

- An advice leaflet has been published aimed at the Council's third party contractors. This is being distributed to them by the Procurement team.
- Updated pages have been prepared for the Bridgend's intranet, containing links to all advice and guidance, and will be uploaded in October 2009.
- Advice for staff is now included in the staff e-learning programme.

4.3 Website development

- The Council's website is being translated on an ongoing basis.
- The link to "Cymraeg" at the top of the web site now contains further links to sections of the website that have been translated.
- Website also now includes "Browse Aloud" software to make it accessible for visually-impaired people, in both English and Welsh. Bridgend County Borough Council was one of the first organisations to make this facility available bilingually.

4.4 Staffing & Training

- 5 elected members and 13 members of staff completed Entry Level 1 courses in June 2009.
- 57 members of staff have enrolled for Entry Level 1 & 2 courses starting in September 2009.
- "Taster" sessions were also held in the Customer Service Centre during Adult Learners Week in May.
- Bespoke "Welsh in the Workplace" training was organised for the Welsh-speaking staff in the Customer Service Centre - recognised as good practice by WAG.
- An article is appearing in the September edition of the Bridgend newsletter to promote these developments.
- The Sport and Physical Activity section of the Wellbeing Directorate is working proactively to increase sporting opportunities through the medium of Welsh. A Welsh Language Active Young People Officer has been appointed, employed by the Urdd and funded by European Social Fund for a period of four years. It is a unique post in Wales.

4.5 Other

- The Council is strengthening links with the local Welsh-language newspaper, *Yr Hogwr*, and supply news items.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules.

5.1 This is a progress report and therefore has no direct effect.

6. Legal Implications.

There are no legal implications.

7. Financial Implications.

7.1 This is a progress report and therefore has no direct financial implications. Actions in the Welsh Language Scheme are being funded from existing resources, as noted in the report to Council on 10th September 2008.

8. Recommendation.

8.1 The Committee is recommended to note the progress being made in implementing the Welsh Language Scheme action plan.

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5 October 2009

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Background documents

Bridgend County Borough Council Welsh Language Scheme, 2008-2011

Welsh Language Act 1993.

Welsh Language Scheme Revision – Advice for Local Authorities 2005 (Welsh Language Board).