

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT TO CABINET COMMITTEE - EQUALITIES

6 FEBRUARY 2012

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE – PERFORMANCE

REVISED WELSH LANGUAGE SCHEME 2012 - 2015

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1** The purpose of the report is to seek approval of the Authority's revised Welsh Language Scheme (2012-2015) as a basis for discussion with the Welsh Language Board.
- 1.2** The Scheme is being presented to the Committee in English only, but will be presented to Council, when full approval is sought, in a bilingual format.

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 Authority. It is linked to the equalities agenda, and is a core element of the Customer Care Programme.

3. Background

- 3.1** The Authority last approved a Welsh Language Scheme in 2008. Working with the Welsh Language Board, officers have developed a revised Scheme, attached at Appendix 1. The revised Scheme aims to address areas in need of development suggested by the Welsh Language Board, based on statutory guidance issued by them.
- 3.2** The Welsh Language Board has suggested that the authority needs to 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.
- 3.3** The revised Scheme outlines how the authority can make improvements in a practical, manageable and cost-effective manner over the course of the next three years.

4. Current situation / proposal

- 4.1** The draft revised Scheme includes the following key commitments:
- To provide clear and concise advice and guidance to managers and staff on their responsibilities
 - To undertake a linguistic needs assessment to identify all areas where Welsh language skills are essential or desirable
 - To conclude the translation of the Council's public facing website.
- 4.2** The Customer Service Centre at Civic Offices is a key element in enabling Welsh-speaking customers to access services. Steps are continuing to ensure that the Centre can respond appropriately, particularly in terms of its staffing complement.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework& Procedure Rules

- 5.1** The proposed 2012-15 Scheme supersedes the 2008 - 11 Scheme.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.1** An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken in respect of the draft revised Welsh Language Scheme. It confirms that there will be a **positive** impact on how the Authority complies with its duties under the Welsh Language Act.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1** The progress that has been made with the current scheme has been funded from within current budgets. The same approach will be adopted for the implementation of the new action plan.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1** It is recommended that the Cabinet Committee – Equalities:
- approves the draft revised Welsh Language Scheme 2012-2015, as a basis for discussion with the Welsh Language Board
 - await the outcome of those discussions and the development of the action plan
 - receive a follow up report on the above prior to the draft scheme and action plan being referred to Council for approval

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30 January 2012

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Background documents:-

Welsh Language Act 1993.

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