

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT TO CABINET EQUALITIES COMMITTEE

4 FEBRUARY 2013

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE – PERFORMANCE

**WELSH LANGUAGE SCHEME – ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2011/2012 –
RESPONSE FROM THE WELSH LANGUAGE COMMISSIONER**

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to inform the committee of feedback received from the Welsh Language Commissioner regarding the council's Annual Monitoring Report 2011/12 on the Welsh Language Scheme.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan / Other Corporate Priority

The Welsh Language Scheme is a statutory scheme and a cross-cutting issue that impacts upon the work of the whole council. It is linked to the equalities agenda, and is a key component in the council's Customer Care Programme.

3. Background

The council is required to report to the Welsh Language Commissioner annually to outline progress made on implementing its Welsh Language Scheme. The council is also required to report on how improvements will be made over the 2012/13 period. The Commissioner will then provide the council with feedback to support delivery of the scheme and to make recommendations for further improvements.

4. Current situation / proposal

The council's Annual Monitoring Report 2011/12 was submitted to the Welsh Language Commissioner following the Cabinet Equalities Committee's approval in September 2012.

The council received written feedback from the commissioner in December 2012. Appreciation was expressed for the council's positive work during this period and the council was praised for positive developments and examples of good practice. In addition to this some concerns were expressed and recommendations for improvements were given. A copy of the commissioner's notes and the council's response to them is attached as appendix 1.

In summary the commissioner noted the following changes or improvements by the council during 2011/12:

1. The development of a Welsh language training plan which aims to provide employees with training dependent on business needs.

2. Welsh Language Indicator WLI 2 (the number and % of main reception, call centres or one stop shop posts that have been denoted as 'Welsh Essential' and filled by bilingual staff) has been reported on in full.
3. Two formal complaints were received about the council. The commissioner was satisfied these were addressed in accordance with the council's corporate standards.
4. There are 326 more Welsh language web pages in 2012 than in 2011. Good progress being made in providing wide ranging and comprehensive information in Welsh was noted.
5. Nine members of staff received Welsh language training in 2011/2012 (Welsh Language Indicator WLI 4[b])
6. Welsh Language Indicator WLI 5 was reported on in full, detailing a breakdown of the council's Welsh speaking employees by service department, grade and workplace.
7. The commissioner has not asked the council about Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) before but has noted that the council undertakes EIAs whenever a new policy or initiative is being considered and that Welsh language is a consideration within the EIA.

The commissioner noted the following areas for improvement from the 2011/12 report:

1. Concern was expressed that Welsh Language Indicator WLI 1 was not reported on. In the Annual Monitoring Report 2010/2011 the council reported that work was ongoing to allow reporting on this indicator this year. The commissioner has asked for an explanation of the level of consideration given by the council to the Welsh Language Board guidance '*Contracting Out Public Service Contracts*'. Since receiving the commissioner's response in December the council has now made progress in developing an action plan to allow reporting on this indicator which has been shared with the commissioner.

Full details of the commissioner's responses can be found in appendix 1.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules

This report is for information purposes and does not contain any proposed changes to the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

No equality impact assessment is required as it is an information report only. The Welsh Language Scheme continues to support the authority's equality agenda and will do so until the national standards become operational.

7. Financial Implications

No financial implications.

8. Recommendation

It is recommended the Cabinet Equalities Committee notes the feedback received by the Welsh Language Commissioner.

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Background documents

The Welsh Language Commissioner's Response to the council's 2011/12 Annual Monitoring Report.