

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT TO CABINET EQUALITIES COMMITTEE

13 JULY 2017

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR – OPERATIONAL AND PARTNERSHIP SERVICES

UPDATE REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WELSH LANGUAGE (WALES) MEASURE 2011 AND WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS

1. Purpose of report

To update Cabinet Equalities Committee on the implementation of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan / Other Corporate Priority

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 introduced Welsh Language Standards which impact upon the work of the whole council. The standards link to the equalities agenda, form a key component of the council's Transformation Programme and Customer Charter, and link to the following corporate priorities:

- Priority 2: Helping people to be more self-reliant;
- Priority 3: Smarter use of resources.

3. Background

The council received its final compliance notice from the Welsh Language Commissioner on 30 September 2015 and has since been working to determine the implications involved in implementing the 171 assigned standards.

Progress updates have been provided to Cabinet Equalities Committee on 28 April 2016, 14 July 2016, 10 November 2016 and 9 March 2017. Those reports are referenced as background documents to this report.

4. Current situation / proposal

The council has continued to work towards compliance with the standards. Key progress/updates since March 2017 can be summarised as:

- a) We received a response from the Welsh Language Commissioner in April 2017 in relation to the standards we appealed. A subsequent meeting with the Commissioner's office took place on 19 May 2017. Corporate Management Board is now considering next steps.
- b) Staff continue to receive regular updates and reminders via email, and information on the staff intranet is under regular review.
- c) Welsh language "Meet and Greet" training for frontline staff continues to be provided by the University of South Wales and a second tranche of "Cwrs Mynediad" Welsh language training – together with business Welsh training - is being planned.

- d) Opportunities for joint working with Menter Bro Ogwr (MBO) have been identified as follows:
- BCBC to work with MBO to advertise Welsh-essential jobs on their website and Facebook page;
 - MBO to continue working with Halo and Awen Trust to provide recreational courses through the medium of Welsh for adults in Bridgend;
 - BCBC to promote public Siop Siarad sessions among staff via the intranet.
- e) No formal complaints have been received since the last update report in March 2017.
- f) A new meeting toolkit has been developed and shared with staff to enable the council to collect record and report on data relating to language preference at all external public meetings that the authority arranges – in line with the Welsh language standards. Between 1 April and 31 May 2017, 306 meetings were arranged, two of which were requested to be held in Welsh.
- g) A Citizen Language Preference database has been developed and shared with staff to enable the council to identify language preference and correspond with the public in their language of choice (English or Welsh). This will continue to be populated as new information about language choice becomes available.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules

There are no proposed changes to the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

This is an information report. As such, no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

7. Financial Implications

A recurring budget of £313,000 and a one-off budget of £81,000 were established in the 2016-17 budget through the Medium Term Financial Strategy to implement those Welsh Language Standards, that were agreed to be funded corporately, which are outlined in appendix 1. These budgets did not take into account the financial implications of the standards which the council has appealed. To date not much of this funding has been allocated out, and the one-off budget has been retained for a further year. The cost of implementing the Welsh Language Standards will continue to be reviewed during 2017-18 and, if the costs are deemed to be significantly higher than budgeted, a decision will be made corporately as to how this shortfall will be met.

8. Recommendation

That the Cabinet Equalities Committee receives and considers this report.

Andrew Jolley

Corporate Director – Operational and Partnership Services

Date: 21 June 2017

9. Contact officers:

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Background papers: Update reports to Cabinet Equalities Committee on the Welsh Language Standards dated 28 April 2016, 14 July 2016, 10 November 2016 and 9 March 2017.