

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT TO CABINET EQUALITIES COMMITTEE

23 NOVEMBER 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, 9 March 2017 and 13 July 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 July 2017 can be summarised as:

- a) We received a formal 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 where it agreed that the council could have an extension of time to comply with 11 of the 20 standards appealed. The council was requested to come up with a reasonable timetable for implementation of the 11 remaining standards and an audit is taking place to determine the dates that will be put forward to the Commissioner.

- b) The council is now progressing compliance with all other standards, including treating Welsh and English equally across our social media accounts (except in emergency situations).
- c) A meeting will take place with the Welsh Language Commissioner's office on 5 December to discuss the council's performance against the standards, successful practices, risks and challenges. This is part of their ongoing review process of local authorities across Wales.
- d) Staff continue to receive regular updates and reminders via email.
- e) Welsh language "Meet and Greet" training for frontline staff continues to be provided by the University of South Wales and a first and second year of "Cwrs Mynediad" Welsh language training - together with business Welsh training - is underway.
- f) No formal complaints have been received since the last update report in July 2017.
- g) Language preference will be captured whenever someone visits the new BCBC website and when they create a My Account profile.

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. These budgets did not take into account the financial implications of the standards that the council appealed. To date not much of this funding has been allocated out, as the full financial implications of meeting all standards is not known. The one-off budget has been retained until a clearer picture emerges. The cost of implementing the Welsh Language Standards will continue to be reviewed during 2017-18 and into 2018-19 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: 13 November 2017

9. Contact officer

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Background papers: none.