

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET EQUALITIES COMMITTEE

16 JULY 2018

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DIRECTORATE

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

1. Purpose of report

This report updates the Cabinet Equalities Committee (CEC) 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 and subsequent Welsh Language Standards 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; enabling people to use the language of their choice by ensuring our systems and front line services are delivered bilingually. Ensuring that bilingual systems enable people to better equipped to manage situations themselves and the council services can concentrate on those in greatest need.
- Priority 3: Smarter use of resources; ensuring that all its resources (financial, physical, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the development of resources throughout the community that can help deliver the Council's priorities.

3. Background

Since the council received its compliance notice in 2015, progress towards implementing the 171 assigned standards has continued.

Updates on compliance have been provided at every CEC since 28 April 2016. Those reports are referenced as background documents to this report.

4. Current situation / proposal

Key progress/updates with compliance since March 2018 CEC can be summarised as:

1. A meeting took place between us and the commissioner's office on 15 March 2018 to discuss the outstanding standards. Since then, communication has been regular and we are now awaiting a final determination on these standards from the commissioner. For some of these standards we are now compliant, however we are still considered to be 'under challenge' by the commissioner's office. This is due to

the commissioner's wish to run one determination on all of these standards rather than assess and determine on an individual basis. Our current position is summarised in appendix 1.

2. A consultation response was drafted on the Welsh Language Commissioner's draft code of practice and submitted by the 6 April 2018 deadline. Receipt of the response was received but as yet we have not received an update on next steps. The draft code of practice is a practical interpretation of each standard and when passed by ministers in the summer, the council would be obliged to follow the interpretation of the standards as set down by the code. In the main we feel that for the majority of standards the commissioner's interpretation matches our own or with some adjustments/further work we will be able to work towards the necessary changes. In summary we highlighted the following in our response:
 - Feedback on general content, style, language and ease of use
 - Feedback on certain terminology and the application of this e.g. the terms 'public' and 'published'
 - Remaining queries over interpretation and where we feel further clarity is needed
 - General concerns on our ability to meet the correspondence standards based on the code's interpretation
 - Detail on any specific standards where we feel that our interpretation and that of the commissioner's is different and why we would not be able to comply with the interpretation as it currently is.
3. Two complaints have been received in 2018:
 - a. An informal complaint was made on 18 January 2018 to the Highways department regarding incorrect signage and availability of Welsh speakers on the phone. The complaint was responded to by the 29/1/18. No further action has been taken.
 - b. A complaint was made to the Welsh Language Commissioner on 1 May 2018 in relation to a failure to respond to a Welsh language email. The investigation is ongoing.

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

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. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Assessment

8.1 This is an update report, therefore a well-being of future generations Act (2015) assessment has not taken place in order to prepare this report.

9. Recommendation

That the Cabinet Equalities Committee receives and considers this report.

Darren Mephram
Chief Executive
Date: 16 July 2018

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11. Background papers:

- 28 April 2016 Update report on implementation of the Welsh Language (Wales) measure 2011 and Welsh Language standards ;
- 14 July 2016 Welsh Language standards annual report 2015/16 ;
- 14 July 2016 Update report on implementation of the Welsh Language (Wales) measure 2011 and Welsh Language standards ;
- 10 November 2016 Update report on implementation of the Welsh Language (Wales) measure 2011 and Welsh Language standards ;
- 9 March 2017 Update report on implementation of the Welsh Language (Wales) measure 2011 and Welsh Language standards ;
- 13 July 2017 Welsh Language standards annual report 2016/17 ;
- 13 July 2017 Update report on implementation of the Welsh Language (Wales) measure 2011 and Welsh Language standards ;

- 23 November 2017 Update report on implementation of the Welsh Language (Wales) measure 2011 and Welsh Language standards.
- 22 March 2018 Update report on implementation of the Welsh Language (Wales) measure 2011 and Welsh Language standards.