

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET EQUALITIES COMMITTEE

19 November 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

- 1.1 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

- 2.1 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

- 3.1 Since the council received its compliance notice in 2015, progress towards implementing the 171 assigned standards has continued.
- 3.2 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

- 4.1 Key progress/updates with compliance since July 2018 CEC can be summarised as:
1. Following various meetings and exchanges of information our final determination on our outstanding standards was received from the commissioner's office on 20 August 2018. A summary on what was agreed can be found at appendix 1. Specific communications to relevant services as well as an all staff message have been issued. There are now no remaining standards under challenge and our compliance

notice has been changed accordingly. Work will now be undertaken in service areas to meet those standards (that have deadlines in the future) as well as there being a piece of work around communications and updating compliance documentation.

2. A letter was received from the commissioner's office on 8 October 2018 to provide an update on the draft code of conduct which we provided a response to in April as part of their consultation process. The letter advised that the code has been amended taking on feedback that has been received and presented to ministers for consent.
3. Two complaints have been received since the July 2018 committee meeting:
 - A complaint was made directly to the Welsh Language Commissioner in relation to an email response being provided in Welsh but with English only attachments as well as issues related to paying council tax online and being diverted to the English version of the external system as opposed to the Welsh version. Investigation is ongoing.
 - A complaint was made directly to the Welsh Language Commissioner in relation to English wording on the Welsh page of democratic services website. Investigation is ongoing.

The investigation into the complaint made in May 2018 (covered at the last committee meeting) in relation to a failure to respond to a Welsh language email is still ongoing.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules

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

6. Equality Impact Assessment

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

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 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 and, over the last 3 years, part of these have been allocated out to directorates in line with approved spend. These budgets did not take into account the financial implications of the standards that the council appealed. Despite that, to date only a small proportion of this funding has been allocated out, partly due to the time taken to appeal, and partly due to uncertainty over potential costs in the first place. Consequently the budgets are being retained until a clearer picture on total costs emerges. 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

9.1 That the Cabinet Equalities Committee receives and considers this report.

Darren Mepham
Chief Executive
Date: 19 November 2018

10. Contact officers:

Emma Blandon
Communications, Marketing and Engagement Manager
Email: emma.blandon@bridgend.gov.uk
Telephone: 642047

Nicola Bunston
Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager
Email: nicola.bunston@bridgend.gov.uk
Telephone:643664

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.
- 16 July 2018 Update report on implementation of the Welsh Language (Wales) measure 2011 and Welsh Language standards.