

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET

15 MARCH 2016

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR - RESOURCES

USE OF WELSH LANGUAGE IN THE WORKPLACE

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval for the proposed way forward in the use of Welsh Language in the workplace.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives / Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 This report and proposal links to the following Corporate Priority:

- Working together to make the best use of our resources.

3. Background

- 3.1 The introduction of the Welsh Language Standards obliges the Council to adopt a new approach to the way in which it treats the Welsh Language.
- 3.2 The majority of standards will need to be met as of 26.03.16 with the remainder coming into force as of 01.09.16.
- 3.3 The Council are appealing 7 standards, where it believes that these are not deliverable, eg, for technological reasons, disproportionate and unaffordable. The outcome of these appeals is awaited.

4. Current situation / proposal

- 4.1 An "HR" policy for employees which explains the Council's approach to the use of Welsh language in the workplace is attached at Appendix 1. This is a new policy and it is recognized that this will need to be reviewed and updated as the full extent of the impact of the Welsh Language Standards becomes known.
- 4.2 The "guiding principles" provide context for the policy and there are a number of key areas where bilingual services must be introduced notably
- 4.2.1 publications
 - 4.2.2 correspondence
 - 4.2.3 telephone calls
 - 4.2.4 reception areas
 - 4.2.5 public meetings
 - 4.2.6 social media

4.3 The standards also mean that we offer all our employees the opportunity to confirm their preferred language in which we will correspond with them.

4.4 There will also be changes in a number of HR practices:

4.4.1 vacancy management

4.4.2 recruitment and selection

4.4.3 assessment of skills

4.4.4 induction

4.4.5 training

4.5 The Council has a Corporate Complaints policy and this been updated in order that we comply with the Compliance Notice, ie, specifically Standards 147, 148, 149, 156, 162, 168. This policy is attached at Appendix 2.

4.5.1 recording the number of complaints

4.5.2 keeping copies of the complaints

4.5.3 establishing a complaints procedure which enables compliance

4.6 The final policy for consideration by Cabinet is the Grants Policy. This policy is attached at Appendix 3. This is a new policy and it is recognised that this will need to be reviewed and updated as the full extent of the impact of the Welsh Language Standards becomes known. This policy enables us to comply with Standards 71, 72, 72A, 74 and 75, ie

4.6.1 bilingual documentation

4.6.2 inviting applications in Welsh

4.6.3 no less favourable treatment of grants in Welsh than English

4.6.4 if the applicant wishes, conducting the interview in Welsh

4.6.5 informing applicants of decisions in Welsh

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules

5.1 None.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 An initial screening EIA has been undertaken which indicates that the policy will have a positive impact on both the Council employees' and the public's use of the Welsh language. The policy will also contribute positively to the understanding and development of Welsh culture in the Council. and assist with our compliance with the Welsh Language Standards.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 A budget pressure arising from the implementation of the Welsh Language Standards has been recognised in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2016-17 to 2019-20. This comprises one off funding of £81,000 and recurrent funding of £313,000. This pressure does not take into account the financial implications for those standards to be appealed. Should the appeal not be successful the Council will have to meet those costs in the short term from the

corporate contingency or Council Fund until such time as recurrent funding is identified from budget reductions elsewhere or council tax increases.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1 Cabinet is recommended to note the report and approve the proposals outlined in Point 4 above.

Contact Officer: Sarah Kingsbury Head of HR/OD
E-mail: Sarah.kingsbury@bridgend.gov.uk
Postal Address Ravens Court
Brewery Lane
Bridgend
CF31 4AP