

Report To: Welsh Language Committee

Date of Meeting: 2 May

Lead Member / Officer: Huw Hilditch Roberts / Nicola Stubbins

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Title: Welsh Language Standards

1. What is the report about?

This report is about the implementation of the Welsh Language Standards

2. What is the reason for making this report?

To provide a briefing on developments with the Welsh Language Standards in Denbighshire.

3. What are the Recommendations?

To note the contents of the report.

4. Report details

A considerable amount of work has gone on in Denbighshire in the efforts to respond positively to changes in language legislation. The Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011 has enabled the Government to set standards relating to the Welsh Language and the Welsh Government expects the Council to adopt a Welsh Language Strategy, as part of its response to the Standards.

The Council has responded positively to the new legislation and has made a commitment to embracing the Welsh Language Standards and enhancing a bilingual culture and ethos within the Council.

The Council is already responding positively to the Welsh Language Standards and has already implemented many of the agreed actions. It has also responded positively to the More Than Just Words framework which has been put in place to improve Welsh language provision in the health and social care sector. A comprehensive action plan is in place and Denbighshire has committed to implementing the action plan in the county, for the benefit of the county's residents.

The Council has made significant progress with implementing the Standards. Whilst the Council is pleased with the progress being made, ensuring that the whole Council complies with the Standards remains a challenge, due to the size and geographical spread of the organisation.

Welsh Language Standards: The Council's main focus over the past three years has been around preparing and implementing the 169 Standards issued by the Welsh Language Commissioner. Extensive work has gone on within service to change processes, ensuring that customers receive a bilingual service, with a focus on the active offer

The Standards relate to correspondence, promotion, policy making and internal administration within the Council.

Extensive communication has taken place around the Standards, including regular staff messages from the Chief Executive, presentations at Leadership Conferences, drop-in sessions for staff, presentations at team meetings.

A list of actions undertaken to comply with the service delivery standards.

- We have provided communications to staff around responding to correspondence, arranging meetings and telephone answering
- We have ensured that all staff offer people the opportunity to be transferred to a Welsh speaker when contacting the Council.
- We have introduced one telephone number for the Council's main switchboard, which offers people the option of choosing a Welsh Language Service.
- We have provided wording for staff to include in letter templates, offering residents an opportunity to request correspondence in Welsh in future.
- We have placed a message on the Contact's Centre's recorded message to state that the Welsh Language line is available.
- We have notified staff arranging public meetings that all publicity/ invites should be in Welsh, that simultaneous translators should be arranged for each public meeting and that organisers of public meetings should remind people at the start of meetings that they can contribute in Welsh
- All documents produced for public use are bilingual, including promotional materials and exhibition documentation.
- The interface and menus on every page of our website are bilingual.
- All grant forms received in Welsh are responded to in Welsh

A list of actions taken to comply with the Operational Standards during 2016/17

- We have produced a policy on using Welsh internally for the purpose of promoting and facilitating the use of the language and this document has been published on our intranet.
- We have introduced a HR process where all staff will be asked whether they wish to receive their contract of employment in Welsh.
- We have asked all staff whether they wish to receive paper correspondence relating to his or her employment and which is addressed to him/ her personally (in Welsh).
- We have asked all staff whether they wish to receive paper correspondence relating to his or her training needs or requirement in Welsh.
- We have asked all staff whether they wish to receive documents that outline their performance objectives in Welsh and we will provide documents in Welsh if that is their wish.

- We have asked all staff whether they wish to receive documents that outline s their career plan in Welsh and we will provide documents in Welsh if that is their wish.
- We have asked all staff whether they wish to receive forms that record and authorise annual leave, absences from work and flexible working hours in Welsh.
- Staff are able to make complaints in Welsh through the corporate complaints procedure and this has been publicised to staff.
- The Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure already states that staff may make a complaint in Welsh and has the right to respond to complaint made about him or her in Welsh. Staff have been made aware of that right.
- All staff will be offered an opportunity to host any meetings regarding complaints made against them in Welsh (with or without the use of a translator)
- Any record of decision relating to a complaint against a member of staff will be issued in Welsh (and any subsequent meeting will be conducted in Welsh).
- Our HR policies state that staff can respond in Welsh to any allegations made against them.
- Computer software for checking spelling and grammar has been provided to all staff who speak or learn Welsh and Welsh Language interfaces for software (such as Microsoft Word) is provided in Welsh.
- We have translated the text of our intranet homepage into Welsh.
- Any pages on the intranet that have corresponding pages in Welsh includes a direct link to the Welsh language page.
- Pages have been created on the intranet which provides services and support material to promote the Welsh language and assist staff in using the Welsh language.
- The intranet has been fully translated and is now available in the language of choice.
- The Council has carried out an assessment of the Welsh language skills of employees through a self-assessment.
- The Council actively promotes opportunities during working hours for employees to receive basic Welsh Language courses
- The Council provides opportunities for staff wanting to further their basic Welsh training through offering further training.
- The Council has developed an e-learning module, to raise staff's awareness of the Welsh Language.
- Information to raise awareness of the Welsh language is provided to all new staff.
- We have provided wording for staff to use on their e-mail signature, to inform people if they are fluent Welsh speakers or are learners.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

The decision contributes to the development of the Welsh Language and culture, which underpins the Council's Corporate Plan. It also responds

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

There is no budget in place for this work and any costs associated must be borne by services directly.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

Whilst no formal Well-being Impact Assessment is needed for this report, it is worth noting some of the key benefits in relation to the Well-Being and Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language Standards.

One of the key components of the well-being and Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is having: “A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language : A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation”.

The Council also has a role, through its Welsh Language Standards, to promote opportunities for local communities to get involved in Welsh Language activities.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

Consultations have taken place with the Senior Leadership Team and with Cabinet Members.

9. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

The main risk is to the reputation of the authority, as we have already made a commitment in our Welsh Language Strategy and through the Welsh Language