

Report to	Welsh Language Strategic Committee
Date of meeting	17 March, 2020
Lead Member / Officer	Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts/ Nicola Stubbins
Report author	Gareth Watson, Team Leader – Communications and Campaign Management
Title	Welsh Language Standards – an update

1. What is the report about?

The report is about the Welsh Language Standards

2. What is the reason for making this report?

To update Members with progress on implementing the Welsh Language Standards.

3. What are the Recommendations?

To note the contents of the report and to approve the associated action plan.

4. Report details

The Welsh Language Standards were introduced in Denbighshire in 2015, as part of a roll out to public sector organisations in Wales. The Standards were created in direct response to the creation of the Welsh Language Bill and the role of the Welsh Language Commissioner.

The Standards have been introduced to ensure that the Welsh Language is treated as fairly as the English Language. Denbighshire needs to comply with 167 Standards which have been broken down into five key areas: Service Delivery; Policy Making; Operational. Record Keeping and Promotional.

The duty for implementing these Standards are for every member of the organisation. A clear mandate has been issued by the Council to comply with the Welsh Language Standards and the aim is to provide the best service possible to the public in the language of their choice.

As would be expected, the Council has been implementing these standards for a number of years. Whilst many of the standards were not new to the organisation, we

needed to ensure that there was a positive response to their implementation across the county and that customers see an enhanced service through the medium of Welsh.

The Council seems to be complying with the majority of the Standards across the Board. The work of monitoring the compliance rests with the Corporate Communications team, who have corporate responsibilities for the Welsh Language. They are supported by a team of Welsh Language Champions who act voluntarily to promote the corporate approach.

The compliance is also subject to random testing by other organisations, including the Welsh Language Commissioner's office.

Whilst in the vast majority of cases we seem to be in compliance, further work is needed around promoting the availability of meetings in Welsh and the rights of individuals invited to meetings to contribute in Welsh. Although this does happen, there needs to be more work to ensure that all members of staff proactively offer this service when they arrange meetings. Some discussions with a small number of staff show they are unfamiliar with these particular Standards and this needs to be addressed over the coming weeks through proactive communications.

The Welsh Language Commissioner regularly carries out spot checks and a formal report is compiled regarding compliance with Welsh Language Standards. The Commissioner also visited the last meeting of this Welsh Language Strategic Group and referred to the good working relationship that exists between his office and the authority.

He also referred to a research project due to be carried out in late 2020 in which he will be reviewing the recruitment processes within local authorities and how each role is categorised in terms of Welsh language skills.

The Council will continue to promote messages around compliance with the Welsh Language Standards, to ensure the high level of compliance continues.

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.

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

There is no budget in place for the Welsh Language. Any costs are expected to be absorbed into existing budgets.

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?

Previous updates have been reported to the Welsh Language Strategy Group and to the Senior Leadership Team.

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

The main risk of any non-compliance could be a complaint being submitted to the Welsh Language Commissioner’s office, as well as damage to the Council’s reputation.

Action Plan 2020

ACTION	BY WHO	WHEN
Programme of visits to team meetings, to promote the Standards	Gareth Watson Manon Celyn	December 2020
A communications programme to remind staff of their duties.	Gareth Watson Manon Celyn	Summer 2020
Mystery Shopper exercise	Welsh Language Champions	Summer 2020
Work with Commissioner's Office to identify best practice and share with teams	Gareth Watson Manon Celyn	December 2020