



CABINET – 9TH JUNE 2021

SUBJECT: WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform members and seek their endorsement of the progress made during the financial year 2020-2021 against four specific areas of Welsh language work, as required under the regulatory framework for implementing the Welsh Language Standards.
- 1.2 The report will then be published online by the deadline date of 30 June 2021, as required by Welsh Language Standard 158.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Council has a statutory duty to produce an annual monitoring report on implementing Welsh language issues under current legislation and in compliance with Standard 158.
- 2.2 The information required for 2020-2021 covers four required key areas.

Detail of Reporting Requirement	Standard No. (and sub-clause)
<p>Complaints from the Public</p> <p>The annual report must include the number of complaints that you received during that year which related to your compliance with the standards with which you were under a duty to comply.</p>	<p>147, 148, 149 156, 158(2), 162, 164(2), 168(a), 170(2)(d)</p>
<p>Staff Language Skills</p> <p>The number of employees who have Welsh language skills at the end of the year in question (on the basis of the records kept in accordance with standard 151);</p>	<p>170(2)(a) 151</p>

<p>Welsh Medium Training Provision</p> <p>The number of members of staff who attended training courses you offered in Welsh during the year (on the basis of the records you kept in accordance with standard 152);</p> <p>If a Welsh version of a course was offered by you during that year, the percentage of the total number of staff attending the course who attended the Welsh version (on the basis of the records you kept in accordance with standard 152).</p>	<p>170(2)(b) 170(2)(c) 152</p>
<p>Recruiting to Empty Posts</p> <p>The number of new and vacant posts that you advertised during the year which were categorised as posts where:</p> <p>(i) Welsh language skills were essential (ii) Welsh language skills needed to be learnt when appointed to the post (iii) Welsh language skills were desirable, (iv) Welsh language skills were not necessary</p> <p>(on the basis of the records you kept in accordance with standard 154);</p>	<p>170(2)(ch) 154</p>

- 2.3 The report provides an update to Members on the Council's current position in relation to the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 statutory requirements.
- 2.4 The report outlines the good progress made by service areas in embedding arrangements for delivering services through the medium of Welsh and increasing the Welsh language skills capacity of the workforce.
- 2.5 It is evident from the content of the report that the work done to date is moving in the right direction. The good progress and momentum will be maintained by continuing to work with partners and responding to help, advice and best practice from the Welsh Language Commissioner and other regional and national bodies.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet Members note the content of the annual report and endorse the publication of this information as a record of progress towards, and compliance with, the relevant Welsh Language Standards.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 As per Standard 158 of the Council's Compliance Notice, the Council must;
- Produce an annual report which deals with the way in which it has complied with the service delivery standards with which it is under a duty to comply during that year.
 - Include in the annual report the number of complaints received during that year which relate to its compliance with the service delivery standards with which it is under a duty to comply.
 - Publish the annual report on its website by 30 June each year.

5. THE REPORT

5.1 The annual report highlights the following performance information;

- 2 Welsh language complaints were recorded this financial year. One related to a joint Covid-19 update from the Chief Executive and the Leader issued during the local Caerphilly lockdown in English only initially due to the urgent nature of its content, with the Welsh translation to follow. The council took a strategic decision to use an exemption given in its compliance notice, in relation to the publication of press statements of an urgent nature, especially during a global pandemic. The other complaint was from a resident who had not received a response to their initial service request and felt it was because the requests was submitted in Welsh.
- There was an increase in the number of Welsh speaking staff recorded on our HR system for 2020-2021 across all 3 directorates.
- For the fourth year running we are seeing an increase in the number of staff learning Welsh with 246 learners having completed courses. A significant number of staff completed the 10 hour online part 1 and part 2 courses during lockdown, with 517 of these courses completed. Many of the staff who completed these courses were school-based staff and or who work in the social care sector.
- 690 vacancies were advertised in total. Only 4 posts were advertised as Welsh Essential. 42 posts were advertised where Welsh language skills needed to be learnt when appointed, 684 posts were assessed as Welsh desirable and 7 where no Welsh language skills were required, due in part to existing staff already possessing Welsh language skills. All posts are advertised with a default of Welsh desirable as a minimum.
- A number of service requests over the past two years have related to highways works signage being non-compliant with the Welsh Language Standards. During 2020-2021 the Equalities, Welsh Language and Consultation team worked very closely with Highways officers to develop a guide which sets out examples of works signage in a compliant format. This guide has been shared with officers and contractors to ensure everyone is aware of the requirement and to reduce the number of service requests we receive regarding this issue. The guide can be seen in Appendix A of the Welsh Language Standards Annual Report.
- The Planning Department have upgraded the Public Access Platform, which enables people to search, track and comment on Planning Applications. The software is being developed in partnership with LinguaSkin, and the Translation Team have been preparing translations to be fed into the system in readiness for it to be launched.
- The new Integrated Impact Assessment, which includes a section on the Welsh language was developed using the Welsh Language Commissioner's guidance on the Policy Making Standards. This section now requires officers to give more consideration on the impact on the Welsh language when developing proposals and policies.
- We have also highlighted the promotional work undertaken during 2020-2021 to promote the Welsh language and raise awareness of calendar dates where we celebrate the language and culture.

5.2 Conclusion

It is evident from the content of the report that there has been progress during 2020-2021, however we must not be complacent, instead we need to continue to achieve and maintain compliance with the standards in everything we do.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 No assumptions have been made in this report.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 Full Equalities and Welsh language assessments and consultation were undertaken on the Strategic Equality Plan as it was being developed; therefore no full assessment has been made on this annual report. The report is an assessment of progress made by the Council under the Welsh Language Standards.

7.2 Welsh language is a crosscutting theme of the Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 and impacts on every Council policy, function and procedure, covering those aimed at the public and internal policies covering the Council's staff members. The report contributes to the following Well-being Goals:

- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

7.3 The Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024, which includes Welsh language and compliance with the Welsh Language Standards as a strategic equality objective in its own right, has direct links with a number of other current policies and strategies, both within the Council and in terms of partnership working.

7.4 There are also Welsh Government strategies or regulations that the Council's Welsh Language work links to, including "**Mwy Na Geiriau / More Than Words**" (the National Health and Social Care Welsh Language Strategy), "**Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh Speakers**" (Welsh Government's Welsh language strategy) and **Prosperity for All**.

7.5 This report ties in with the following objectives of the Corporate Plan 2018-2023;

- Objective 1 - Improve education opportunities for all
- Objective 2 - Enabling employment
- Objective 6 - Support citizens to remain independent and improve their well-being

7.6 This report contributes to the Well-being Goals as set out above. It is also consistent with the five ways of working:

- Long Term – Ensuring that staff have the skills to deliver bilingual services now and in the future
- Prevention – Improving services and upskilling staff will ensure that everyone regardless of language choice has equal access to services and thus preventing complaints and Welsh Language Commissioner Investigations.
- Integration – By providing bilingual services to the public we make everyone feel equal and valued.

- Collaboration – Partnership working is key to this and assists the council in meeting its duties under the Welsh Language Standards. Working in collaboration with partners is further evidenced in the Five Year Welsh Language Strategy.
- Involvement – As noted under collaboration, we must involve our partners to deliver on the Five Year Welsh Language Strategy and to assist us with service delivery.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no direct financial implications to this report as the annual report covers work already undertaken in the previous financial year. However it should be noted that moving the agenda forward will incur financial implications, particularly in relation to Welsh language translation and training of staff.

The cost of supporting staff to attend Welsh in the Workplace courses for the 2020-2021, which assists in the delivery of bilingual Council services under the Standards, was £1637.83. This is less than in previous years due to all courses being run online during the pandemic.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no personnel implications to this report, although this continues to be reviewed as the work of implementing the Welsh Language Standards progresses. This is relevant to Section 7 of Appendix 1, which focuses on Recruiting to Empty Posts.
- 9.2 No posts will be advertised without a Welsh Language Skills Assessment.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 All responses from consultations have been incorporated in the report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.
- 11.2 Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Author: Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer – Equalities, Welsh Language & Consultation (cullima@caerffili.gov.uk)

Consultees: Christina Harrhy, Chief Executive
 Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director – Education & Corporate Services
 Cllr Eluned Stenner, Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance & Planning
 Cllr James Pritchard, Equalities Champion
 Sue Richards, Head for 21st Century Schools
 Stephen Harris, Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer
 Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer
 Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services

Kathryn Peters, Corporate Policy Manager
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer

Background Papers:

- Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024
- Compliance Notice – Section 44 Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011
- Welsh Language Strategy 2017-2022
- Various Guidance Documents

(These are available electronically for information on the Policy Portal and on relevant website pages at www.caerphilly.gov.uk/equalities)

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2020-2021