



## POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 9TH JUNE 2009

**SUBJECT: UPDATE TO THE COUNCIL'S STATUTORY WELSH LANGUAGE SCHEME FOR THE PERIOD 2009-2012**

**REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek a recommendation from Cabinet on the draft update of the council's fourth Welsh Language Scheme, for the period 2009 to March 2012, pending any additional comments made at Policy and Resources Scrutiny this evening.

### 2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The council's current scheme came to an end in March 2008. It was decided to undertake a full review and update of the scheme before producing a new version, which is the reason for the gap year, during which the previous scheme continued to be in effect.
- 2.2 Following an extensive consultation internally with all relevant areas (beginning with Legal Services in order to ensure that the Council was meeting its statutory obligations), a draft was completed and discussions held with the Welsh Language Board (WLB) concerning the new version and overall approach. The WLB were very much supportive of the new scheme and the approach being suggested.
- 2.3 The key area to note is that the new Scheme does not commit the Council to any significant increase in provision over and above what it already has in place.
- 2.4 What has changed is that the Scheme now only contains the high-level commitments as required by the guidance issued under the Welsh Language Act 1993, with the operational detail that had been added over the last 10 years now removed.
- 2.5 This operational detail is to be issued as Supplementary Guidance on specific subjects, targeted at relevant staff (the first of these is attached for information).
- 2.6 This has streamlined the Scheme itself making it a more accessible document and the attached draft therefore represents a significant update to the Scheme following a major review being undertaken by a number of officers.

### **3. LINKS TO STRATEGY**

3.1 The Welsh Language Scheme is a crosscutting policy and impacts on every other council policy that is aimed at the public.

3.2 It also has direct links with a number of council policies and strategies: -

- The Community Strategy
- Linguistic Skills Strategy
- Equalities
- Staff Development
- Freedom of Information
- E-Government
- Customer Care
- Recruitment and Selection

### **4. THE REPORT**

4.1 The Council is required to periodically review and update its Welsh Language Scheme and the draft Scheme is attached in full as an appendix for information.

### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Translation and training costs are met from the budget within the Policy Unit.

5.2 The expansion of those parts of the scheme being undertaken already will not incur significant additional costs but any further development in new areas will have to be considered as part of project development.

### **6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The section on Recruitment and Selection within the scheme does include long-term personnel implications, but these have already been agreed as part of the Linguistic Skills Strategy, approved in September 2007.

### **7. CONSULTATIONS**

7.1 The draft scheme was sent out for consultation during 2008, to those listed below.

### **8. RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL**

8.1 It is recommended that Cabinet consider and, subject to any additional comments made at Policy and Resources Scrutiny this evening, recommend that Council approve the draft Scheme.

### **9. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 The Welsh Language Scheme is part of the council's policy framework and is presented for consideration by Cabinet prior to going to Council for final approval.

### **10. STATUTORY POWER**

10.1 The council is required to prepare, review and update its Welsh Language Scheme under the Welsh Language Act 1993.

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Consultees: Executive Equalities Group  
(chaired by Nigel Barnett, Director of Corporate Services, with representation from Cabinet, Personnel, Communications, Performance, Policy and Heads of Service from each Directorate)

Welsh Language Equalities Group  
(*chaired by Pat Mears, Chief Planning Officer*)

Legal Services

Menter Iaith Sir Caerffili (a local voluntary organisation)

Appendix: Draft Welsh Language Scheme 2009-2012 (attached)

Background Papers - Supplementary Guidance - Editorial Policy