



CORPORATE AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE INFORMATION ITEM – 25TH JUNE 2024

SUBJECT: WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform members of the progress made during the financial year 2023-2024 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 be published online by the deadline date of 30 June 2024, 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 2023-2024 covers four required key areas.

Detail of Reporting Requirement	Standard No. (and sub-clause)
Complaints from the Public 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.	147, 148, 149, 156, 158(2), 162, 164(2), 168(a), 170(2)(d)
Staff Language Skills 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);	170(2)(a) 151

Detail of Reporting Requirement	Standard No. (and sub-clause)
<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 progress made by the Council in embedding arrangements for delivering services through the medium of Welsh and increasing the Welsh language skills capacity of the workforce.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Corporate and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee for information, note the content of the annual report, following its approval at Cabinet on 5th June 2024, which will be published on the Council's website by the 30th June deadline.

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;

- We didn't receive any complaints or investigations about the Welsh language during this financial year. This is the fifth year in a row that we haven't been subject to a Welsh Language Commissioner investigation for non-compliance.
- We promoted and celebrated a number of different Welsh language activities during 2022-2023 including:
 - Diwrnod Shwmae – staff and residents of Tŷ Iscoed residential home got involved with a Welsh language course
 - Welsh Language Rights Day – we promoted Welsh language services and encouraged members of the public to access services in Welsh
- We continued our work supporting Careers Wales with talks at Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni, St Martins School, Islwyn High, and St Cenydd Comprehensive. The talks were delivered to Years 10 and 11 regarding career and apprenticeship opportunities with the Council, and emphasis on how important Welsh language skills are to employers.
- The partnership working with Careers Wales and schools in the county borough earned us a nomination and shortlisted as finalists in the Careers Wales Valued Partner Awards. Although we did not win the award, it was a great achievement for the Council to be recognised for the work that has been done over the years and will continue to do in a number of schools in the county borough.
- The Council's Translation Team translated 2,175,562 words this financial year. That's over 700,000 words more than last year, thanks to the additional capacity in the team.
- The number of staff recorded as having Welsh language skills rose from 2,100 to 2,258 during this financial year. With the roll-out of the Welsh Language Skills Audit in April, we hope next to year to be in a position where we can map and detail every member of staff with Welsh language skills, and provide them with the necessary support to encourage them to use those skills confidently in the workplace.
- The number of staff learning Welsh increased again during this financial year to 96. We have changed the process of registering on courses, which is much more streamlined. We have also been working a lot more with service areas, in particular the Employability Team, who have all attended a Welsh course and are a great example of how to embed Welsh language into everyday work.
- Out of 685 new and vacant posts advertised only 9 of these were advertised as Welsh Essential, 13 posts were advertised where Welsh language skills needed to be learnt when appointed; 663 posts advertised as Welsh Desirable; and 0 where Welsh language skills were not required.

All posts are advertised with a default of Welsh desirable as a minimum.

5.2 Conclusion

The report gives evidence of our progress to promote the Welsh language and comply with the Welsh Language Standards in the Council's Compliance Notice.

We will continue to work with service areas, and with the data from the Welsh Language Skills Audit, that was rolled out in April 2024, we will identify and address any Welsh language training or Welsh language skills requirements, to ensure our services are delivered in line with the Welsh Language Standards moving forward.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 No assumptions have been made in this report.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 A full Equalities and Welsh language assessment and consultation were undertaken on the Strategic Equality Plan and the Five Year Welsh Language Strategy when they were 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 and in line with associated actions in the Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024, and the Five Year Welsh Language Strategy 2022-2027.

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, 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** (Welsh Government's economic action plan).

7.5 This report ties in with the following objectives in the Council's Corporate Plan 2023-2028;

- WBO1 - Enabling our Children to Succeed in Education
- WBO2 - Enabling our Residents to Thrive
- WBO3 - Enabling our Communities to Thrive
- WBO4 - Enabling our Economy to Grow

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 2023-2024, which assists in the delivery of bilingual Council services under the Standards, was £3,661.00.

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 6 of Appendix A, which focuses on Recruiting to Empty Posts.
- 9.2 No posts are 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.

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Consultees:

Dave Street, Deputy Chief Executive
Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director – Education and Corporate Services
Mark S Williams, Corporate Director – Economy and Environment
Gareth Jenkins, Assistant Director – Head of Children’s Services
Cllr Eluned Stenner, Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance
Cllr Philippa Leonard, Cabinet Member for Planning and Public Protection and Equalities
Champion
Cllr Gary Johnston – Chair of Corporate and Regeneration Scrutiny
Cllr Amanda McConnell – Vice-Chair of Corporate and Regeneration Scrutiny
Sue Richards, Head of Transformation and Education Planning and Strategy
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
Stephen Harris, Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer
Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer
Kathryn Peters, Corporate Policy Manager
Geraint Ashton, Policy Officer – Equalities and Welsh Language

Background Papers:

- Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024 [Link to Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024](#)
- Compliance Notice – Section 44 Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 [Link to Compliance Notice - Section 44 Welsh Language \(Wales\) Measure 2011](#)
[compliancenotice.aspx \(caerphilly.gov.uk\)](#)
- Welsh Language Strategy 2022-2027 [Link to Welsh Language Strategy 2022-2027](#)
- Various Guidance Documents (*These are available electronically for information on the Council's Intranet and on relevant website pages at www.caerphilly.gov.uk/equalities*)

Appendices:

Appendix A – Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2023-2024