

Report

Cabinet



Part 1

Date: 16 September 2020

Subject Annual Welsh Language Monitoring Report 2019 - 20

Purpose This report reflects Newport City Council's progress on its Welsh language commitments during the financial year 2019-2020.

The attached monitoring report is required to be published on the council's website in accordance with statutory responsibilities under the Welsh Language Standards.

Author Connected Communities Manager

Ward All

Summary The Council is required to report annually on its progress in complying with the Welsh Language Standards under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

The statutory deadline for publishing is 30th June 2020, although in line with other regulatory bodies at the current time, there is recognition by the Welsh Language Commissioner that the current pandemic may cause delays. The draft report has been published on the Council's website.

This report covers the fourth year of implementation, following the imposition of the majority of Welsh language standards in March 2016. The report provides Cabinet with an overview of the Council's progress in meeting the Welsh Language Standards.

Proposal To approve the attached final monitoring report and publish it on the Council's website, in accordance with statutory deadlines.

Action by Head of People and Business Change, Heads of Service

Timetable Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

Cabinet Member for Community and Resources
Welsh Language Elected Member Champion
Welsh Language Implementation Group
Heads of Service

Signed Head of People and Business Change

Background

Legal context

This annual report has been prepared in accordance with Welsh Language Standards 158, 164 and 170 and sets out how Newport City Council has complied with the Welsh Language Standards which were imposed on the authority by the Welsh Language Commissioner in Newport City Council's [Newport City Council's Compliance Notice](#) during the financial year 2019/20. This represents the Authority's fourth year of implementing the Welsh Language Standards which came to force on the 30th of March 2016.

Governance

The implementation of, and compliance with, Welsh Language Standards is monitored through the Welsh Language Implementation Group. The Authority also has an Elected Member Welsh Language Champion. The implementation of the Welsh Language Standards has been identified as a medium risk on the Authority's Risk Register.

Developments

This annual report reflects the positive work undertaken by the council, reflects on its achievements and highlights the challenges ahead. Positive work this year has included:

- A review of the council's Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment process and guidance to better reflect our Welsh language responsibilities
- Training delivered to Cabinet Members on Welsh language in the decision making process
- Recruitment of a Welsh Language Promotion Officer to better promote Welsh language to diverse communities across the city
- Sponsorship of, and engagement with, Welsh language events in Newport, including Gwyl Newydd, the Welsh language festival in Newport
- Piloting of the 'Say Something in Welsh' app, enabling frontline staff to learn workplace-relevant Welsh at their own pace

As in previous years, the council has identified a number of priorities for the next financial year, to build on the good work already undertaken and further promote the Welsh language both within the authority and across the city:

- Developing creative partnership arrangements outside of the public and voluntary sector to better raise the profile of the Welsh language across Newport and local regions, for example, exploring opportunities to work with local sports teams
- Working with our neighbourhood hubs in each area of the city to promote better engagement with council services through the medium of Welsh
- Reviewing the current Welsh language lessons and classes we offer with a view to developing bespoke learning interventions, for example, delivering a course for staff who may have studied Welsh in school but now lack confidence to use it in the workplace
- Reviewing our internal governance structure around Welsh language to ensure it is effective and responsive
- Working with our refugee, migrant and BAME communities to better embed Welsh language as part of a shared sense of identity across the city, particularly in the context of the development of our fourth Welsh medium school
- Continuing our work to improve the representation of Welsh speakers across the council. This year we have also commissioned research to look at why young people are not choosing childcare and early years education as employment/further education options, and how we can work to better address these gaps

- Improving our recording and monitoring of Welsh language skills in the workplace, and better using this data to inform strategy
- Enhance partnership working across Welsh Language Forum members in line with the Welsh Language Strategy
- Develop the corporate intranet site to include Welsh language guidance around compliance with the Welsh Language Standards

Financial Summary

Newport City Council continues to invest in the Welsh language, with a Welsh Language and Equalities budget to support internal adoption of standards and facilitate partnership and community initiatives. The most significant expenditure is translation costs (around £30k per quarter) although this is currently under review, with a number of proposals being considered in order to reduce translation costs.

Additional funding for short-term projects is available through a Welsh Language Reserve.

There is an expectation that service areas will factor in costs associated with Welsh language provision when developing new services in order to ensure sustainability.

Risks

Risk	Impact of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect	Who is responsible for dealing with the risk?
That the Welsh Language (WL) Standards in their entirety are not implemented	H	M	Governance of the WL Scheme/Standards and Equalities is strengthened through the WL Implementation Group and Strategic Equalities Group.	Heads of Service Head of People and Business Change
That the Standards are not understood by employees	H	L	The WL internal communications strategy is a visible campaign that engages managers and employees. Training on WL awareness is now delivered by internal officers, helping to facilitate engagement between Welsh language officers and staff.	Head of People and Business Change
That the Council's website is not fully bilingual	M	H	The majority of the Council's website is now compliant with WL Standards, however, the number of associated systems which populate the site remains an ongoing challenge.	Head of People and Business Change Head of Streetscene

* Taking account of proposed mitigation measures

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

The Council's responsibilities under the Welsh Language Standards are integrated into the authority's Wellbeing and Corporate Plans. The council also has also published a 5 year Welsh Language Strategy (2017-22) which sets out how the authority is going to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language.

Options Available

- a) To approve the attached report and publish on the council's website
- b) To not approve the attached report and redraft.

Preferred Option and Why

Option a) is the preferred option, in order to ensure that the Council remains compliant with its statutory obligations.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

There are no direct financial consequences as a result of the proposal to approve the monitoring report and then publish on the Council's website. Cost of the implementation of the Welsh Language Standards is met by service area budgets, and a central budget is also in place to develop a sustainable translation service, with a reserve available to draw on for additional projects or set up costs associated with compliance.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

The Council has a statutory duty under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 to comply with prescribed Welsh Language Standards. The Council is required to report annually on progress in meeting the Welsh Language Standards and publish the report in accordance with standard 158. This report sets out the actions taken and the progress made in meeting the Council's Welsh language commitments during 2019/20. It demonstrates that the Council has responded to the legislative requirements in a systematic way, however, further progress will be required in the next 12 months.

Comments of Head of People and Business Change

There are no direct staffing implications arising from this report.

This annual report reflects the positive progress made and highlights some examples of good practice that we have delivered over the past 12 months. The report also identifies some areas in which we will need to make improvements in the year to come.

Continued work on the Welsh Language agenda, and the 5 Year Welsh Language Strategy contributes to the delivery of the Council's well-being objectives and the national well-being goals, in particular, working towards a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language.

Comments of Cabinet Member

I am pleased to see the progress the authority has made over the past 12 months outlined in this report, and that our Welsh Language Standards are now recognised and understood by the majority of Council staff. Our governance arrangements ensure that we monitor ongoing implementation and progress against our standards, as well as seeking opportunities to effectively promote the Welsh language across the City in partnership with community-based Welsh language groups. As we move into a new year, I look forward to continuing to lead on this work, particularly in light of recent announcements in relation to our plans for an additional Welsh medium school, which I anticipate will provide further opportunity to build on the good work already undertaken.

Local issues

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Committees

Not applicable.

Equalities Impact Assessment and the Equalities Act 2010

No Fairness & Equalities Impact Assessment (FEIA) is necessary for the annual report.

Children and Families (Wales) Measure

No consultation was needed for this report.

Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015, which came into force in April 2016, places an obligation on Local Authorities to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Welsh Language Annual Report represents much of the work that the authority undertakes to fulfil our Wellbeing objective to work towards 'a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language'.

In support of the Act's sustainable development principle, our focus on developing a workforce which has a range of Welsh language abilities across service areas ensures an approach to meeting our Welsh language obligations which looks to the future, alongside continued efforts to promote increased use of Welsh within our local communities. This work is informed and delivered collaboratively with Welsh language community networks, and better integration of Welsh language considerations within our Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment process has improved the way our Welsh language responsibilities and community views impact on our policy and decision making.

Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Not applicable.

Background Papers

Welsh Language Standards (Newport City Council Compliance Notice)

Welsh Language Annual Report 18/19

5 Year Welsh Language Strategy

NCC Wellbeing Plan

Dated: August 2020