

Report

Cabinet



Part 1

Date: 12 June 2017

Subject Annual Welsh Language Monitoring Report 2016-17

Purpose This report reflects Newport City Council's progress on its Welsh language commitments during the financial year 2016-17.

To approve the attached monitoring report to be published on the council's website.

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Corporate Policy and Diversity Officer

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.

This report covers the first full year of implementation, following the implementation date for the majority of the standards (being 30th March 2016). The council engaged with the Welsh Language Commissioner over their allocation of Standards and has systematically addressed all the Standards with which we are expected to comply.

The report provides Cabinet with an overview of the Council's progress in meeting the Welsh Language Standards.

Proposal To approve the attached 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:

Corporate Directors
Cabinet Member for Assets & Member Development (Deputy Leader)
The Council's Welsh Language Implementation Group

Signed Head of People and Business Change

Background

Legal context

This report reflects Newport City Council's progress on its Welsh language commitments during the financial year 2016-17. This year has been the first full year of implementing the majority of the Standards which came to force on the 30th of March 2016.

The report presents data required by the Standards and will be published by 30th June in compliance with Standard 158. The report will be publicised following approval by Cabinet and we will ensure that a copy is available online and in public offices as required by Standard 170.

Risk

The implementation of the Welsh Language Standards remains on the council's Risk Register although the risk level has been reduced. To address the risk we have planned for and implemented the Standards in a systematic way.

Governance and management

A Welsh Language Implementation Group of service area representatives chaired by the Head of People and Business Change, reports to the Strategic Equalities Group, which was chaired by Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources. Progress is reported and monitored by the Strategic Leadership Team and Cabinet. A briefing note on implementation was received by Cabinet Member and Heads of Service in February 2017 in order to present our current position and focus attention on areas of risk.

Challenging the Standards

We have challenged some Standards in advance of their implementation date of 30th March 2016. Many of these challenges have been accepted by the Welsh Language Commissioner and some have been amended, however, there remains a lack of parity across local authorities. As we've outlined in our official challenge, due to current workforce skill level and the current software systems employed by the authority we have issues achieving full compliancy with all standards at all times.

Positive attitudes

It is fair to say that there has been a perceptible change in attitude towards the Welsh language across the council in the last year. We have undertaken a lot of work to make the Welsh language more visible and with the roll-out of bilingual greetings using incidental Welsh has become more normal. Senior figures use Welsh in public events, and the Leader of the Council regularly speaks Welsh in Council and Cabinet, leading through example. Feedback from the staff conference in October 2016 suggested that staff felt increasingly confident in offering and delivering bilingual services.

Developments

We are pleased that the main areas of work identified in last year's annual report have been addressed: developing a bilingual website for the council, developing a 5 year Strategy to promote the Welsh language and developing a sustainable translation service. In developing the 5 Year Welsh Language Strategy for Newport we've had the opportunity to engage stakeholders and we will continue to engage people through the Strategy in order to make Newport a Welsh language friendly city.

The following are challenges identified for the coming year:

- improving the way we engage with staff
- improving the way we identify and record choice of language and complaints
- testing our ability to deliver Welsh medium services

- implementing the Workforce Development Strategy to further support and make better use of Welsh speakers
- identifying more Welsh speaking customer services operatives for front line services
- developing integrated guidance in impact assessments
- implementing the Welsh Language 5 Year Strategy
- developing a fully bilingual website for the authority
- maintaining the momentum for change

Furthermore we need to develop better monitoring systems to ensure that the procedures that we have put in place facilitate the intended outcome: greater use of the Welsh language.

Financial Summary

The cost of implementing the Welsh Language Scheme is largely met out of existing budgets by each relevant service area. The majority of the actions relate to work already identified in service improvement plans, for example workforce monitoring. In 2016/17 an additional £280,000 was put into base budgets to deliver the Welsh Language Standards, with most of that amount ear-marked for developing a sustainable translation service. Service Areas will need to continue to ensure sufficient resource is allocated to meeting the requirements for service provision.

There is also a reserve set aside for the initial and one-off implementation costs for Welsh language standards and the development and promotion of the Strategy, this will be closely monitored.

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 Standards in their entirety are not implemented	H	L	Governance of the WL Scheme / Standards and Equalities is strengthened through the WL Implementation Group and Strategic Equalities Group. Resources identified for implementation and translation provision.	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 mandatory for managers	Head of People and Business Change
The website needed to be bilingual	M	H	Website translation is commissioned and information prioritised but will not be complete in the coming year. This work will continue to be a priority.	Head of People and Business Change Head of Streetscene

* Taking account of proposed mitigation measures

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

As detailed in the body of the report, the council's commitments under the Welsh Language Standards are integrated into the authority's planning documents including the Strategic Equality Plan, the Improvement Plan and in the work emerging from the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Options Available

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

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 further financial consequences arising from this report in relation to existing plans and strategies but Cabinet will be aware that there is a budget as well as a reserve which has been made available for the new standards and requirements.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

The Council has a statutory duty under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 to comply with prescribed Welsh language standards in relation to the delivery of public services, policy making and record keeping. 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 action taken to comply with this duty and the progress, to date, in implementing the relevant standards for the first full year since they were introduced in March 2016. It demonstrates that the Council has responded to the requirements of the Measure and the prescribed standards in a systematic way and that the main areas of work identified in last year's annual report have been addressed in relation to the development of a bilingual website, developing a 5 year Strategy to promote the Welsh language and developing a sustainable translation service. However, further progress will be required in the next 12 months.

Comments of Head of People and Business Change

This annual report both reflects the positive distance travelled by the authority in delivering bilingual services and meeting the Welsh Language Standards, while also highlighting the work left to be done. The authority has taken a holistic approach to implementing change, allocating responsibility to service areas and putting governance arrangements in place through the Welsh Language Implementation Group and the Strategic Equalities Group. Developments in our Organisational Development provision also support this change.

Comments of Cabinet Member

Implementation of the Welsh Language Standards is a significant challenge for the Local Authority and I am pleased with the progress being made. We recognise that further work is required but the report demonstrates progress and our ongoing commitment.

Local issues

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Committees

Not applicable.

Equalities Impact Assessment and the Equalities Act 2010

No Fairness & Equalities Impact Assessment (F&EIA) is necessary for the annual report. Equalities and Welsh language agenda are well aligned and actions in the report referring to F&EIA in Newport will consider both together.

The Welsh Language Standards are congruent with equalities legislation as outlined in the 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 sets the context for the move towards long term planning of services. A programme of training for senior management and elected members is underway so that the wide-ranging implications of the Act are understood and can be embedded in the Council's ways of working.

The wellbeing objectives for Newport City Council include Welsh Language requirements, linked to the 5 year Welsh Language Strategy.

Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Not applicable.

Background Papers

Welsh Language Standards

Welsh Language annual report 16/17

5 Year Welsh Language Strategy

NCC Well-being Objectives and Well-being Statement

Dated: 22nd May 2017