

CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday, 19 October 2017
Report Subject	Welsh in the Workplace Policy
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets
Report Author	Chief Executive
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Welsh Government (WG) is committed to strengthening Welsh language provision in public services, particularly in health and social services where language is an integral part of service user safety, dignity and respect.

The Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011 enables the Welsh Ministers to specify Standards relating to the Welsh language. These Standards replace Welsh Language Schemes. The aim of the Standards is to:

- improve the services Welsh-speakers can expect to receive from organisations in Welsh;
- increase the use people make of Welsh-language services
- make it clear to organisations what they need to do in terms of the Welsh language; and
- ensure that there is an appropriate degree of consistency in terms of the duties placed on bodies in the same sectors.

Standard 98 requires public bodies to develop a policy for using Welsh in the Workplace. The purpose of this report is to present the Council's draft Welsh in the Workplace policy prior to adoption by Cabinet and provide an overview of progress to ensure compliance with the Standards.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To be assured that work is being undertaken to comply with the Welsh Language Standards.
2	To consider and review the Welsh in the Workplace policy.
3	To receive annual reports on work carried out to meet the Welsh Language Standards.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE WELSH IN THE WORKPLACE POLICY
1.01	<p>The WG's commitment to the Welsh language is set out in various legislation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 identifies seven well-being goals, one of which includes "A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language."• Welsh Medium Education Strategy – WG's commitment to continuing the growth of Welsh medium and Welsh language education.• More than Words Framework - the WG framework to strengthen Welsh language services in health, social services and social care.• One million Welsh speakers by 2050 – WG strategy encouraging more people to speak and use Welsh in their daily lives including the workplace.• The Welsh Language Measure 2011 – imposed Welsh Language Standards on public bodies. Welsh Language Standard 98, requires public bodies to develop a policy for using Welsh in the Workplace.
1.02	<p>The purpose of the Welsh in the Workplace policy is to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">i) promote positive attitudes and encourage employees to take pride in the Welsh language and Welsh culture.ii) increase the number of Welsh speaking employees and provide opportunities for employees who are already fluent Welsh speakers and those who are learning to use Welsh both in work and at work.iii) encourage a bilingual working environment in which employees have the freedom and support to work through the medium of Welsh. <p>The commitments in the attached policy reflect the requirements for promoting and implementing the Welsh Language operational Standards, in particular in relation to employment.</p>
1.03	Implementing this policy will support the Council, over the long term, to develop bilingual services and comply with Welsh Language Standards.

	<p>Amongst other things it will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduce our dependency on Translation and Interpretation translation facilities; • contribute towards “normalising” Welsh in the workplace and help to attract and retain Welsh speaking employees; • support the Council’s Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, sending a clear message, internally and externally, that the Welsh language is valued outside of the school environment and is an asset in employment; and • support colleagues in Social Services and their progress implementing More Than Words Framework and will underpin the Council’s Customer Services Strategy.
1.04	<p>Offering more opportunities for employees to see, hear, use and practice Welsh at work, will support them to become more confident and proficient, improving the quality of Welsh medium services to the public. The more people are immersed in a new language the more quickly they will learn. Increasing the number and proportion of employees who speak Welsh will in turn lead to further use of Welsh in the workplace, strengthening the Council’s ability to provide bilingual services in the future. Recognising and responding to customer’s language preference is an integral part of customer care.</p>
1.05	<p>The policy is focussed on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fostering positive attitudes towards the Welsh language; • encouraging employees to use Welsh whatever their skill level; • supporting employees, particularly in customer facing roles, to be able to develop some Welsh language skills; • encouraging employees to make an “active offer” to Welsh speaking customers; • providing more support to Welsh learners enabling them to practise newly acquired skills; • supporting employees who wish to use Welsh in the workplace; • building on good practice developed by individual employees and services such as the Panad a Sgwrs, conversation group initiated by Social Services; and • setting out more clearly for employees and potential employees the Council’s commitment to the Welsh language and culture.
1.06	<p>The Council’s ability to deliver bilingual services is challenged by the difficulty in recruiting to Welsh essential posts. The process is being reviewed which will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simplifying the Welsh Language Skills Assessment (WLSA) which determines the level of language skills required for posts; • using practical and user friendly wording to describe the level of Welsh skills required for posts. Employers who use specific examples of the levels of skill required rather than stating a job is “Welsh essential” have reported more success in recruiting Welsh speakers. For example, using descriptions such as “ the ability to conduct a simple conversation in Welsh with customers” rather than stating “Welsh

	<p>essential”;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • using Welsh media to advertise posts; and • developing alternative solutions if suitable Welsh speaking applicants cannot be recruited e.g. introducing a requirement to learn Welsh to a specified level in a set time or training a Welsh speaker to fulfil other requirements of a post.
1.07	<p>Regular workforce news items have been published to remind employees and managers of the requirement to comply with the Welsh Language Standards. Resources to support managers and employees are available on a specific page of the intranet. These resources relate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising/publicity/public documents; • Audio announcements and signage; • Correspondence; • Consultation and research; • Education courses for the public; • Meetings; • Promoting Welsh medium services; • Telephones; and • Tenders and contracts.
1.08	<p>The front page of the intranet is also now available in Welsh to comply with the Standards. A page will be developed which will provide resources for Welsh learners.</p>
1.09	<p>To support the implementation of the Standards a Welsh Language Network has been developed comprising representatives from each Portfolio. Their role is to be the main point of contact for their service in supporting the Council with the implementation of the new Welsh Language Standards and enhancing and promoting a Welsh language culture across the Council.</p>
1.10	<p>A report describing progress to meeting the Welsh Language Standards will be published annually; information will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of new and vacant posts which were categorised as posts where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Welsh language skills were essential ii) Welsh needed to be learnt when appointed iii) Welsh desirable iv) Welsh language skills were not necessary • Number and percentage of employees who have completed the Welsh language skills audit. • Profile of Welsh language skills of employees. • Number of employees attending Welsh language skills training by level of training. • Number and percentage of employees who have completed the Welsh language awareness e-learning training. • Number of employees who attended courses through the medium of Welsh.
1.11	<p>An implementation plan to meet the Standards has been prepared and will be incorporated into the Council’s performance management system which</p>

	will help monitor compliance. Progress will be monitored through the Chief Officer Team, Cabinet and relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
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2.01	A corporate budget is in place to support employees attend Welsh language skills training. Developing an understanding and support of the policy will be important; the launch of the policy will need to be supported by awareness sessions which will also dispel misunderstanding and preconceptions about the Welsh language.
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3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
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3.01	Consultation has been undertaken with the workforce, the Council's Welsh Language Network and with Chief Officers.
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4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
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4.01	The Performance Management System, CAMMS, will help us to monitor compliance where appropriate. Implementation of the Welsh in the Workplace policy will enhance the profile of Welsh language and support the Council meet the needs of Welsh speaking customers.
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5.00	APPENDICES
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5.01	Appendix 1 - Welsh in the Workplace policy.
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6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
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6.01	<p>Welsh Language Standards</p> <p>Contact Officer: Fiona Mocko Strategic Policy Advisor Telephone: 01352 702122 E-mail: fiona.mocko@flintshire.gov.uk</p>
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7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
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7.01	<p>Compliance Notice: specifies the exact standards with which each organisation should comply and also the date by which they are required to comply with a standard.</p> <p>More Than Words Framework: A Welsh Government strategic framework to strengthen Welsh language services in health, social services and social</p>
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care. It includes the principle of the “Active Offer” where customers are offered services in Welsh as opposed to having to request them.

Welsh in Education Strategic Plan: The Council’s plan to increase the number of fluent Welsh speakers within the county.

Welsh Language Measure: Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 confirms the official status of Welsh, creates a new system of placing duties on bodies to provide services through the medium of Welsh and creating the post of Language Commissioner with enforcement powers.

Welsh Language Standards: specify standards of conduct in relation to the Welsh language.