



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

WELSH LANGUAGE CABINET STEERING GROUP

29 APRIL 2019

**WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS COMPLIANCE REPORT
TO THE WELSH LANGUAGE COMMISSIONER
2018 – 2019**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION, AND
COMMUNITY SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT
PORTFOLIO HOLDER CLLR G. HOPKINS**

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Welsh Language Steering Group with a copy of the Welsh Language Standards Compliance Report 2018 – 2019.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group:

- 2.1 Note the content of the report;
- 2.2 Approve the report for publication on Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's website, and approve the distribution of the report to each of the authority's offices that are open to the public by no later than 30 June 2019 so that it is made available to the public;
- 2.3 Approve arrangements for publicising the fact that the annual report has been published.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Standards 158, 164 and 170 of the Compliance Notice issued under section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 requires the Council to produce a report (an "annual report") in relation to each

financial year which outlines the way in which the Council has complied with:

- the Service Delivery Standards with which the Council were under a duty to comply during the year in question;
- the Policy Making Standards with which the Council were under a duty to comply during the year in question;
- the Operational Standards with which the Council were under a duty to comply during the year in question.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Rhondda Cynon Taf received its final Compliance Notice from the Welsh Language Commissioner on 30th September 2015 which outlined the Council's duty to meet 171 of the statutory Welsh Language Standards introduced by the Welsh Government under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.
- 4.2 An application to challenge 14 of the Standards was presented to the Commissioner on 29 March 2016. This resulted in the imposition date for achievement of aspects of 3 of the standards (52, 58 and 64¹) being postponed until 31st March 2018 so that progress against these are included for the first time in this Annual Monitoring Report.
- 4.3 The report at Appendix 1 covers the third full year of the implementation of the standards – from 1 April 2018 to 31st March 2019. The report must be published on the Council's website and made available in each of the Council's offices that are open to the public no later than 30 June 2019.
- 4.4 The Council is under a statutory duty to publicise the fact that it has published an annual report.
- 4.5. As well as complying with the aforementioned Standards in 3.1, this year's annual report must include the following:

¹ Standard 52 – full compliance in respect of websites other than the corporate website was not required until 31/3/2018.

Standard 58 – full compliance in respect of social media other than the Council's main social media account was moved to 31/3/2018.

Standard 64 – areas defined as 'reception services' (for example, Libraries, Leisure centres etc) apart from the Council's main reception service was moved forward to 31/8/2018.

- the number of complaints that were received during the year that relate to the Council's compliance with the (i) service delivery (ii) policy making (iii) operational standards with which it was under a duty to comply;
- the number of employees who have Welsh language skills at the end of the year in question;
- the number of members of staff who attended training courses offered by the Council in Welsh during the year in question;
- the percentage of the total number of staff who attended training courses offered in Welsh by the Council during the year in question;
- the number of new and vacant posts that the Council advertised during the year which were categorised as posts where - (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, or (iv) Welsh language skills were not necessary during the year in question.

5. CURRENT POSITION

5.1 The Annual Monitoring Report at Appendix 1 describes in detail the work undertaken by the Council to ensure compliance with the Welsh Language Standards. Of particular note are the following:

- the introduction of Welsh Language Level 1 Training for all new appointees;
- The delivery of Welsh language tuition to 455 members of staff (March 2019) at all levels with additional Welsh language training in the Autumn term 2018 for Early Years and Family Support Service settings;
- Appointment of Senior Translator roles allowing for a more efficient service, with dedicated support for Democratic Services and the Cabinet Office.
- Provision of Welsh simultaneous translation services for all decision making Committees e.g. Scrutiny and Regulatory Committees;
- A new question introduced for use on all service change consultations to assess the impact that any change will have on the Welsh language or Welsh speakers;
- Ongoing review of Website pages with removal of non-compliant pages

5.2 Despite the good progress made by the Council, challenges remain as we seek to achieve full compliance. Particular areas that remain challenging include the following:

- The need to increase the number of Welsh speaking staff and to further develop the skills of current staff to learn Welsh so that services are able to provide services in the medium of Welsh (this has been identified as a need by nearly all Council services in their Service Self-evaluations 2018/19);
- Capacity to meet the increased demand for Welsh language tuition at Level 1 and to balance this with the need to provide continued skills development for staff who are at higher Welsh language skills levels;
- Capacity to meet the increased administrative burden related to the organisation and delivery of compulsory Welsh level 1 for all new appointees due to the number of new appointments;
- Promoting the use of Welsh among residents and staff as required under the Strategy for the Promotion and Facilitation of the Welsh Language;
- Monitoring the partnership elements of the 5 Year Strategy;
- Ensuring that all Council related websites and social media feeds are bilingual

5.3 Even in the face of some of the challenges identified at 5.2, feedback from the Welsh Language Commissioner during the annual meeting with their Compliance Officers remains very positive in respect of the progress made in Rhondda Cynon Taf. For example, officers from Welsh Language Services were invited to present their work at the Welsh Language Commissioner's Successful Practices Seminar in November 2018 at the Temple of Peace, Cardiff as implementing audits in the context of compliance with statutory linguistic duties was identified as an area of good practice in the Welsh Language Commissioner's Annual Assurance Report 18/19.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

7. CONSULTATION

A consultation process was not required for this report, although all service areas contributed data to the report through their service self-evaluations.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

There are no financial implications aligned to this report. However, there may be costs and resources as yet not fully ascertained in respect of implementation of any recommendations by the Welsh Language Commissioner as well as continued implementation of the 171 Standards. Non-compliance with a Standard could incur financial penalties of up to £5,000.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and Welsh Language Statutory Standards 2015 regulate this area of work.

10. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

10.1 The Welsh language is a cross-cutting theme in the Corporate Plan and underpins all corporate priorities as the Council is required to comply with the amended Compliance Notice issued by the Welsh Language Commissioner in September 2016.

10.2 The Annual Compliance Report outlines the work undertaken by the Council to comply with the Welsh language statutory standards that will contribute to the Welsh Government's longer-term goal of 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050. The work undertaken to achieve these standards involves working collaboratively with partners and residents to facilitate a wide range of opportunities for the use of the Welsh language in communities across the county. Achievement of the standards will prevent complaints from residents who have been unable to access services in the Welsh language.

10.3 The content of this report is directly related to Goal 6 of the Well-being of Future Generations Act - a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Compliance with the standards will support the normalisation of the Welsh language and ensure that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language. It also contributes to the creation of a more equal Wales by providing opportunities for Welsh speakers to access Council services in the medium of Welsh if they so wish.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 This is the third Annual Report published by the Council in respect of the way it has complied with the Statutory Standards which it is under a duty to comply with under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. The report outlines the good progress made by service areas in embedding arrangements for delivering services through the medium of Welsh.
- 11.2 It is recognised that further work must be done, especially considering the need to meet the additional standards (52, 58 and 64) which are a challenge. However, the Council is confident that the systems developed to monitor compliance are robust and that support is available for service areas to further improve their performance where required.

Other Information:-

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