

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**WELSH LANGUAGE CABINET STEERING GROUP**

**28 NOVEMBER 2017**

**SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION PROVISION  
FOR RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL AT  
FULL COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND LIFELONG  
LEARNING 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 an opportunity to discuss the current simultaneous translation provision at full Council and various committee meetings facilitated by Welsh Language Services Unit, the Executive and Regulatory Business Unit and Legal and Democratic Services.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Welsh Language Steering Group:

- 2.1 Note the content of the report;
- 2.2 Consider and comment on the information provided.
- 2.3 Approve draft guidelines for facilitating bilingual meetings with simultaneous translation (Appendix 2) and further training for all involved in the facilitation of bilingual meetings.

**3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 Standards 24, 24A, 26, 26A, 27A, 27D, 29, 29A 32, 33, 74, 79, 114, 118, 139 of the Compliance Notice issued under section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 requires the Council to

provide simultaneous translation at both public and internal meetings (Appendix 1).

- 3.2 The requirement to provide simultaneous translation services to support the Council to meet the Welsh Language Standards has had a greater impact on Council services, in particular Legal and Democratic Services and Welsh Language Services.
- 3.3 This report will provide an opportunity to approve new guidelines on simultaneous translation provision to ensure that Members and staff are aware of the procedures which need to be considered to enable people to use their language of choice freely and naturally at meetings where simultaneous translation is provided.

#### **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 established by the Welsh Government under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. An application to challenge Standards which involved simultaneous translation was presented to the Commissioner on 29 March 2016.
- 4.2 The Welsh Language Commissioner issued the amended final Notice of Compliance for Rhondda Cynon Taf Council in September 2016. Although the amended notice reflected changes to timescales agreed by the Welsh Language Commissioner in light of the Council's appeal, it did not reduce the obligation on the Council to provide simultaneous translation at meetings.

#### **5. CURRENT POSITION**

- 5.1 Following discussions between Legal and Democratic Services, Welsh Language Services and Service Director for Cabinet Office and Public Relations (June 2017), it was decided to facilitate simultaneous provision at all full Council and Committee meetings held in the Council chamber with immediate effect.
- 5.2 The provisional calendar of meetings includes 139 meetings timetabled for the full Municipal year, excluding any additional meetings called as and when, in addition to those noted in 5.3 below.
- 5.3 In line with the Council's attempts to increase resident participation in the Scrutiny process, there is a further requirement to facilitate simultaneous provision at Committee meetings held at various

locations throughout the County Borough. To date, 9 meetings are scheduled to be held 'off-site'.

- 5.4 Welsh Language Services gained additional investment in 16/17 (two additional translators plus an increase of one post from 30 hours to 37 hours) to deal with increasing demand for paper translation services and ad-hoc simultaneous translation requests. The additional funding was not intended to facilitate simultaneous provision neither at all full Council and Committee meetings held in the Council chamber nor at various locations throughout the County Borough.
- 5.5 Nevertheless, 4 of the Council's current translators have undergone a 10 hour training course to provide them with basic simultaneous translation skills. We are encouraged by the level of expertise exhibited by the team and the flexibility and voluntary willingness they have shown in terms of changing their working hours in order to meet the needs of the Council. However, key to the development of higher-level simultaneous translation skills is having sufficient opportunities to practise as well as having robust procedures in place for those all involved in bilingual meetings to aim for seamless provision.
- 5.6 There have also been some concerns among staff and Elected Members regarding the provision of this service at meetings mainly due to the fact that the provision is new and the complexities surrounding approaches on facilitating two languages at meetings. The preparation of guidelines for all involved with the facilitation of bilingual meetings will help to alleviate some of those concerns.

## 6. **NEXT STEPS**

- 6.1 In order to ensure the Council continues to make a constructive contribution towards the Welsh language and in order that Members, staff and the public may contribute as seamlessly as possible in their chosen language, draft guidelines have been prepared for approval.
- 6.2 The draft guidelines are based on the Welsh Language Commissioner's advice document: ***Bilingual Drafting, Translation and Interpretation***.
- 6.3 In addition, future training for staff and Members (including specific training on the use of simultaneous translation equipment for the hard of hearing, Chairs of meetings and translation staff) will be arranged by Democratic Services/Welsh Language Services.

## **7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

In addressing the need to facilitate simultaneous translation at all full Council and Committee meetings held in the Council chamber with immediate effect, the chamber's old common Loop system for the hard of hearing was removed in favour of a dual channel personal Loop.

## **8. CONSULTATION**

A consultation process was not required for this report.

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

Non-compliance with the relevant Standards could incur financial penalties of up to £5,000 per breach. Also, printing and training costs may be incurred as a result of the points outlined in section 6.

## **10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

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

## **11. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

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.

## **12. CONCLUSION**

12.1 The Council has a good track record of implementing the Standards as set out in the Compliance Notice and providing opportunities for Elected Members and residents to access services through the medium of Welsh. The requirement to facilitate simultaneous translation has been a significant challenge for the Council and, as such, procedures need to be followed in to order to overcome some of the challenges.

12.2 The provision of guidelines and training opportunities will hopefully go a long way in alleviating some of the concerns with regards to the provision of bilingual meetings and provide the necessary information on how to get increased contribution from all involved.

## APPENDIX 1 – STANDARDS RELEVANT TO SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION

24	Service Delivery	If you invite one person only ("P") to a meeting you must ask P whether P wishes to use the Welsh language at the meeting, and inform P that you will, if necessary, provide a translation service from Welsh to English for that purpose.	30/03/2016
24A	Service Delivery	If you have invited one person only ("P") to a meeting and P has informed you that P wishes to use the Welsh language at the meeting, you must arrange for a simultaneous translation service from Welsh to English to be available at the meeting (unless you conduct the meeting in Welsh without the assistance of a translation service).	30/03/2016
26	Service Delivery	If you invite an individual ("A") to a meeting, and the meeting relates to the well-being of A, you must ask A whether A wishes to use the Welsh	30/03/2016

language at the meeting, and inform A that you will, if necessary, provide a translation service from Welsh to English and from English to Welsh for that purpose.

26A

Service Delivery

You must arrange for a simultaneous translation service from Welsh to English and from English to Welsh to be available at a meeting - (a) if the meeting relates to the well-being of an invited individual ("A"), and (b) if A has informed you that A wishes to use the Welsh language at the meeting; unless you conduct the meeting in Welsh without the assistance of a translation service.

30/03/2016

27A	Service Delivery	If you have invited more than one person to a meeting (which does not relate to the well-being of one or more of the individuals invited), and at least 10% (but less than 100%) of the persons invited have informed you that they wish to use the Welsh language at the meeting, you must arrange for a simultaneous translation service from Welsh to English to be available at the meeting.	30/03/2016
27D	Service Delivery	If you have invited more than one person to a meeting (which does not relate to the well-being of one or more of the individuals invited), and all of the persons invited have informed you that they wish to use the Welsh language at the meeting, you must arrange for a simultaneous translation service from	30/03/2016

29	Service Delivery	<p>Welsh to English to be available at the meeting (unless you conduct the meeting in Welsh without the assistance of a translation service).</p> <p>If you invite more than one person to a meeting, and that meeting relates to the well-being of one or more of the individuals invited, you must -</p> <p>(a) ask that individual or each of those individuals whether he or she wishes to use the Welsh language at the meeting, and (b) inform that individual (or those individuals) that, if necessary, you will provide a translation service from Welsh to English and from English to Welsh for that purpose.</p>	30/03/2016
29A	Service Delivery	<p>You must provide a simultaneous translation service from Welsh to English and from English to Welsh at a meeting - (a) if you have invited more than one person to the meeting, (b) if the meeting relates to the well-being of one or more of the</p>	30/03/2016



32	Service Delivery	<p>individuals invited, and (c) if at least one of those individuals has informed you that he or she wishes to use the Welsh language at the meeting; unless you conduct the meeting in Welsh without the assistance of a translation service.</p> <p>If you invite persons to speak at a meeting that you arrange which is open to the public you must - (a) ask each person invited to speak whether he or she wishes to use the Welsh language, and (b) if that person (or at least one of those persons) has informed you that he or she wishes to use the Welsh language at the meeting, provide a simultaneous translation service from Welsh to English for that purpose (unless you conduct the meeting in Welsh without a translation service).</p>	30/03/2016
33	Service Delivery	<p>If you arrange a meeting that is open to the public, you must ensure that a simultaneous translation</p>	30/03/2016

service from Welsh to English is available at the meeting, and you must orally inform those present in Welsh - (a) that they are welcome to use the Welsh language, and (b) that a simultaneous translation service is available.

You must comply with standard 33 in every circumstance, except:

where an invitation or material advertising the meeting has asked persons to inform you whether they wish to use the Welsh language, and that no person has informed you that he or she wishes to use the Welsh language at the meeting.

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Service Delivery

If you receive an application for a grant in Welsh and it is necessary to interview the applicant as part of your assessment of the application you must - (a) offer to provide a translation service from Welsh to English to enable the applicant to use the

30/03/2016

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Service Delivery

Welsh language at the interview, and (b) if the applicant wishes to use the Welsh language at the interview, provide a simultaneous translation service for that purpose (unless you conduct the interview in Welsh without a translation service).

If you receive a tender in Welsh and it is necessary to interview the tenderer as part of your assessment of the tender you must - (a) offer to provide a translation service from Welsh to English to enable the tenderer to use the Welsh language at the interview, and (b) if the tenderer wishes to use the Welsh language at the interview, provide a simultaneous translation service for that purpose (unless you conduct the interview in Welsh without a translation service).

30/03/2016

114

Operational

If you receive a complaint from a member of staff or a complaint about a member of staff, and a meeting is required with that member of staff, you must - (a) ask the member of staff whether he or she wishes to use the Welsh language at the meeting; (b) explain that you will provide a translation service from Welsh to English for that purpose if it is required; and if the member of staff wishes to use the Welsh language, you must provide a simultaneous translation service from Welsh to English at the meeting (unless you conduct the meeting in Welsh without translation services).

30/09/2016

118

Operational

If you organise a meeting with a member of staff regarding a disciplinary matter that relates to his or her conduct you must - (a) ask the member of staff whether he or she wishes to use the Welsh language at the meeting, and (b) explain that you will

30/09/2016

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Operational

provide a translation service for that purpose if it is required; and, if the member of staff wishes to use the Welsh language, you must provide a simultaneous translation service from Welsh to English at the meeting (unless you conduct the meeting in Welsh without a translation service). You must ensure that your application forms for posts - (a) provide a space for individuals to indicate that they wish to use the Welsh language at an interview or at any other method of assessment, and (b) explain that you will provide a translation service from Welsh to English for that purpose if it is required; and, if the individual wishes to use the Welsh language at the interview or assessment, you must provide a simultaneous translation service at the interview or assessment (unless you conduct the interview or assessment in

30/03/2016

Welsh without that translation  
service).

## **Appendix 2**

### **Draft text for guidelines on facilitating bilingual meetings with the aid of simultaneous translation**

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council is committed to treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language and will ensure that people who wish to live their lives through the medium of Welsh can do so in their dealings with the Council; and that Elected Members and others who wish to use the Welsh Language in Council meetings have every opportunity to do so.

This guidance has been prepared in order to support Elected Members and staff so that:

- those who wish to use the Welsh language can do so,
- those who rely on simultaneous translation can use the equipment appropriately, and
- bilingual meetings are as seamless as possible.

### **ARRANGING A BILINGUAL MEETING**

Elected Members and staff of service areas who wish to arrange simultaneous translation at meetings should consider the following:

- As much notice as possible should be given to the Welsh Language Unit in order to schedule an interpreter.
- All communication shared in relation with the meeting is bilingual, including those that are only temporary for the purposes of the meeting;
- Announcing on advertisements and on the agenda of meetings that it will be possible to speak in either language, and that interpretation facilities will be available;
- Ensuring that the interpreter/Welsh Language Unit ([translation-cyfieithu@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:translation-cyfieithu@rctcbc.gov.uk)) receives documentation relevant to the meeting beforehand, including any pre-prepared statements or scripts if appropriate;
- Circulating glossaries and relevant terminology if the meeting deals with a field that is not usually discussed in Welsh;
- Remembering that the interpretation service is provided for those who do not speak Welsh. Interpretation is not often offered from English to Welsh, although this can happen in some circumstances;
- Explaining to the interpreter when arranging the service what type of meeting will be held, such as a public meeting, a committee meeting, interview, seminar, meeting of a voluntary organization.
- Ensuring that there is sufficient time to set up the interpretation facilities before the meeting and that people have easy access to them;
- Ensuring that the room where the meeting is held is appropriate and of the right size, and that the acoustics are acceptable;
- Ensuring that there are anti-bacterial wipes available in the room so users may choose to sanitize the translation headphones;

### **USING TRANSLATION HEADPHONES DURING A MEETING**

- Switch on the headphones and leave in the 'on' position
- Place the arms of the headphone in each of your ears to sit downwards

- Make sure you can hear the interpreter during a brief test via the Chair
- If you cannot hear, adjust the volume or bring it to the attention of the Chair (who will speak to the translator)
- If an issue needs to be raised with regards to the translation/translation equipment, please do so via the Chair.
- Switch off the headset at the end of the meeting and leave on the desk
- All headphones are cleaned after use by the translators. However, users of the headphones are welcome to use the sanitising wipes to clean the earpieces that will be available at each meeting.

### **CONTRIBUTING IN WELSH DURING A MEETING**

- If you are contributing, please speak clearly via the microphones on the desks and switch off the microphones after your contribution.
- Before you start speaking in Welsh, please let others know that you're about to do so.
- Be mindful that due to the nature of simultaneous translation, not every word is not translated
- Chairs of meetings should ensure that contributors speak in turn, and this is especially important at bilingual meetings

### **CHAIRING A BILINGUAL MEETING**

Chairpersons have an important role to play in ensuring that people can use their language of choice. They can set the tone for the meeting. The chairperson can do the following to facilitate a successful bilingual meeting:

- Open the meeting bilingually : “Noswaith dda a chroeso i chi gyd” / “Good evening and welcome”
- Announce that a simultaneous translation service is in use so that anyone wishing to contribute in Welsh know they can do so
- Announce that the simultaneous translation headphones are sanitized after each use, but users are also welcome to use the wipes provided
- Ask all non-Welsh speaking members to wear their headsets and ensure that the equipment is working properly and that the non-Welsh speaking listener understands and can operate the headset.



- Remind the speakers to use the microphones, since the interpreters can only translate what they can hear.
- Explain that everybody should speak in turn as the translator can never translate more than one contributor at a time
- If there's an issue with the translation equipment or clarification is needed with regards to a translation, invite Members to bring it to the Chair's attention

## **TRAINING AND SUPPORT**

Training and support on using simultaneous translation equipment at meetings and facilitating bilingual meetings may be arranged by Democratic Services and Welsh Language Services. In addition to pre-arranged training, Members and staff are welcome to contact either service directly for short 'open-door' policy training sessions as and when convenient. Using simultaneous translation equipment alongside loop systems for the hard of hearing may also be covered by training. For more information, contact <insert agreed contacts here>