

EXECUTIVE BOARD

30th NOVEMBER 2015

Welsh language Skills Strategy

To consider and comment on the following issues:

That the Executive Board considers and discusses the (draft) Welsh language Skills Strategy.

Reasons:

- Following the publication of the 2011 Census results, Carmarthenshire County Council agreed to establish a Task and Finish Group to investigate the factors that led to the deterioration in the number of Welsh speakers and make recommendations to address the situation.
- One of the recommendations in the report was the revision of the Welsh language Skills Strategy.

The Strategy is also a key document in relation to meeting the new Welsh language Standards and our responsibilities to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language in internal administration.

EXECUTIVE BOARD / COUNCIL / COMMITTEE

Recommendations / comments of Scrutiny Committee:

Exec Board Decision Required	YES
Council Decision Required	YES

Executive Board Member Portfolio Holder:

- Cllr. Mair Stephens (Human Resources, Efficiencies & Collaboration)

Directorate: Chief Executive's	Designations:	Tel Nos. / E-Mail Addresses:
Name of Head of Service: Paul R Thomas	Assistant Chief Executive (People Management)	01267 246123 PRThomas@carmarthenshire.gov.uk
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Welsh language Skills Strategy

Carmarthenshire County Council developed its first Language Skills Strategy in 2008, in order to ensure that sufficient skills were available in the workplace (through learning and development and recruitment) to meet the requirements of the Welsh language Scheme.

Further to the research and recommendations made by the Census Working Group, the Strategy has been reviewed in order to manage and plan staff language skills and covers the following key areas in the management of language skills:

- Determining the Welsh language skills required for workplaces, teams and jobs, across the Authority;
- Record and monitor staff Welsh language skills;
- Recruit people with the appropriate level of Welsh language skills;
- Develop language skills and language awareness.

A Language Skills Framework is a key tool for Managers as they design and implement their workforce plans. Many of the leading employers in the public sector in Wales have adapted a widely recognised skills framework, which is the ALTE Framework (Association of Language Testers of Europe). This provides a good reference for employers due to the fact that it is based on recognition of what individuals can achieve linguistically (in Welsh and English in this context). It is a way of measuring language skills according to the types of communication tasks that a person can achieve in speaking, understanding, reading and writing.

Welsh Language (Wales Measure)

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 received Royal Assent in February 2011 giving official status to the Welsh language in Wales. The Measure sets a new legislative framework for the Language in all aspects of life, namely the Welsh language Standards. The aim of the Language Standards is to simplify the process of placing duties on bodies and to introduce greater consistency across sectors and areas.

The Language Standards will replace the current language schemes, and impose duties on organisations named by the Welsh language Measure in five areas; service delivery, policy formulation, implementation, promotion of the Language and record keeping.

The aim of this strategy is to ensure that Carmarthenshire County Council implements the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards, specifically the Implementation Standard.

OTHER OPTIONS AVAILABLE AND THEIR PROS AND CONS

Preparing and publishing a Language Skills Strategy is a key element in preparing Compliance Standards under the Welsh Language Measure (2011).

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?

YES

IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report.

Signed: Paul R Thomas

Title: Assistant Chief Executive (People Management)

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NONE

1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities

Preparation of Compliance Strategies is a statutory responsibility under the Welsh language Measure 2011.

2. Legal

There are legal obligations to non-compliance with the Equality Act 2010

3. Finance

A detailed resources plan will need to be prepared to support areas such as Learning & Development, the Translation Unit and funding ICT developments to support service delivery and operational requirements for compliance with the new Standards.

4. ICT

There are likely to be a number of requirements to enhance existing ICT solutions to meet the delivery of the Operational Standard and support services and their staff. These requirements will need to be identified within the resourcing plan.

5. Risk Management Issues

In cases of alleged failure to comply with a Standard, the Commissioner will consider whether an investigation is required under section 71 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. The Enforcement Policy will explain the investigation process. However, the process does include the power to impose a civil penalty on organisations (maximum of £5,000).

6. Staffing Implications

The Operational Standard will focus upon areas such as the Language Skills Strategy, Human Resource functions and ensuring that workforce changes are planned in order to provide bilingual services. There will be a continuing need to ensure that support mechanisms are in place for Training and Development of staff.

CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below:

Signed: Paul R Thomas

Title: Assistant Chief Executive (People Management)

1. Local Member(s) – N/A

2. Community / Town Council – N/A

3. Relevant Partners – N/A

4. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations

The draft Strategy was discussed at the Corporate Employee Relations Forum on 17 July 2015.

The following feedback / concerns were noted at the meeting;

- 1) Provision, suitability and costs of training. The Unions would be concerned were undue pressure be put upon staff to undertake training, particularly outside the working day.
- 2) The approach to be taken towards those members of staff in posts in which the language skills requirement is increased.
- 3) The potential impact on grading of posts as the increase in skills required for a post could result in a higher grade
- 4) Whether there is going to be an Equality Impact Assessment undertaken
- 5) Potentially divisiveness between staff in situations where a post's language skills requirement changes and this prevents some staff applying should the post become vacant
- 6) Costs of implementing WLSS and the WL Standards

Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information

List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

THESE ARE DETAILED BELOW:

Title of Document	File Ref No. / Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
Recruitment: Welsh Language considerations Prepared by the Welsh Language Commissioner	http://www.comisiynyddygydraeg.cymru/English/Publications%20List/20120518%20DG%20S%20Dogfen%20Cyngor%20Recriwtio%20f2.pdf