



Meri Huws
Welsh Language Commissioner
Market Chambers
5 – 7 St. Mary Street
Cardiff
CF10 1AT

Dear Commissioner,

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Compliance Notice: Challenging future duties [section 54 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011]

Agreeing a variation to a compliance notice [section 57(7)(b)]

I write in response to your letter dated 24 October 2016 and the meetings held during November and December 2016 between our respective officers.

I welcome the dialogue that has taken place over recent months to help clarify the interpretation of the standards as applied to the Council. This has helped us reassess our position and as a result we have been able to identify a number standards with which we are able to comply as well as standards which, with some modification, are workable in practice. However, a small number of standards remain which we are unable to accept due to the risk they pose on both legal and practical grounds.

You will see in the attached document that we have identified XX standards where we could comply based on your preliminary conclusions and the clarification provided towards the end of 2016. In addition the Council proposes to comply with a further XX standards should you be minded to adopt the suggested variations and understandings as stated in the attached document.

Chief Executive's Office

Steven Phillips, Chief Executive
Civic Centre, Port Talbot SA13 1PJ
Tel 01639 763306 Fax 01639 763355

Swyddfa'r Prif Weithredwr

Steven Phillips, Prif Weithredwr
Y Ganolfan ddinesig, Port Talbot SA13 1PJ
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We welcome correspondence in Welsh and will deal with Welsh and English correspondence to the same standards and timescales.
Croesewir gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a byddwn yn ymdrin â gohebiaeth Gymraeg a Saesneg i'r un safonau ac amserlenni.

We have been able to see ways to embrace the XX standards referred to above, provided the variations are agreed, in spite of the additional cost that compliance will inevitably attract. We have been mindful of other ongoing and future commitments as well as being realistic given the limitations in the linguistic capability of our current workforce and the ongoing budgetary constraints.


The remaining XX standards continue to be unreasonable and disproportionate in their application given the potential audience, costs and linguistic skills of the council workforce, as well as placing the council in a position of legal risk which is something that we are unable to accept.

Evidence previously provided in support of our submission remains pertinent to these standards and as such would request you reconsider it alongside our latest submission. If you feel unable to move forward on these standards perhaps you would consider a joint approach to ministers as a more constructive next step. I would also like to be clear that the Council is open to revisiting these standards in the future should circumstances change.

While I accept the principle behind the standards I do not believe they are achieving their intended aim. This appears to be borne out by the recent announcement that ministers intend to revisit the regulations. Perhaps this would be another opportunity where a joint approach to ministers at an early stage in the process would be beneficial.

I hope you will appreciate that we have invested considerable time in identifying such variations and I hope that you will respond positively to our proposals. Failing this we are more than willing to continue our dialogue with the aim of reaching an understanding and so avoid the necessity to resort to the Welsh Language Tribunal to resolve our genuine concerns. I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven Phillips". Below the signature is a horizontal line.

Steven Phillips
Chief Executive