

**NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD**

**13 DECEMBER 2017**

**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CORPORATE STRATEGY AND  
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES – K.JONES**

**SECTION A - MATTER FOR DECISION**

**WARDS AFFECTED - ALL**

**WALES INTERPRETATION AND TRANSLATION SERVICE**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To seek member approval to enter into an agreement with the Wales Interpretation and Translation Service (care of Cardiff Council) and to terminate the current arrangement with Language Line Solutions from April 2018.

**Background**

2. Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (“the Council”) has paid an annual subscription to Language Line Solutions for a telephone based interpretation service since 2010. In addition to the subscription there is a charge, per minute, for each time the service is accessed.
3. Social Services Health and Housing Directorate is responsible for the annual subscription with individual service areas responsible for any charges accrued when accessing the interpretation service.
4. While there has been a reduction in the number of calls to Language Line Solutions over recent years, there has been an increase in accessing face to face translation services, albeit on short term/ad hoc agreements, from the Wales Interpretation and Translation Service.
5. The All Wales Interpretation and Translation Partnership, established in January 2010, is a partnership comprising Criminal

Justice Agencies, Health Organisations and Local Government Authorities. Its operations are coordinated and managed through a central hub, namely the Wales Interpretation and Translation Service (WITS). Cardiff Council is the host organisation for the Wales Interpretation and Translation Service.

### **Wales Interpretation and Translation Service (WITS)**

6. The subscription to Language Line Solutions in 2017-2018 was £295 with the average cost of calls of £2.45 per minute (based on the usage during April – October 2017). During April 2016 - March 2017 the cost per minute equated to £2.49.
7. While there was a high demand for an interpretation service during the early years of the agreement more recently there has been a considerable reduction in the number of calls; from 389 in 2010-2011 to 2 calls during the first six months of 2017-2018.
8. Conversely over recent years there has been a growing need for face to face interpretation services, particularly in relation to Social Services, resulting in an increase in the accessing services from the Wales Interpretation and Translation Service.
9. The Wales Interpretation and Translation Service provides a telephone and face to face interpretation, British Sign Language and Welsh translation service.
10. Members of the Wales Interpretation and Translation Service, include Welsh Councils, Health Boards, Police Forces and Police and Crime Commissioners amongst a range of other organisations in Wales.
11. There is no joining fee or annual subscription for becoming a member of WITS. The only charges that would be incurred are as laid out on page 72 in the draft agreement, attached at Appendix 1. Although the agreement has yet to be finalised by the WITS Advisory Board assurances have been given by the host organisation (Cardiff Council) that no fundamental changes are likely to be made to the agreement before it is finalised. In the event that changes are made prior to entering into any agreement, the advice of the Head of Legal Services will be sought.

12. It must be noted that telephone interpretation while accessed through WITS is provided by external organisations, one of which is Language Line Solutions. However, the cost for the service provided by Language Line Solutions under this arrangement would be 67p per minute.

### **Financial Impact**

13. There are likely to be some financial savings made by entering into an agreement with the Wales Interpretation and Translation Service.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

14. The agreement with the WITS will ensure that the Council will be able to facilitate people in accessing council services and so work towards meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty; to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations

### **Workforce Impacts**

15. There are no workforce impacts with this report.

### **Legal Impacts**

16. The provision of an interpretation and translation service will help the Council meet its statutory duty as required in the Equality Act 2010.

### **Risk Management**

17. There are no risk management issues with this report

### **Consultation**

18. There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

### **Recommendations**

19. To terminate the Council's subscription to Language Line Solutions from April 2018.

20. To approve the use of the Wales Interpretation and Translation Service on the finalisation of the Collaboration Agreement.
21. To authorise the Head of Legal Services to enter into a legally binding contract with the Cardiff Council to access translation services provided by the Wales Interpretation and Translation Service.

### **Reason for Proposed Decision**

22. To ensure the Council meets its statutory duty as required in the Equality Act 2010

### **Implementation of Decision**

23. The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period

### **Appendices**

24. Appendix 1 – Wales Interpretation and Translation Service Collaboration Agreement (DRAFT)

### **Officer Contact:**

25. Mrs Karen Jones, Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services Tel: 01639 763284 e-mail: [k.jones3@npt.gov.uk](mailto:k.jones3@npt.gov.uk)