



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cabinet

29 June 2022

Report of the Head of People and Organisational Development – S Rees

Matter for Monitoring

Wards Affected: All Wards

Report Title: Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2021-2022

Purpose of the Report

1. To present the Welsh Language Standards Annual Report for 2021-2022, produced in accordance with the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015.

Executive Summary

2. This annual report, produced in accordance with the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, provides an overview of compliance with the standards with which we had a duty to comply during the year.
3. The report also details the number of complaints received during the year which relate to compliance with the service delivery, operational and policy making standards and the Welsh language generally. A total of nine complaints were received during the year; six via the Welsh Language Commissioner and three direct to the Council.
4. Specific information as required by the standards in relation to the Welsh language skills of employees and new and vacant posts is also included.

Background:

5. Following the Welsh Language Commissioner's final determination in relation to the Council's challenge to a number of standards a final compliance notice was received on 25 April 2018.
6. The annual report, attached at Appendix 1, provides an overview of compliance with the standards with which we had a duty to comply during 2021-2022.
7. The Council's Welsh Language Officer Group remains key to the promotion of the Welsh language, the implementation of the standards, identification of good practice and monitoring compliance.

Annual Report

8. Monitoring compliance with the Welsh language standards during 2021-2022 continued to be challenging with the ongoing impact of the pandemic. The outcome of the Welsh Language Commissioner's evidence gathering exercise for 2020-2021 was received and discussions with the Commissioner's officer took place in January 2022.
9. Compliance was like the curate's egg – good in parts. While some of the areas initially indicated relatively high levels of compliance these were let down by simple oversight/errors/omissions: notably omission of text / hashtags on social media posts, lack of standard text on English versions of documents and forms and Welsh webpages not mirroring those in English.
10. However some areas saw no improvement from the monitoring exercise undertaken by the Welsh Language Commissioner in 2019-2020: responses to correspondence and calls to the main telephone number.
11. The Commissioner has recommended further actions to ensure full compliance with specific standards:
 - ensure that all English versions of documents and forms clearly state that the document/form is also available in Welsh.

- take steps to ensure that social media accounts fully comply with the requirements of the standard.
- produce a Policy on Awarding Grants by 27 May 2022.
- take steps to ensure that the new HR/Payroll system and therefore all of the Council's recruitment processes fully comply with the requirements of the standards.

12. The Welsh Language Officer Group has made significant strides in promoting the Welsh language as well as supporting staff in complying with Standards – although it is recognised that further work need to be done to ensure full compliance. Guidance and supporting materials as well as promotional work, have been produced over the last year.

Financial Impacts:

13. Full compliance with the standards continues to be challenging, particularly with the impact of the outbreak of the pandemic on the Council's human resources.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

14. There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment as this report is for monitoring/information purposes.

Valleys Communities Impacts:

15. The Annual Report includes progress made in delivering services to support residents in valley communities.

Workforce Impacts:

16. Staff with Welsh language skills continue to be encouraged to use Welsh in their work. In order to help increase the future language capability of staff the Council encourages the uptake of available Welsh courses. We are taking every opportunity to recruit staff with Welsh language skills where appropriate.

Legal Impacts:

17. This report deals with the Council's duty to comply with the final Compliance Notice issued on 25 April 2018.

Risk Management Impacts:

18. Failure to comply with the standards could lead to a £5,000 fine per standard. There is also a risk of damage to the Council's reputation.

Consultation:

19. There is no requirement for external consultation on this item

Recommendations:

20. It is recommended that:

Members monitor Neath Port Talbot Council's Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2021-2022, attached at Appendix 1, prior to its publication by the statutory deadline of 30 June.

Appendix:

21. Appendix 1 - Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2021-2022

List of Background Papers:

Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011

Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015

Welsh Language Standards Compliance Notice

Officer Contact:

22. Sheenagh Rees Head of People and Organisational Development Tel: 01639 763315
or e-mail: s.rees5@npt.gov.uk
23. Rhian Headon Corporate Policy Officer Equalities and Welsh Language Tel 01639
763010 or email: r.headon@npt.gov.uk