

SOUTH WEST WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE

5th December 2023

Report of the Chief Executive

Report Title: Welsh Language Standards

Purpose of Report	To seek Members authority to respond to the consultation initiated by the Welsh Language Commissioner on the standards that she proposes is applied to the South West Wales CJC.
Recommendation(s)	It is recommended that Members authorise the Chief Executive to formally respond to the Welsh Language Commissioner before 5th January 2024 indicating the Committee's acceptance of the Welsh Language Standards it is proposed should apply to the South West Wales CJC.
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Introduction / Background:

A report was presented to Members on 24th October detailing contact with the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office regarding the application of Welsh Language Standards and the issuing of a compliance notice.

The Welsh Government have confirmed that CJCs are required to comply with the same Welsh Language Standards duties as local authorities - The Welsh Language Standards (No. 1) Regulations 2015 ("the No. 1 Regulations"). The No. 1 Regulations also authorise the Welsh Language Commissioner to issue compliance notices, which set out the duties that each individual body must comply with.

The Chief Executive has reviewed the proposed compliance notice with the standards which have already been voluntarily adopted by the Committee and there are no additional standards included. Therefore it is proposed that the Chief Executive is authorised to confirm to the Welsh Language Commissioner that there are no standards which the Committee considers unfavourable and/or disproportionate and that the Committee is content to proceed to the next stage of the process.

Financial Impacts:

It is considered that the cost of meeting the Welsh Language Standards can be met within the existing budget set for the CJC where provision for translation costs is already made.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

The CJC is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage
- Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
- Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
- Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'. Members will note that in respect of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 one of the seven Well-being Goals is "A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language".

Workforce Impacts:

There are minimal workforce impacts for the CJC to be concerned with in relation to this report.

Legal Impacts:

The Compliance Notice is the means by which the Welsh Language Commissioner sets the Welsh Language Standards that will be legally applied to corporate joint committees and other relevant bodies.

Risk Management Impacts:

The Committee voluntarily adopted the standards applied to Carmarthenshire County Council at an early stage in its work – those standards being the most stringent across South West Wales. There have been no material problems in applying those standards in practice. There are very low risks anticipated from agreeing to the same standards being legally applied by the Welsh Language Commissioner.

Consultation:

No formal consultation required for the purpose of this report.

Reason for Decision:

To ensure a formal response is sent to the Welsh Language Commissioner within the required consultation deadline.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that Members authorise the Chief Executive to formally respond to the Welsh Language Commissioner before 5th January 2024 indicating the Committee's acceptance of the Welsh Language Standards it is proposed should apply to the South West Wales CJC.

Implementation of Decision:

Following the 3 day call in period.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Draft Compliance Notice

List of Background Papers:

[Welsh Government Statutory Guidance on CJs](#)

[Carmarthenshire County Council – Welsh Language Standards](#)

[Welsh Language Standards, Interim Policy Position, Corporate Joint Committee - 11th October 2022](#)