



FULL COUNCIL REPORT

Date Written	15 th August 2016
Report Author	Kerry O'Donovan
Service Area	Corporate Services
Exempt/Non Exempt	Non Exempt
Committee Date	7 th September 2016

To: Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen

Welsh Language Standards and Translation Costs

1.0 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council received its final Compliance Notice from the Welsh Language Commissioner on 30th September 2015. This outlined the Council's duty to meet 171 of the statutory Welsh Language Standards established by the Welsh Government under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.
- 1.2 In line with most other Councils, we have appealed against a number of the Standards as there are Departments within the Council that will not be able to comply for various reasons including low numbers of Welsh speaking staff, the need to amend/change corporate systems, as well as the costs and availability of translators to support compliance.
- 1.3 Based on spend for the first four months of this financial year it is estimated that the Council's corporate budget for Welsh language translation will be significantly overspent caused by the increasing demand for translation. If spend continues at the same rate as for the first four months of the year it is likely to reach £80,000 by year end, an overspend of £55,000.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that

- 2.1 The content of the report be noted.
- 2.2 Further reports are presented to Council on the appeal against the Welsh Language Standards.

- 2.3 The Council's corporate Welsh language translation budget continues to be closely monitored and reported on a regular basis.

3.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Welsh Language Standards

- 3.1 Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council received its final Compliance Notice from the Welsh Language Commissioner on 30th September 2015. This outlined the Council's duty to meet 171 of the statutory Welsh Language Standards established by the Welsh Government under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.
- 3.2 This Measure gave equal status to Welsh and English so that Welsh cannot be treated less favourably than English. The recent introduction of the Welsh Language Standards is designed to ensure that those in Wales who wish to live their lives in Welsh can do by obliging local authorities, and other public sector bodies, to deliver their services in Welsh.
- 3.3 As a Council we are endeavouring to comply with the Welsh Language Standards which came into force on 30th March 2016 and are making every effort to respond to them in a positive manner.

Appeal against Standards

- 3.4 In line with most other Councils, we have appealed against a number of the Standards as there are Departments within the Council that will not be able to comply for various reasons including low numbers of Welsh speaking staff, the need to amend/change corporate systems, as well as the costs and availability of translators to support compliance. This is in the context of the financial climate the Council is currently operating in and the scale of cuts that are expected in future years.
- 3.5 The Council received a response from the Welsh Language Commissioner on 6th June 2016 setting out their initial findings on the Council's appeal. The Council responded to the Commissioner's initial findings on 4th July 2016 and has requested a meeting with the Commissioner to discuss certain Standards.
- 3.6 The Council has also requested that the Commissioner does not make their final determination on the appeal until after this meeting(s) have taken place and any written correspondence that results from this meeting(s) have also been deliberated upon by the Council.

Welsh Language Translation

- 3.7 The Council's annual corporate budget for Welsh language translation is £25,000.
- 3.8 Welsh language translation is provided by Canolfan Soar through an annual service contract.

3.9 Due to the volume of demand some translation work is having to be given to alternative translators in addition to Canolfan Soar.

4.0 WELSH LANGUAGE TRANSLATION SPEND FOR 2015/16 AND 2016/17

4.1 The spend for Welsh language translation for 2015/16 was £33,198.54 of which £8,750.75 was spent on translating the Council's website.

4.2 For the first four months of this financial year (April to July 2016) the spend for Welsh language translation has been £26,263.37.

4.3 The cost of translation per month for 2015/16 and 2016/17 to date is shown below:

Month	Spend 2015/16	Spend 2016/17
April	£1,309.75	£7,053.64
May	£1,013.23	£8,352.50
June	£1,408.35	£5,196.84
July	£3,484.25	£5,660.39
August	£2,084.90	
September	£5,670.83	
October	£1,602.50	
November	£1,416.86	
December	£693.20	
January	£5,824.40	
February	£4,042.32	
March	£4,647.95	
Total	£33,198.54	£26,263.37

4.4 A report on Welsh language translation spend was presented to Corporate Management Team on 4th July 2016.

Analysis of Welsh Language Translation Spend

4.5 The table above demonstrates that there was an increase in translation for September 2015 and January 2016. During these two months significant work was done on translating the Council's website.

4.6 There was also an increase in translation spend in February and March 2016. This increase resulted from the preparations for the Welsh Language Standards which came into force on 30th March 2016.

4.7 Based on the spend for April to July of 2016/17 the Council's corporate Welsh language translation budget is already overspent for this financial year caused by the increasing demand for translation. If this spend continues at the same rate this could result in a spend of approximately £80,000, an overspend of £55,000.

4.8 It should also be noted that there are additional costs for translation for the monthly Contact magazine which are estimated to be £2,088 for the year in addition to the figures referred to above.

4.9 It's also important to note that with the need for the Council to improve its reach with its residents, we will need to increase our social media activity. This will also mean additional translation costs.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

5.1 It is currently difficult to identify the full financial implications of implementing the Standards as they only came into force on 30th March 2016. Based on the spend to date it is estimated that spend on translation for 2016/17 may reach £80,000.

5.2 The Council will be in a better position to calculate these costs after implementing the Standards for a year.

6.0 SINGLE INTEGRATED PLAN AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT SUMMARY

6.1 A Single Integrated Plan & Sustainability Impact Assessment has been completed and the proposals positively impact on a number of aspects of the Corporate Plan and Single Integrated Plan, including the Welsh Language, Learning for Life, Sustainable Development and Equal Opportunities.

6.2 The negative impact is likely to be the cost of implementing the Standards, particularly the cost of translation, which is discussed above in paragraph 5.1.

7.0 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) form has been prepared for the purpose of this report. It has been found that a full assessment is not required at this time. The form can be accessed on the Council's website/intranet via the 'Equality Impact Assessment' link.

GARETH CHAPMAN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

COUNCILLOR PHIL WILLIAMS
CABINET MEMBER FOR GOVERNANCE
& CORPORATE SERVICES

BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Title of Document(s)	Document(s) Date	Document Location
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council's Welsh Language Standards Compliance Notice.	30th September 2015.	Council's Website and Intranet.
Welsh Language Standards Appeals	Various.	Network drive.

documentation.		
Does the report contain any issue that may impact the Council's Constitution?		No

Consultation has been undertaken with the Corporate Management Team in respect of each proposal(s) and recommendation(s) set out in this report.