

SUBJECT:	Welsh Language Standards Annual Monitoring Report 2023/24
MEETING:	Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee
DATE:	11th July 2024
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

1. PURPOSE:

1.1 To enable members to scrutinise the council's performance during 2023/24 against the Welsh Language Standards.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 That the committee uses the draft annual monitoring report to scrutinise the council's performance during 2023/24.

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 The Welsh language is an important part of the culture and heritage of our place. Back in 2016 Monmouthshire hosted the National Eisteddfod and we have ambitions to do so again. Our desire to increase the number of people who speak and learn Welsh is a commitment within the Community and Corporate Plan. Dovetailing with this, the council's Welsh Language Strategy sets our commitment to ensure that Monmouthshire is having a positive impact on achieving the Welsh Government's ambitious strategy of having a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

3.2 Alongside our strategy sit the Welsh Language Standards which promote the language and ensure that it is treated no less favourably than English. The standards applying to each public body can differ and there are 176 applying to our council. It is a requirement of standards 158, 164 and 170 that we produce an annual report which deals with the way in which we have complied with the standards during the year and publish this on our website. This is referred to as the Monmouthshire's Welsh Language Standard's Annual Monitoring Report. This is a duty placed upon us, but of equal importance is a desire for the language to thrive and grow in our county.

3.3 The annual report demonstrates how we have complied with the Welsh language standards, these include:

- Making available Welsh language courses at all learning levels to members of staff. These courses are facilitated through the National Centre of Learning Welsh and delivered by Coleg Gwent. Courses are fully funded and can be undertaken during work hours or in the

evenings if staff prefer. 40 members of staff registered for these courses this year 23/24, this is an increase from last year 22/23 where 32 members of staff had registered.

- Efforts were made to increase the number of Welsh speaking applicants for new posts. Welsh language essential posts as well as some select Welsh language desirable posts were advertised on Welsh language recruitment sites which saw success in attracting applicants with Welsh language skills.
- A 'Welsh Tip' has been created to include in the staff's fortnightly newsletter which helps promote the Welsh language standards and to distribute guidance for best practice.
- Organising promotional events and social media posts throughout the year to promote the use of the language and our Welsh language services. Although promotion is done throughout the year, important dates such as St David's Day, Shwmae Day, and Welsh St Dwynwen's Day are especially utilised for these promotions.

3.4 During the year there have been some challenges. These included:

- Delays in the procurement process for the new telephony system in our Contact Centre has meant that our existing technology does not allow us to prioritise Welsh language calls to Welsh speakers in the Contact Centre. As a result, callers end up in a hunt group answered by a pool of Welsh speaking officers rather than a trained customer service advisor.

3.5 During the year, steps have been taken to improve our processes and strengthen our compliance with the Welsh Language Standards. These include:

- During the financial year 21/22 we received a complaint from the Welsh Language Commissioner regarding our policy making processes which was upheld. As a result of this, our Street Naming and Numbering Policy has been reviewed and an amendment made. This amendment was regarding existing street name plates with English only names, if they now require replacement for example due to damage, the new nameplates will have the Welsh translation added to the nameplate.
- The Welsh Language Officer takes part in the induction process for all new staff members so that they are familiarised with our requirements to the Welsh Language Standards.

4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

There are no additional resource implications as a result of this report. However, there may be resource implications in undertaking further actions identified in this annual report. These would be subject to the usual council decision-making processes.

5. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

[Monmouthshire Compliance Notice – Welsh Language Standards](#)
[Monmouthshire's Welsh Language Strategy 2022-2027](#)

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