

SUBJECT:	WELSH LANGUAGE COMMISSIONER'S MONITORING WORK 2019-20
MEETING:	INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER DECISION
CABINET MEMBER:	COUNCILLOR SARA JONES
DATE:	12th November 2020

1. PURPOSE:

To provide an update on the outcomes of Welsh Language Commissioner's 2019-20 monitoring work and secure endorsements of the actions that will be taken by the authority to address the issues highlighted.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 To approve the actions, shown in appendix 2, that will be put in place to address the issues highlighted in the Monitoring Report prior to a formal response to the Commissioner.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 The Welsh Language Standards were created in 2011 and introduced the concept of the Welsh Language Standards. These standards were tailored to individual local authorities and were allocated in September of 2016 for us to implement. They are a very detailed list of requirements that set out how Monmouthshire must use the Welsh language in both the workplace and in its dealings with the public.
- 3.2 The Welsh Language Commissioner annually monitors user experience by reviewing all 22 local authorities in Wales to test the effectiveness of their Welsh language offer. This process takes the guise of a mystery shopper exercise and is carried out by an external organisation on behalf of the Commissioner. The survey is very detailed and involves the following: written and e-mail correspondence, Facebook and Twitter posts, press releases, vacancies, telephone calls, visits to receptions and sample surveys of pages on the councils website. These interactions are all designed to measure the effectiveness of our provision through the medium of Welsh.
- 3.3 The feedback, shown in appendix 1, was generally positive and compares well with the average results across Wales which can be seen alongside the findings in Monmouthshire. There were 4 key areas highlighted which suggested a "suspicion of failure to comply with the relevant statutory requirements" and these have required specific actions to ensure compliance with the standards. The key areas are:

- The Council was unable to deal with one of the three telephone calls made in Welsh to 01633 644644.
- 2/3 of the forms that were subject to the survey were available fully in Welsh.
- 18 of the 30 pages surveyed on the organisation's website were available and fully operational in Welsh. There were 12 pages where the Welsh language was treated less favourably.
- During the visits to the County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, reception staff were unable to deal with any of the Welsh inquiries in Welsh.

3.4 These issues have been examined in detail and remedial actions identified which are shown in appendix 2 of this report. The first three issues will be addressed by the effective application of existing processes, and additional checks have been introduced to minimise the risk of these re-occurring. The final issue is one that is more difficult to address in the short term. It has been agreed, therefore, that the next time a vacancy arises for a receptionist at County Hall that it is designated as Welsh Essential and that a fluent Welsh speaker is recruited. In the meantime further Welsh language training has been offered to existing staff.

4. REASONS:

To ensure compliance with the Welsh Language Standards and ensure that those who wish to use the Welsh language in their interactions with the authority are treated no less favourably than those using English.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

There are no specific resource implications resulting from these recommendations

6. WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS (INCORPORATING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING)

A full evaluation has not been carried out for this recommendation. However it has been identified that the proposals will have a positive impact on the Welsh language. No negative or positive impacts have been identified in other areas.

7. CONSULTEES:

Senior Leadership Team
Cabinet

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None

9. AUTHOR:

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Results of the Monitoring Work

Monmouthshire CC Performance	Average performance of the sample of organisations
<p>Correspondence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Three emails were sent in Welsh to contact@monmouthshire.gov.uk between June and November 2019. <input type="checkbox"/> A response was received in Welsh to the three Welsh emails. <input type="checkbox"/> Additional material was provided in Welsh with one of the responses. <input type="checkbox"/> One of the responses did not include a statement welcoming correspondence in Welsh and that corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 73% of Welsh correspondence received a response (in any language). <input type="checkbox"/> 92% of responses to Welsh correspondence were in Welsh. <input type="checkbox"/> Additional material was provided with the responses to Welsh correspondence in 49% of cases. <input type="checkbox"/> Responses to Welsh correspondence included a statement welcoming Welsh correspondence in 41% of cases.
<p>Telephone calls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Three phone calls were made to 01633 644644 between July 2019 and December 2020. <input type="checkbox"/> The automated information was available in Welsh for all of the calls. <input type="checkbox"/> A proactive offer of a Welsh language service was received at the start of the three phone calls. <input type="checkbox"/> The organization failed to deal with one of the three calls in Welsh in its entirety and provide a complete answer to the inquiry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 90% of automatic telephone options were in Welsh. <input type="checkbox"/> There was a proactive offer of a Welsh language service at the start of the call in 67% of cases. <input type="checkbox"/> 55% of calls were dealt with successfully in Welsh.
<p>Forms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Three forms were subject to the survey. <input type="checkbox"/> Two were available fully in Welsh. <input type="checkbox"/> The English versions of the forms did not state that the document was also available in Welsh. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 78% of the forms subject to the survey were available fully in Welsh. <input type="checkbox"/> 19% of the forms subject to the survey stated that the document was also available in Welsh.
<p>Press releases</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Three press releases were subject to the survey. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> All three were available fully in Welsh. <input type="checkbox"/> All three were pages on the organisation's website, and there was a language choice button on the English versions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 82% of the press releases that were subject to the survey were available fully in Welsh. <input type="checkbox"/> 22% of press releases that were subject to the survey stated that the document was also available in Welsh.
<p>Brochure / pamphlet / leaflet / card</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Three examples were subject to the survey. <input type="checkbox"/> All three examples were available in Welsh. <input type="checkbox"/> The English versions did not state that the document was also available in Welsh. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 68% of the examples subject to the survey were available in Welsh. <input type="checkbox"/> 7% of the examples subject to the survey stated that the document was also available in Welsh.
<p>Corporate identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Three examples were subject to the survey. <input type="checkbox"/> All three examples appeared in Welsh. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 88% of the corporate identity examples surveyed appeared in Welsh.
<p>Website</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 30 pages of the organization's website were subject to the survey. <input type="checkbox"/> The text of 18 of the pages were available fully in Welsh with 7 partly available in Welsh. <input type="checkbox"/> 18 of the pages were fully operational in Welsh. <input type="checkbox"/> 29 of the pages included a 'Welsh' button on the English version <input type="checkbox"/> There were 12 pages where the Welsh language was treated less favourably 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 81% of the website pages that were subject to the survey were available fully in Welsh.
<p>Facebook and Twitter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 15 messages on the organization's Facebook page were subject to the survey. <input type="checkbox"/> All 15 messages were available in Welsh. <input type="checkbox"/> 15 tweets on the organization's Twitter account were subject to the survey. <input type="checkbox"/> All 15 tweets were available in Welsh. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 74% of the Facebook messages that were subject to the survey were available in Welsh. <input type="checkbox"/> 70% of the tweets subject to the survey were available in Welsh.

<p>New and vacant posts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 10 jobs were subject to this survey. <input type="checkbox"/> The Welsh language was mentioned in all of those posts. <input type="checkbox"/> The 10 posts were advertised in Welsh and included a statement welcoming applications in Welsh <input type="checkbox"/> Application forms for 8 of the posts were available in Welsh. <input type="checkbox"/> The application forms did not provided a space for specifying the preferred language of assessment. <input type="checkbox"/> All 10 of the job descriptions were available in Welsh. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 82% of the job advertisements subject to the survey included a Welsh language skills category. <input type="checkbox"/> The Welsh language was considered 'essential' for 17% of the jobs subject to the survey. <input type="checkbox"/> 47% of job advertisements were available in Welsh.
<p>Reception areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Two visits were made to the County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, between October and November 2019. <input type="checkbox"/> The visitor was greeted in Welsh by a member of the reception staff at the start of both visits. <input type="checkbox"/> A member of reception staff was unable to deal with both visits in Welsh. <input type="checkbox"/> The organization had displayed a sign in the reception area stating (in Welsh) that persons are welcome to use Welsh there. <input type="checkbox"/> Not all reception staff who spoke Welsh wore a badge stating this. <input type="checkbox"/> The organization promotes the use of Welsh in reception. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Visitors were greeted in Welsh or bilingually during 37% of visits. <input type="checkbox"/> 46% of visits were successfully dealt with in Welsh. <input type="checkbox"/> There was a sign stating that visitors were welcome to use the Welsh language in 51% of cases. <input type="checkbox"/> All Welsh speaking reception staff wore a badge showcasing this ability in 36% of cases.
<p>Self-service machines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The Council was not subject to this survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The default language of 25% of the self service machines surveyed was Welsh or bilingual. <input type="checkbox"/> 75% of self-service machines were working fully in Welsh. <input type="checkbox"/> 75% of self-service machines proactively offered a Welsh language service.

Signs

- Six signs were subject to the survey during visits to the County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, between October and November 2019.
- All text on the six signs was available in Welsh
- The Welsh text was set so that it was likely to be read first on two of the signs.
- All text was accurate in meaning and expression.

- 89% of the signs subject to the survey had all the text in Welsh.
- The text of 84% of signs is set so that Welsh is likely to be read first.
- 90% of signs included text that was correct in meaning and expression.

Further Details and Proposed Actions

Issue Highlighted	Context and Response
<p>The Council was unable to deal with one of the three telephone calls made in Welsh to 01633 644644.</p>	<p>Callers to 01633 644644 are asked to dial 1 for English and 2 for Welsh. On further investigation it appears that the call that was not dealt with in Welsh was made on the English Language Line in error and not the dedicated Welsh line.</p> <p>When people dial 2, a telephone hunt system identifies an available Welsh speaker who then handles the call. In the event that no Welsh speaker is available, the caller can leave a message and an audio file is sent the Welsh Language Officer to contact the caller.</p> <p>Recruiting is underway to appoint a fluent Welsh speaker in the contact centre to reduce the reliance on the hunt system while further Welsh speakers are being sought amongst existing staff to bolster the number of staff who can receive calls via the hunt system</p>
<p>2/3 of the forms that were subject to the survey were available fully in Welsh</p>	<p>The majority of forms are available in both languages and there is no technical barrier to this being in place for all forms</p> <p>All individual departments are responsible for publishing on the council website rather than the council having one dedicated officer being responsible. All departmental web site publishers have been contacted and reminded of their obligations under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011</p> <p>An audit of all forms will now be carried out to identify any further instances. The particular forms highlighted by the Commissioner are being remedied.</p>

Issue Highlighted	Context and Response
<p>18 of the 30 pages surveyed on the organisation's website were available and fully</p>	<p>The errors identified varied in their significance, however there should be no reason for pages not to be fully available in both languages and processes are in place to support this.</p> <p>All website updates carried out centrally are automatically sent for translation by the Communications Team prior to publication.</p> <p>All departmental website publishers have been contacted to remind them of the requirements of the Act and reiterate that everything on our website must be in both languages.</p> <p>We will commission a third party to carry out an annual audit of the website to proactively identify and remedy any errors. This will ensure a fully compliant bilingual website. We have specified that the review includes the front pages of all departments and includes links to other documents externally hosted sites commissioned by the council.</p>
<p>During the visits to the County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, reception staff were unable to deal with any of the Welsh inquiries in Welsh.</p>	<p>County Hall reception is staffed by 3 officers (one dedicated to the role and two as cover) who have all undertaken Welsh Language training although none are fluent</p> <p>The role has previously been advertised as Welsh Essential but unfortunately we were unsuccessful in attracting any applications despite a comprehensive recruitment campaign through the medium of Welsh comprising the following: a video on the council website; social media posts; a paid advert on Lleol.com and an e-mail to the Welsh Language Officer's Welsh speakers database of circa 200 people</p> <p>The 3 members of staff will be offered the "Say something in Welsh" fast track course and that the next time a vacancy occurs the role will once again be designated as Welsh Essential.</p> <p>As a council we are fully aware and supportive of our obligations under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 but as with many other local authorities with our language</p>

Issue Highlighted	Context and Response
	demographic we have been unsuccessful in attracting Welsh speakers utilising the Welsh Essential criteria.