

SUBJECT: Welsh Language Standards Annual Monitoring Report 2022/23

MEETING: Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee

DATE: 17th July 2023

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1 PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To enable members to scrutinise the council's performance during 2022/23 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 2022/23.

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. 32 members of staff registered for these courses this year 22/23, this is an increase from last year 21/22 where 19 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. For some Welsh language essential roles, we introduced specification of the level of skills which would be required for the post so that Welsh speakers would have more confidence in applying.
 - A dedicated Microsoft Teams channel has been established to empower Welsh speaking staff of all levels, providing a platform for communication with colleagues in Welsh fostering a greater sense of confidence in their language skills. This Teams channel also serves as a valuable

resource for the Welsh Language Officer to inform staff of Welsh language support which is available to them as well as any local Welsh language events in the community.

- 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 Language Music Day are especially utilised for these promotions.

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

- During the financial year of 21/ 22 we received a complaint (CS112) from the Welsh Language Commissioner regarding the Policy Making process of our Street Naming and Numbering Policy which continued to the current financial year. It was found by the commissioner that we failed to comply with standards 88, 89 and 90 and were given 15 enforcements actions which was successfully completed.
- During regular monitoring undertaken by the Welsh Language Officer of Monmouthshire's websites and social media pages, it was discovered that there were significant issues on the Welsh language pages of the MonLife website. Once these issues were identified an action plan was created to resolve them. This work was already underway when we received a complaint from the Welsh Language Commissioner (CS1103). It was therefore decided by the commissioner that they would not continue with the investigation at that time as steps were already being taken to resolve these issues.

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

- Strengthening our policy making process by revising the Integrative Impact Assessment (IIA) tool which is produced to accompany all policy decisions. The accompanying guidance document was also updated and the quality assurance process of all IIA's strengthened and meetings minuted to ensure that we can evidence how any issues are being addressed before the decision made.
- When issues were identified with the MonLife website, advice was sought from an external translator and specialist in Welsh language matters. The Welsh Language Officer and the MonLife digital team worked closely with them to ensure all aspects of the current website was amended to become compliant, and all future changes to the website are made compliant at the point of updating.

4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

4.1 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](#)

6. AUTHOR:

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