

MEETING:	LANGUAGE COMMITTEE
DATE:	20 June 2022
TITLE:	Welsh Language Policy Revision
AUTHOR:	Gwenllian Williams Language Advisor
PURPOSE OF THE REPORT	Present the revision of the Language Policy for the members of the Committee to discuss and approve to be moved on for the approval of the Cabinet

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Council's statutory obligations in relation to the provision of Welsh Language services is defined under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards set on the Council by the Welsh language Commissioner as a result.
- 1.2 The current policy was written and approved in 2016 in response to the setting of the Welsh Language Standards. It was a way to answer the requirements set within the Standards to *"develop a policy on using Welsh internally for the purpose of promoting and facilitating the use of the language"* (Standard 98) and to have a document that explains how the Council intends to comply with the different groups of standards (Standard 171 and others).
- 1.3 At the same time, the Council was eager to ensure that implementing the Standards would weaken the commitment that had been set in the previous language plan, and specifically so the commitment to having Welsh as the internal administrative language, to promote the use of the language, and to actively offering services in Welsh throughout the Council.
- 1.4 The Policy was therefore formed with the intention of explaining how the Council services will comply with the Standards while delivering services, and also to reflect the principles and the ambition of the Council for the Welsh language, and it's intention to operate in a manner that promotes the language.

2. The change to the Policy

- 2.1 During 2020, work started on reviewing the language policy. This was done as a result of the feeling that there had been significant changes in the way that the Council operates and delivers services since the last Policy was published in 2016.
- 2.2 There was a feeling that some sections of the policy did not give clear enough guidance to staff, and that it did not encompass all the scenarios that services deal with from day to day. There

were no specific clauses, for example, dealing with the way the Welsh language is used in IT systems. The changes to the recruitment process also needed to be reflected in the Policy.

2.3 We took advantage of this opportunity to conduct a thorough review of the policy. The changes that are being suggested here vary, from:

- small administrative changes
- creating new clauses
- providing guidance on specific areas that are not necessarily covered by the Standards
- creating new clauses that set out key principles to ensure that the Council makes the most of every opportunity to promote the Welsh language.

3. New clauses or sections

3.1 Some new clauses have been added to the Policy, as well as significant changes to some sections from the current policy. We summarise some of the changes here, for your information:

- **General principles** – these have been added at the beginning of every section as a short, clear explanation of the general aim. We ask you to consider these principles and if you agree with them.
- **Section 5 – Digital Services – website, aps and self-service** – this section has changed significantly in order to give staff better guidance about the use of the language in the different ways technology is used by the Council to deliver services.
- **Section 6 – Signs** – new clause added to reflect the commitment and the work of the welsh place names project to use and promote the Welsh versions of local place names.
- **Section 12 – advertising jobs and the recruitment process** – this section has been changed significantly. This section has already been presented to the language committee, but as it is one of the biggest changes to the policy, we draw your attention to it here as well.
- **Section 13 – Accountability** – explains who is answerable to the policy and what the responsibility of Elected Members, and members of the Language Committee is.

4. Next Steps

4.1 After being considered and discussed by the language committee, the policy will be presented to the Cabinet for approval.

4.2 Feedback from department heads will be considered, and any changes deemed necessary done to the document before presenting to the Cabinet.

4.3 Any comments or feedback from the language committee will also be considered by the officers, and any changes needed made to the document before presenting to the Cabinet.

5. Recommendation

Members of the committee are invited to comment on the content of the draft policy, and are asked to approve the next step of the process, which is to present the Policy – with any changes deemed necessary – to the Council Cabinet for approval.