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## NORTH WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE

6 September, 2024

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**TITLE:** Welsh Language Standards: Compliance Notice

**AUTHOR:** Alwen Williams, Interim Chief Executive

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### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to present the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee's final Welsh Language Compliance Notice – section 44 Welsh Language (Wales) measure 2011. The compliance notice was issued by the Welsh Language Commissioner on 16th August, 2024 with an imposition date of 28th February, 2025 by which full compliance in accordance with the standards are required. A copy of the Commissioner's letter and the standards are provided in **Appendix 1** and **Appendix 2** of this report.

### 2. DECISION SOUGHT

- 2.1. To accept Welsh Language Standards that have been set for the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) (**Appendix 2**).
- 2.2. To request that the interim Chief Executive develop a proposal that sets out the options and costs to commission officer resource required for implementation, monitoring and reporting on the Welsh Language standards.

### 3. REASON FOR THE DECISION

- 3.1. Corporate Joint Committees (CJC) are public bodies established by Regulations made under Part 5 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. They are liable to comply with applicable and relevant Welsh Language Standards in the areas of service delivery, policy making, operations, promotion and record keeping.
- 3.2. Appropriate options for resources need to be identified to ensure that the CJC can operate in a way that is compliant with the standards as set. Options to be considered could include the procurement of officer resource to be shared across CJC if appropriate and feasible to do so. Consideration should also be given to the procurement of this service from any of the constituent Councils who may have capacity to offer this by means of a Service Level Agreement to the CJC.

### 4. BACKGROUND AND RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1. The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 is the legislation that created Welsh language standards. The standards promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language and ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English language in Wales. The Measure also makes Welsh an official language in Wales.

- 4.2. Corporate Joint Committees are subject to the Welsh Language Standards in the same way as its constituent councils and other public service organisations in Wales. The Corporate Joint Committees ([Amendment of Schedule 6 to the Welsh Language \(Wales\) Measure 2011](#)) Regulations 2021 amended the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, adding CJs to the list bodies and categories of bodies that must comply with the standards as set by the Welsh Language Commissioner.
- 4.3. The standards ensure appropriate consistency and clear expectations on how CJs must provide services in Welsh to partners, stakeholders, and the public as well as how they must promote the use of the language through its services.
- 4.4. The Welsh Language Commissioner started the statutory consultation process under section 47 of the Welsh Language Measure by issuing the draft compliance notice on 25th March, commencing a consultation period within which evidence could be provided to highlight if one or more of the standards included within the draft compliance notice is viewed by the CJC as unreasonable and/or disproportionate. This consultation period concluded on the 26th of July 2024. Members will recall that the CJC considered the consultation at its meeting on the 21st of June and raised no specific issues with the proposal. Under Section 54 of the Welsh Language Measure an organisation given a Compliance Notice may appeal against its contents and requirement. The CJC is advised that the Compliance Notice in its current form can be accepted, and we can move forward to comply with its requirements within the prescribed time scales.
- 4.5. Standards [145 and 146](#), included in the draft compliance notice, have been removed from the final compliance notice. These standards are not to be imposed on any of the four regional CJs. These standards require a 5-year strategy that sets out how the organisation will promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language more widely in the geographic area represented by the organisation. The geographical area of the CJC includes an area served by six local authorities and Eryri national park who have already adopted promotion strategies and have already set a target for maintaining/increasing Welsh speakers in their areas. Imposing these standards on the CJC would duplicate much of the work already being done by the local authorities and Eryri national park. A more comprehensive rationale is presented in **Appendix 1**.

## 5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. Costs associated with the Welsh Language Standards will relate to officer time required to ensure that the Corporate Joint Committees standards are met. It is not anticipated that a full-time officer will be required. Likely scope of work and cost will be presented in a future report, but indicative costs for a full-time officer, dependant on role seniority, could range between £39,000 and £50,000 per annum. Feasibility and practicality of sharing resource and costs with other CJs will be considered, alongside other options.

## 6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. As noted in paragraph 3.1, compliance with the Welsh Language standards is a legal requirement of the CJC as a public body. The final compliance notice has set an imposition date of the 28 February, 2025 by which time the CJC will be required to demonstrate its compliance.

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**APPENDICES:**

- Appendix 1:** Letter from the Welsh language Commissioner (plus Appendix)
- Appendix 2:** Welsh Language Standards – Final Compliance Notice 44 The North Wales Corporate Joint Committee
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**STATUTORY OFFICERS RESPONSE:**

**i. Monitoring Officer:**

“The setting of a Welsh Language Standard for the CJC creates legal duties for the organisation which will have to be complied with. However, it is there to establish a set of standards and expectations as to the use and promotion of Welsh by the organisation which it can take forward. The dialogue and consultation which led up to this step should mean that initial implementation and subsequent compliance is achievable.”

**ii. Statutory Finance Officer:**

“The costs of implementing the decision sought will relate to staff time and will be funded from the current budget.”