

09 July 2015

Paper Title	Welsh Language Scheme Annual Report to Welsh Language Commissioner 2014-15
Paper Reference:	NRW B B 45.15
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Purpose of Paper:	Decision / Information
Recommendation:	- To inform the Board of our Welsh Language Scheme Annual Report for the Welsh Language Commissioner - To inform the Board of the Standards Report received from the Welsh Language Commissioner and the subsequent work required to ensure our compliance when Standards are imposed
Decision Required:	Information only

Impact: To note – all headings might not be applicable to the topic	Impact on the Environment: A bilingual Natural Resources Wales will be in a stronger position to work with other Welsh organisations and partners to deliver better environmental outcomes. Impact on the Economy: Not applicable. Impact on Community: Enables our organisation to deliver a bilingual service to the public and to be able to communicate effectively with all the communities we serve.
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	Impact on Knowledge: Increasing our bilingual capability will strengthen our ability to share and develop knowledge with partners and academic institutions across Wales.
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Issue

1. To update the Board on progress with our Welsh Language Scheme during 2014-15 and our Annual Report to the Welsh Language Commissioner.
2. To inform Board members of the Standards Report received from the Welsh Language Commissioner following the Standards Investigation process undertaken earlier this year.

Summary

3. Each year the Welsh Language Commissioner requires all public bodies in Wales to provide an Annual Report on the progress made in implementing their Welsh Language Scheme. The draft 2014/15 report for Natural Resources Wales is attached. The report shows the continued good progress made with implementing the Scheme as we work towards becoming a naturally bilingual organisation for the future.
4. A copy of the Standards Report sent to Welsh Ministers was received from the Welsh Language Commissioner on 2nd June 2015. The report is a conclusion of the evidence provided in the Standards Audit and the recommendations of the Commissioner that will apply to Natural Resources Wales. A copy of the Standards Report is available from the Board Secretariat.

Background

Welsh Language Scheme:

5. The Welsh Language Scheme is a NRW corporate policy. The 1993 Welsh Language Act which puts a duty on public organisations in Wales to prepare a Welsh Language Scheme which sets out how they plan to provide a bilingual service to the public of Wales. The Scheme has been operational since 1st April 2013 and will remain in place until the Welsh Language Standards displace the Scheme over time.
6. The attached Annual Report, set out in a format that is mandated by the Welsh Language Commissioner, shows progress made with Welsh Language in NRW against targets set for the Scheme in 2014-15.
7. The main achievements set out in the Annual Report are below.
 - Welsh Language Training programme launched in June 2014, the success of the programme has seen 250 of our staff attend a one day Cyfarch (annunciation) course, and 255 attend weekly Welsh classes. Supporting staff in this way will help us achieve our long term vision of becoming a bilingual organisation for the future.
 - Two of our Management Board members have taken up the opportunity of learning Welsh and have successfully passed the WJEC examination at the end of their course. Whilst the Chair and other Board members have received training in basic pronunciations and greetings in Welsh.

- Grŵp Pencampwyr have been actively seeking ways of helping our learners in offices helping with homework, arranging Siop Siarad to give staff the opportunity to practice what they have learnt.
- Launch of Mentoring Scheme in March 2015 giving learners the opportunity to speak to a Welsh speaker informally - this is known to help learners become more confident in using the skills they have developed.
- Bilingual Software guidance developed to ensure that the Welsh language is considered when developing existing or purchasing new software for external and internal use. This guidance has been developed following advice given by staff at the Welsh Language Commissioner office.
- MyNRW internal HR and Finance self-serve system and the Health and Safety on-line accident reporting system developed bilingually increasing the opportunity for our staff to work bilingually.
- Welsh language included as a consideration on our Equalities Impact Assessment form and guidance to ensure that the language forms a part of the screening process for all policies, plans and projects.
- New website content system designed to only allow a new page to be published when both Welsh and English versions are populated; this ensures compliance with our Scheme.

Welsh Language Standards:

8. The Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011 sets out a framework to introduce a duty on public organisations to comply with standards to do with Welsh language. The standards will explain how organisations are expected to use the language and ensure consistency in Welsh language services across public organisations in Wales. The Standards will displace the Welsh Language Schemes over time.
9. The conclusions of the Standards Report received will be debated in Y Senedd by Welsh Ministers during Autumn 2015. The Standards to be imposed and date of realisation will then be made known to the organisation. Our Welsh Language Scheme was written to reflect the forthcoming Standards and our organisation has been working towards achieving these targets from vesting day. This should put the organisation in a good position when the Standards are imposed at some point in the future.

Next Steps

10. Completion of the organisational-wide change programmes, enables us to move forward in making our Bilingual Skills Strategy fully operational. The Strategy is being implemented in part through the launch of our Welsh Language Training programme, which will help us achieve the target set out in the Strategy to have 30% of our staff able to speak Welsh with confidence by 2018.
11. To complete the work required there will be a need for all staff to assess their Welsh Language level. This will help us to plan where our skills are, areas of

the business where we need to increase capacity and when and where we are likely to lose our existing skills in place.

12. A pan-business mapping exercise will need to be carried out to assess and agree a set Welsh language level for each post within the organisation. This will be done using the Staffing and Recruitment guidance already in place taking into consideration the language requirements of the post and the team, to ensure each workplace has sufficient number of Welsh speakers to provide a bilingual service.
13. An Action Plan will need to be compiled to see if there are any areas we need to concentrate on to ensure that our organisation is able to comply with the Standards when they are imposed in the future.
14. Once the Standards are known, there will be a need to raise staff awareness through our internal communication channels, face to face at team meetings and through the work of the Grŵp Pencampwyr.
15. We will continue to support our staff who are learning Welsh for work purposes and provide extra help and tuition to our staff who are currently at or learning Welsh at Level 3 - Canolradd/Intermediate. This will help our learners gain confidence in using their skills in the workplace, the course known as "Using Welsh in the Workplace" will be tailored to our requirements and specific terms used within the organisation. This course will help our staff who are learning on their journey to become fluent Welsh speakers and help in attaining the target set in our Bilingual Skills Strategy.

Risks

16. The Welsh Language Commissioner currently oversees the implementation of our Welsh Language Scheme and will in the future regulate Natural Resources Wales when the Standards are imposed; failure to comply with relevant Standards could result in reputational damage to the organisation leading to lack of trust with the communities, partners and members of the public we serve. This could also lead to a civil penalty if the organisation is found to be failing in complying with a relevant Standard.

Financial Implications

17. Continued implementation of the Scheme is within current budgets, this will be reviewed once we know the full impact of the Standards.

Communications

18. We will continue to raise awareness of our Scheme and guidance in place whilst also informing our staff of the requirements of the forthcoming Standards. Once the Standards to be imposed are known, the Welsh Language Policy Advisor and Grŵp Pencampwyr members will attend team meetings across Wales to discuss their requirements.

Equality impact assessment (EqIA)

19. An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out on the Welsh Language Scheme prior to vesting day. We will review the EqIA once the Standards are set as part of the development of the action plan.

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Annex 1 - Welsh Language Scheme Annual Monitoring Report 2014-15