

REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATION AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES MANAGER

SUBJECT: STANDARDS AND THE WELSH LANGUAGE

Purpose of report

To inform Members of impending changes to the way in which the National Park Authority is required to report on how it conducts its business in relation to the Welsh Language Act 1993 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

Background

The Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority has adopted the principle that, in the conduct of public business in Wales, it will treat the English and Welsh languages on a basis of equality. In accordance with the Welsh Language Act 1993, the Authority adopted a Welsh Language Scheme which sets out how the Authority will give effect to that principle when providing services to the public in Wales. The original Scheme was approved by the then Welsh Language Board in 1997; a revised version was approved by the same body in 2008. The Authority is required to report annually on how it has conducted its business in relation to its Welsh Language Scheme.

Since then, the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 has set in place a legal framework whereby organisations are required to comply with statutory Standards relating to the Welsh language. These Standards, which have yet to be finalised, will specify how organisations are expected to treat and use the Welsh language and are intended to provide more clarity as to the Welsh language services people should expect to receive, as well as consistent service provision throughout the public sector.

The Office of Welsh Language Commissioner has also been created, whose role will be to ensure that organisations comply with the relevant Standards and to investigate those who fail to do so.

An informal consultation was held earlier this year where it was set out that the draft Standards are intended to be high-level and will deal with principles relating to:

- service delivery;
- policy making;
- operational;
- promotion, and
- record keeping.

The consultation document can be found on the Welsh Language Commissioner's website:

<http://www.comisiynyddygydraeg.org/English/Publications/Pages/PublicationDetails.aspx?PublicationId=3b166697-643b-435d-ac82-463543fb5cae>

Alongside the Standards, a number of relevant activities will be listed and organisations will have to ensure that all activities listed and practised by them as part of their normal functions comply with the Standards. Organisations will be required to report to the Commissioner on their performance in relation to the Standards.

The results of the informal consultation are still awaited but, in the meantime, organisations are required to continue to comply with their approved Welsh Language Schemes.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Members note the report.

Author: Janet Evans, Administration and Democratic Services Manager

Consultee: Tegryn Jones, Chief Executive Officer

Background documents

Welsh Language Act 1993

Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority's Welsh Language Schemes of 1997 and 2008

Standards and the Welsh Language: What are your views? – Welsh Language Commissioner's informal consultation document published May 2012

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