



Meeting:	MID WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	Monday, 29 th January 2024
Title of Report:	Report on the Welsh Language Standards for the Mid Wales Corporate Joint Committee (MWCJC)
Purpose of Report:	To provide members of the CJC with an update and proposed way forward with regards to the Draft Compliance Notice served by the Welsh Language Commissioner
Decision Sought:	To consider and approve the recommendations in Section 11 of the report
Report Author:	Eifion Evans, Chief Executive, Mid Wales Corporate Joint Committee
Finance Officer:	Duncan Hall, Section 151 Officer
Legal Officer:	Clive Pinney, Monitoring Officer

1. Introduction

This report provides members with an update on the MWCJC's compliance with the Welsh Language Standards together with recommendations in Section 11 of the report.

2. Background

Following the introduction of Corporate Joint Committees, a number of regulations/orders were made alongside the Establishment Regulation in March 2021.

These included:

Corporate Joint Committees (Amendment of Schedule 6 to the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011) Regulations 2021. The amendment regulations provide that CJC's established by regulations made under Part 5 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 are liable to comply with the Welsh Language Standards within the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

The CEO of the MWCJC received a letter from the Welsh Language Commissioner (WLC) dated 4th October stating that following one to one meetings with representative of our organisation, the Commissioner is now starting the statutory consultation process under section 47 of the Welsh Language Measure with the MWCJC.

The Consultation period on the draft compliance notice will commence on 4th October 2023 and will end on the 5th January 2024. However, to allow the MWCJC to consider this report an extension to the 26th January 2024 has been agreed with the Commissioner's Office.

It should be noted that the draft compliance notice served on the MWCJC proposed adoption of Ceredigion County Council's standards and not Powys County Council. This will result in a huge financial burden on the MWCJC.

On the 14th December 2023 the WLGA arranged a meeting with the Commissioner's Office and all CJC's in Wales. This was attended by the Chief Executive and the Strategic Programme Manager from the MWCJC.

3. Proposed Way Forward

During the meeting held with the Commissioner's Office the following was discussed:

The extent to which the MWCJC believes that the use of Powys County Council's Welsh Language Standards as a baseline for compliance with Welsh Language regulations would be reasonable and proportionate.

During the discussions held with the Commissioner's Office it was agreed:

- a) that the MWCJC could respond to the consultation by suggesting the use of Powys County Council's Welsh Language Standards as a baseline for compliance with the Welsh Language Regulations 2021.
- b) The MWCJC will be willing to work to progress to improve on its adopted Welsh Language standards in its compliance notice and to achieve Ceredigion's Welsh Language Standards.
- c) The annual reporting requirements for the MWCJC will be in line with the existing arrangements for the two Local Authorities. The first report will be due by the end of June 2025.
- d) The extent to which the MWCJC's promotional activities could be incorporated into the existing strategies of the relevant local authorities when they are next up for review.

4. Recommendations

- a) The MWCJC approves the following recommendations:

- The MWCJC adopts Powys County Council’s Welsh Language standards as a baseline for compliance with the Welsh Language Regulations 2021.
- The MWCJC will work to progress to improve on its adopted Welsh Language standards.
- The annual reporting requirements for the MWCJC will be in line with the existing arrangements for the two Local Authorities. The first report will be due by the end of June 2025.
- The extent to which the MWCJC’s promotional activities could be incorporated into the existing strategies of the relevant local authorities when they are next up for review.

b) The MWCJC provides a generic response to the Welsh Language Commissioner’s consultation letter dated 4th October 2023 on the draft compliance notice by the agreed extended end date of 26th January 2024.

5. Financial Impact

5.1 There would be significant costs to the MWCJC if it adopted Ceredigion County Councils Welsh Language standards due to the difference in Standards between the two Local Authorities.

6. Integrated Impact Assessment:

6.1 There is no requirement for an Integrated Impact Assessment for this report.

7. Workforce Impacts:

7.1 There are no workforce implications for the MWCJC in this report. All resource requirements to comply with the Welsh Language Standards will be undertaken by the respective Local Authorities.

8. Legal Impacts:

8.1 There are no Legal implications within this report.

9. Risk Management Impacts:

9.1 There are no Risk Management implications within this report.

10. Consultation:

10.1 The consultation referred to in this report is undertaken by the Welsh Language Commissioner.

11. Reasons for Proposed Decision:

11.1 To ensure the MWCJC satisfies with the requirements of the Welsh Language Commission and is compliant with the Welsh Language Requirements 2021

12. Recommendations

The MWCJC approves the following recommendations:

- a) The MWCJC adopts Powys County Council's Welsh Language standards as a baseline for compliance with the Welsh Language Regulations 2021.
- b) The MWCJC will work to progress to improve on its adopted Welsh Language standards.
- c) The annual reporting requirements for the MWCJC will be in line with the existing arrangements for the two Local Authorities. The first report will be due by the end of June 2025.
- d) The extent to which the MWCJC's promotional activities could be incorporated into the existing strategies of the relevant local authorities when they are next up for review.
- e) The MWCJC provides a generic response to the Welsh Language Commissioner's consultation letter dated 4th October 2023 on the draft compliance notice by the agreed extended end date of 31st January 2024.