

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **EXECUTIVE**

DATE: **27 MARCH 2012**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

SUBJECT: **WELSH LANGUAGE SCHEME TARGETS AND
TIMETABLE 2012-14**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.01 To present to members the Welsh Language Scheme Targets and Timetable 2012-14 for approval.
- 1.02 To seek members' approval for formal submission of the Targets and Timetable to the Welsh Language Board (WLB).
- 1.03 To inform members of developments with Welsh language legislation and their impact on the Council's Welsh Language Scheme.

2.00 BACKGROUND

- 2.01 The Council's statutory Welsh Language Scheme includes a set of targets and a timetable for their implementation. A number of targets have yet to be achieved, and this was reported in the Council's last Welsh Language Scheme Monitoring Report covering the period 2010-11.
- 2.02 In 2010 the Council and the WLB agreed eight Scheme commitments that require prioritised attention. Progress against these priorities was reported in the last Welsh Language Scheme Monitoring Report.
- 2.03 In its response to our Monitoring Report the WLB has requested that the Council prepare a revised set of targets and timetable that will ensure the completion of the outstanding targets and the eight priorities, and to present this to the Board for formal approval by 30 March 2012.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.01 A copy of the Targets and Timetable is attached in Appendix 1.
- 3.02 The targets for 2012-14 reflect the unmet targets and eight priority areas as described in the last Monitoring Report. The document identifies the targets for the eight Improvement Priorities.

- 3.03 There is a two-year timetable for implementing the targets. This period is significant in that it is expected that in two years time, the Council's Welsh Language Scheme will no longer be in force. It will be replaced by Welsh language 'standards'. These will be developed over the course of the next two years by the office of the Welsh Language Commissioner, created under the Welsh Language Measure 2011. Achievement of the targets by 2014 will place the Council in a strong position with regard to meeting the new standards.
- 3.04 The Welsh Language Board ceases on 31 March 2012. The Board's work will be divided between the Welsh Language Commissioner and the Welsh Government.
- 3.05 Duties transferring to the Welsh Language Commissioner:
- Work with public bodies and language schemes.
 - Dealing with complaints by members of the public on the failure of organisations to provide a Welsh language service.
 - Advise and promote good practice in the private and voluntary sector
 - Terminology and translation
 - Research into any ideas of interest to the Welsh language.
- 3.06 Duties transferring to the Welsh Government:
- Grants to promote Welsh.
 - Projects i.e. youth, family and community projects.
 - Overseeing Welsh-medium education planning.
 - Co-ordinating the work flow of minority languages in the British-Irish Council.
- 3.07 The Commissioner, Meri Huws was appointed the first Welsh Language Commissioner and her powers will come to force on April 1 2012. The role of the Commissioner is to:
- Promote the use of the Welsh language.
 - Facilitate the use of the Welsh language.
 - Promote equality between the Welsh and English languages.
- 3.08 What's new following the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011:
- The Welsh language has an official status in Wales.
 - The current procedure of Welsh language schemes will come to an end. It will be replaced by standards, and the Commissioner will form these following a period of consultation.
 - The Commissioner will have the power to enforce bodies to comply with the standards.
 - The Commissioner will be able to investigate the failure of an organisation/person to comply with language schemes, and in

future, standards. An investigation can also be carried out if an organisation/person has prevented the freedom of Welsh speakers to communicate with each other through the medium of Welsh.

- The Commissioner will have the power to impose civil penalties on organisations if they fail to comply with the standards (up to £5,000 although this could be increased by order).
- An organisation/person can appeal to the Commissioner if it believes that a standard or requirement is unreasonable or disproportionate
- The organisation/person will be able to appeal further to a Tribunal if it believes that a requirement or standard, or a sanction for failing to comply, is unreasonable or disproportionate. The Tribunal can either affirm, vary or annul the Commissioner's decision or sanction.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 Executive approves the Targets and Timetable 2012-14 and its submission to the Welsh Language Board.

4.02 Executive notes the developments in relation to Welsh language legislation and their impact on the Council's Welsh Language Scheme.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 There are no anti poverty implications arising from this report.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 The Welsh Language Scheme is an important element of the Council's overall commitment to the principle of equality in all aspects of its business.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 There are no personnel implications arising directly from this report.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 None required

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 None required.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 Appendix 1: Targets and Timetable 2012-14

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

FCC Welsh Language Scheme and supporting documentation

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