28/06/2011

John Cook

Communications Manager

Brecon Beacon NPA

Plas y Ffynnon

Cambrian Road

Brecon

LD3 7HP

Dear Mr Cook

**BRECON BEACONS NPA ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2010/11**

Thank you for the above report. There are detailed comments attached to this letter.

We are pleased to note that the Welsh language working group has met regularly during the year, and that it supports and advises the member-champion and Welsh language officer. The group will have an important role to play over the coming months as the Authority revises its Welsh Language Scheme. We look forward to discussing the content of the revised scheme with you, and to agreeing on a timetable for implementation that should lead to an improvement in the Welsh language service provided.

We are concerned that the Authority’s website is not available in Welsh, despite commitments made in the Council’s Welsh Language Scheme and in last year’s monitoring report. Arrangements have now been made to address the situation and we trust that they will be implemented promptly.

No significant change was seen in the language skills of staff members; however a reduction in the number of Welsh speakers that work in the main reception has lead to a situation where the Authority can no longer guarantee a Welsh language service there.

The next usual step for us is to hold a feedback meeting in the near future in order to discuss matters that arise from the report and this response. I shall contact the Authority's Language Officer in the near future to arrange the details of the meeting. In the meantime, if you have any queries regarding this letter, you are welcome to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

**Rhodri Roberts**

*Government in Wales Unit*

**Brecon Beacons National Park Authority**

**Welsh Language Scheme Monitoring Report 2010/11**

**Welsh Language Board Response, July 2011**

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| **Section** | **Comment** |
| **Revision of Welsh Language Scheme** | |
|  | Enclosed with this response is a template for use in revising the Authority’s Welsh Language Scheme. Please consider this template and respond by proposing your own draft WLS. The next steps can be considered once the first draft has been submitted. |
| **Introduction** | |
|  | The WLS states that this report is to be approved by the Authority before it is submitted to the Board. Was this procedure followed this year?  We are pleased to learn that the working group met regularly during at the beginning of the year. We trust that the group shall convene again shortly to discuss the revised WLS, and that the group will be in a position to submit proposals. |
| **2.**  **Compliance with Welsh Language Scheme** | |
| Front Line Services | The current staffing situation dictates that only one Welsh speaker works on the main reception. There exists, therefore, no guarantee of a Welsh language service. In such situations, it is unlikely that the public will have confidence in receiving Welsh language service, and is therefore unlikely to use the language in their dealings with the Authority.  A number of organisations now report to the Board on the number of posts designated as having Welsh language skills as ‘essential’ and that are filled with Welsh speakers, organisation wide. Is the Authority in a position to report similarly?  We welcome the decision to designate posts in the education field as Welsh ‘essential’. |
| Learning Welsh | The Authority reported fully on this indicator.  It is good to see cooperation between public sector organisations in providing Welsh lessons, and that they are well attended. Will the opportunity to learn Welsh be extended once the current course programme comes to an end? Does the Authority provide an opportunity for those with existing Welsh language skills to develop those skills further?  The Welsh Language Board does not provide funding for public bodies to provide Welsh lessons. |
| Welsh Language Awareness Session | We are pleased to note that raising awareness of the Welsh language and the Authority’s scheme continues to form part of the induction programme. Please provide information on the number of staff that has attended the induction programme.  Does the Authority provide any guidance or support to staff on the implementation of the WLS beyond the induction programme? |
| **3.**  **Performance Indicators** | |
| Human Resources | The Authority reported fully on this indicator.  The information provided confirms that there has been no significant overall change in the language skills of the workforce. The statistics suggest that the Authority can provide a service in Welsh in situations where it knows in advance the language choice of the service user. It appears that if this is not the case, the Authority would not be able to offer a service in Welsh on most occasions.  The Authority’s WLS states that a register of Welsh speaking staff is kept to enable non-Welsh speaking staff to transfer calls from those wishing to receive a Welsh language service. Is this register maintained, and are staff aware of the register’s existence? |
| Complaints | As noted in our response to last year’s report, the absence of complaints does not necessarily equate to satisfaction with the service. Does the Authority have another means of measuring the quality of service provided? |
| **4.**  **Other Matters** | |
| Publications | We are pleased to note that the majority of the Authority’s publications continue to be available bilingually, and that an increase was seen in the number of publications available in Welsh.  It disappointing that the Authority does not publish its main publication in Welsh. This matter further can be discussed further as part of our discussions on the revision of the WLS. |
| Translation | The Authority’s translation agreement with Snowdonia NPA is a positive step forward. It should ensure a consistency in the quality of translation, as well as reducing the administrative procedure of commissioning translations. |
| Website | The absence of a Welsh language version of the website is a serious concern for the Board., especially since the Authority noted in last t year’s report that  *“we intend to have the site fully translated during this financial year.”*  The revised timetable appears to be reasonable, however we wish to receive clarification on the following matters:   1. Will the website be fully bilingual on the completion of translating the various sections in December 2011? 2. Is it the Authority’s intention to translate those parts of the website that updated regularly e.g. “What’s new?” |
| Mainstreaming | The Authority has already received a copy of the Board’s guidance documents *‘Advice on Mainstreaming the Welsh Language’*. When considering the revised WLS the Authority should consider adopting a methodology that fits in with the Authority’s corporate arrangements for assessing related matters, such as the equalities. |