



Chief Executives Strategic Delivery Group	
Date of Meeting	Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup> October 2017
Agenda Item	Welsh Language Standards
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## 1. Background

The Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011 introduced a procedure for placing duties on public bodies, as defined in the Act, to comply with Welsh Language Standards. Following its introduction, the Welsh Language Unit in Welsh Government was tasked with drafting a menu of regulations, to be approved by the National Assembly for Wales, and selected by the Welsh Language Commissioner, who would subsequently issue individual Compliance Notices outlining the exact duties placed on an individual organisation.

The legislation applies to housing associations, and Community Housing Cymru have also volunteered to be subject to the standards alongside the sector.

Standards for housing associations and CHC have suffered from a number of delays, following the concerns in a number of sectors over the standards process. In August this year, Welsh Government published a white paper – *Striking the right balance: proposals for a Welsh Language Bill* – and will seek to make a number of changes, including:

- the abolition of the Welsh Language Commissioner's office
- Welsh Government taking all responsibility for creating and imposing Welsh Language Standards, simplifying the previous relationship between Government and Commissioner
- the creation of a new single body – the Welsh Language Commission – which would be responsible for promoting the Welsh Language, and monitoring and enforcing compliance with Welsh Language standards

The overall aims are to simplify the standards process and improve promotion of the Welsh Language. It also proposes to widen the range of organisations standards can apply to, going beyond the public bodies listed in the previous legislation, and proposes a function whereby standards are reviewed every 5 years.

Whereas the current standards regime can apply in four main areas (service delivery, policy making, operational standards and record keeping), the new standards are proposed only to apply to services.

These new 'service' standards are proposed to capture all the areas covered by the previous 'service delivery' standards and the 'operational standards' which set out internal services available in Welsh to staff.

All other corporate duties currently captured in the Standards system which do not create would be renamed 'language planning duties' and placed on the face of the legislation as statutory duties.



## 2. Response to the White Paper

CHC will be publishing a draft response to the White Paper in mid-October for consultation with members. We would welcome the views of the Chief Executives Delivery Group on the key principles in advance of this.

We are proposing the following:

- Welcome the simplification of the process of making and imposing standards.
- In particular, the proposals for a full public consultation on any standards the Government make are to be welcomed, and address some of our previous concerns over process.
- Welcome views from the sector on the White Paper, in particular the proposal to create 'language planning duties'. In particular seek reassurance that the statutory duties would retain a degree of flexibility for organisations when implementing the duties.
- Seek views from members on the proposal to widen the range of organisations beyond the current list of 'public bodies'.