

Establishment of a Welsh Language Officer Post (Part-time)

Name of Committee	National Park Authority
Date	June 25 th , 2019
Report Author	Mr Julian Atkins
Job title	Chief Executive
Contact Details	Julian.atkins@beacons-npa.gov.uk
Purpose of Report	To agree the establishment of a Part-time Welsh Language Officer (0.2FTE) to ensure the Authority is meeting its obligations with respect to the Welsh Language and its published and adopted Welsh Language standards
Single Integrated Assessment	N/A
List of Enclosures	Enclosure 1: Welsh Language Officer Job Description Enclosure 2: Welsh Language Officer Person Specification
Public Interest Test	Not applicable
Recommendation(s)	It is recommended that Members approve the establishment of a dedicated Welsh Language Officer post (0.2FTE) as set out in the report.

I.1 Introduction or Background

Members will be aware that the Authority has duties and obligations with regard to ensuring that it considers the Welsh Language and, in so far as it can through delivering against our purposes and duty, that it seeks to promote the Welsh language and Welsh culture through its work. Furthermore, as a public body the Authority has agreed a set of Welsh language standards with the Welsh Language Commissioner. These govern how the Authority communicates with Welsh speaking members of the public and

includes advising on the publishing of any written materials. At the same time there is a clear expectation on the part of Welsh Government , through *Valued and Resilient*, that the Authority makes a contribution to Cymraeg 2050 and the target of reaching one million Welsh speakers in Wales. There is therefore not only a need to ensure that the Authority is complying with its own published standards at all times but also that the Authority is able to demonstrate how it is contributing to the wider agenda in relation to Welsh language and culture. Our contributions are monitored by the Commissioner and there is a requirement to publish an Annual Report setting out the work the Authority is undertaking in this area.

1.2 Proposals

Previously, the Authority has relied on the good will of staff who are committed to promoting the Welsh language to help deliver its responsibilities. One officer volunteered to act as Welsh Language Officer in return for a small honorarium but this arrangement has not fairly reflected the work which has needed to be undertaken in return, nor the responsibility involved in liaising with bodies such as the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office. In practice the Officer concerned needed to fit Welsh language work in around existing commitments and the honorarium involved did not reflect the value of the work being undertaken or the responsibilities required to discharge the Authority's obligations. The HR officer also expressed concern that the payment of honoraria should not be used to remunerate work responsibilities on a long-term or permanent basis. If a permanent or long term requirement is identified then she has advised, correctly, that a proper role and job description should be created and evaluated accordingly.

To that end, and following the resignation of the previous postholder, officers undertook to review the requirements of the role and a dedicated job description was produced and evaluated (See Enclosure 1). At the same time provision was made in the 2019-20 budget to cover a part-time role on the basis of 1 day per week (0.2 FTE). While it has been difficult to estimate the amount of time required to discharge the role given the way the Authority has met its Welsh language requirements, it is considered that a part time role of one-day per week represents the minimum starting point from which to establish a dedicated role.

It is therefore proposed to establish the role set out here on that basis.

1.3 Implications

If Members approve the recommendation then a new post will be created on the establishment. The part-time nature of the role means the additional burden on resources is relatively small and has already been budgeted for. A provision of £6,750 has been made in this year's budget which is sufficient to cover the gross costs of the post for the remainder of the year.

Experience of delivering the work on Welsh language by other means (e.g. by asking a member of staff to take it on as additional duties in return for an honorarium) has been proven not to be a long term solution and has not adequately reflected the responsibilities associated with the role.

1.4 Risk

If Members reject the recommendation then officers will have to consider alternative delivery models as the Authority needs to allocate some resources to meeting its Welsh language commitments. Furthermore, the longer the Authority operates without a clear arrangement in place for discharging its duties then the more likelihood there is that it will be found wanting by the Welsh Language Commissioner or be in receipt of directions from the Commissioner to address any shortfalls. There is also the possibility that the Authority could be the subject of a complaint from a member of the public that it is not discharging its duties or is not compliant with our own published standards regarding Welsh language matters.

1.5 Conclusion

It is important that the Authority has clear arrangements in place for meeting its obligations with respect to Welsh language. It is proposed to establish a new Welsh Language Officer role (0.2FTE) and, if Members agree, to offer the post as a two year fixed term contract subject to the role being reviewed at the end of that period to determine if it is delivering as intended with the level of resources allocated. Due to the responsibilities and level of corporate risk attached to the role, the job-evaluation resulted in the post being graded relatively highly. It is therefore proposed to offer the role internally in the first instance as it is considered likely that an existing member of staff may find the role an attractive proposition. It is also proposed that the new role should report to the Chief Executive given the nature and profile of the work involved.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

It is recommended that Members approve the establishment of a dedicated Welsh Language Officer post as set out in the report.