

Executive Decision Report

Interpretation and translation policy

Decision to be taken by: Cllr Sood

Decision to be taken on: 1st March 2013

Lead director: Miranda Cannon



City Mayor

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
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- Report version number: 1

1. Summary

The purpose of this report is to:

- Set out the proposed interpretation & translation policy for Leicester City Council

2. Recommendations

The Assistant City Mayor for Partnerships, Equalities and Community involvement is recommended to:

- Agree the proposed interpretation and translation policy for Leicester City Council.

3. Supporting information including options considered:

Context

Leicester is a diverse city with people from different backgrounds, cultures and faiths. The city also has many newly arrived communities including refugees, asylum seekers and EU migrants.

There are now more than 70 languages or dialects used across the city, including signed communication such as British Sign Language (BSL). The number of languages continues to increase as the city's population becomes more diverse.

In an effort to build cohesion and encourage integration, the council encourages the use of English as the city's main language. The commission on integration and cohesion has made it clear that not being able to speak English is the biggest barrier to integration.

In line with our public sector equality duty, the council is committed to making its services, and information on those services, accessible to everyone who lives and works in the city.

Definition

Interpretation may be defined as the transfer of the spoken word from one language into another, while translation is the transfer of the written word into another language.

The provision of interpretation and translation is crucial to ensure people who have difficulties in accessing council information are able to do so.

Overview of Current Provision:

- **Increase in linguistic language requests**

The council is experiencing an increase in the number of linguistic language requests. In 2010 the council's community language service (CLS) received 9282 and in 2011 this number rose to 9366. A total of 67 languages were requested in 2011.

- **No guidance/policy**

Currently there is no guidance or policy in place that informs Council staff when they should provide interpretation and translation.

- **Inconsistency**

There is inconsistency in the way interpretation and translation services are provided across the council. Service's provide interpretation and translation at their own discretion. There is a lack of clarity around when we will and when we will not provide interpretation and translation – therefore it can be provided as a matter of course.

There is also inconsistency in customer experience.

- **Costly**

Inconsistent practice and providing translation as a matter of course is costly too – and these costs are not being controlled or managed. This is particularly true for translation services.

There are many concerns nationally around the development and use of translated materials across both statutory and voluntary sectors. The costs of translation and printing can be high and there is limited data to confirm whether printed translated material is ever read. The department for communities and local government and the commission on integration and cohesion's reports both recommend that local authorities and their partners should consider moving from a position of automatic translation of all documents into community languages, towards a more selective approach – driven by need, and set firmly in the context of communications strategies for all residents.

Community Language Services (CLS) – Services Provided

Leicester city council's community languages unit exists to provide comprehensive linguistic services to residents and customers whose first language is not English or who have a visual impairment and hearing difficulties. They provide the following services:

- Translation
- Interpretation
- Telephone Interpretation
- Braille translation
- Audio (CD) Production
- Sign Language

CLU has a register of more than 120 freelance interpreters, who provide translation /

interpretation support to internal and external clients.

The section launched community language line (CLL) in 2006 which is the first of its kind provided within the public sector in the U.K. CLL can provide council staff with immediate access to interpreters in over 100 languages. Interpreters are provided from the CLU register and via the national database, where necessary.

Costs for Interpretation & Translation Services

Interpretation: (most languages) £30.00 per hour

Community language line (telephone Interpretation) : £1.00 per minute - minimum charge £5.00

Translation: (depending on the language) from £150.00 - £180.00 per 1000 words which includes translation, type-setting, proof reading, hard copy and electronic copy - minimum charge £60.00 - £75.00 for up to 400 words.

British sign language: £150.00 - £195.00 for up to 2 hours thereafter £45.00 per hour

Braile: £2.50 per page - minimum charge £10.00

Audio recording: (most languages) £30.00 per hour, £10.00 for master copy and £2.00 per copy

Auxiliary Interpreters Scheme

The council's auxiliary interpreter's scheme has been in place since 1986. The basis of the scheme is that staff who are able to speak a language other than English join a register and may be called upon to provide interpretation services. Auxiliary interpreters receive a fixed annual allowance of between £485 and £918 depending on whether they make their services available only within their own service area or more widely, and on the number of languages spoken. Currently there are approximately 126 employees on the scheme at a total cost of approximately £74K per annum.

A number of issues associated with the operation of the scheme have been identified and it is currently under review. Discussions are taking place with the trade unions.

Leicester City Council's Draft Interpretation & Translation Policy

The council's draft interpretation & translation policy seeks to:

- More narrowly define when interpretation and translation will take place
- Strike a balance between encouraging all our customers and residents to learn and use English versus providing information in home language/s where necessary.
- Address the pressure to control costs
- Address the need to ensure consistency in the way interpretation and translation is provided across the council and;
- Address the need to ensure no one is adversely affected in their engagement with the council.

- Ensure that information is available in the most appropriate format to those who most need it.

Implications for Council Services:

The policy provides a framework to help individual service areas determine when it is appropriate to provide interpretation and translation.

Services will need to ensure that staff are aware of and understand the policy.

Service's will also need to assess how best they can make their service information accessible to their users by:

- Understanding the information access needs of their customers and target audience.
- Ensuring all information is in plain English.
- Ensuring information that may have a significant impact on a person's life is provided in the most appropriate format, to meet individuals need.

4. Details of Scrutiny

None

5. Financial, legal and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

There are no Financial Implications arising directly from the contents of this report as this frames the Council's overall approach to customer access and provides a policy context for a more specific review of the auxiliary interpreters' scheme.

This policy should therefore provide a guide in terms of services where translation and interpretation is needed more often and hence help inform a review of the scheme with a view to either adopting a new approach or at least a more targeted approach to ensure efficient use of resources.

Steve Charlesworth, Financial Services, Ext 29 7495

5.2 Legal implications

In formulating any such policy the council needs to consider the appropriate public

sector equality duties under Section 149A of the Equality Act 2010;

149 Public sector equality duty

(1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—

(a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;

(b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

(c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

(2) A person who is not a public authority but who exercises public functions must, in the exercise of those functions, have due regard to the matters mentioned in subsection (1).

(3) Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to—

(a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;

(b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;

(c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

(4) The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.

(5) Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to—

(a) tackle prejudice, and

(b) promote understanding.

(6) Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others; but that is not to be taken as permitting conduct that would otherwise be prohibited by or under this Act.

(7) The relevant protected characteristics are—

Age (excluding services to pupils in schools and certain other Children Act functions);

disability;

gender reassignment;

pregnancy and maternity;
race;
religion or belief;
sex;
sexual orientation.

Pretty Patel
Team Leader/ Senior Solicitor
Community Services Law

5.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

This report does not contain any significant climate change implications and therefore should not have a detrimental effect on the council's climate change targets.

Helen Lansdown
Senior Environmental Consultant - Sustainable Procurement

5.4 Equality Impact Assessment

An equality impact assessment has been completed. Please see appendix 2 for details.

5.5 Other Implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

6. Background information and other papers:

None

7. Summary of appendices:

1. Leicester City Council Interpretation & Translation Policy
2. Equality Impact Assessment: Interpretation & Translation Policy

8. Is this a private report (If so, please indicated the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

No

9. Is this a “key decision”?

Yes

10. If a key decision please explain reason

Significant in terms of it being relevant to all service users living / working across all wards in the city.

In determining whether it is a key decision you will need consider if it is likely:

- to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council’s budget for the service or function to which the decision relates.
- to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working *in two or more wards in the City*.

Expenditure or savings will be regarded as significant if:

- (a) In the case of additional recurrent revenue expenditure, it is not included in the approved revenue budget, and would cost in excess of £0.5m p.a.;
- (b) In the case of reductions in recurrent revenue expenditure, the provision is not included in the approved revenue budget, and savings of over £0.5m p.a. would be achieved;
- (c) In the case of one off or capital expenditure, spending of over £1m is to be committed on a scheme that has not been specifically authorised by Council.

In deciding whether a decision is significant you need to take into account:

- Whether the decision may incur a significant social, economic or environmental risk.
- The likely extent of the impact of the decision both within and outside of the City.
- The extent to which the decision is likely to result in substantial public interest
- The existence of significant communities of interest that cannot be defined spatially.