

Motion for Time Limited Debate: Review of Translation and Foreign Language Service Expenditure

Proposer: Paul Thomas

Seconder: Brian Black

MOTION

The council resolves to:

1. Recommend that the Executive instructs the Chief Executive to undertake a review of all current expenditure and activity related to translation, interpretation, and foreign language publication services across Kent County Council.
2. Recommend that the Executive explores adopting a policy that Kent County Council communications, publications, consultations, correspondence, advertising, and public information materials shall ordinarily be produced in English only, except where the law requires otherwise.
3. Recommend the retention and improvement of British Sign Language services as part of any review or policy change.
4. Confirm that the recommended review identify:
 - The total annual cost of such services;
 - The departments in which such costs are incurred;
 - The savings that would arise from adopting this policy.
5. Recommend that the findings of the review, together with recommendations for implementation, be reported to Policy & Resources Cabinet Committee within 6 months.
6. Recommend that the total expenditure incurred on translation and interpretation services is published on an annual basis.

Background Information provided by the Restore Britain Kent Group.

Kent County Council operates within a challenging financial environment and is required to ensure that every pound of public money is spent effectively and delivers maximum value for residents. The Council currently incurs expenditure on translation, interpretation, and the production of materials in languages other than English.

The Kent Restore Group believe that public funds should be prioritised towards frontline services and support for residents. The routine provision of translated materials and foreign language services is not an appropriate use of limited resources. As English is the principal language of the United Kingdom Council, communications should, as a matter of principle, be provided in English.

It is noted that, in the exercise of all decisions of a public function, officers must have due regard to the various statutory objectives detailed in s. 149 (1) of the Equality Act 2010. Any changes proposed, pursuant to a review carried out in pursuance of this Motion, will require an EqIA to be carried out so as to provide assurance that the 'public sector equality duty' will be discharged.