

## **REPORT OF THE LEADER**

### **UPDATE ON THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide an update on the progress and performance of the new arrangements for delivering translation and interpretation services.

#### **Information and Advice**

2. Ensuring service users are provided with language translation and interpretation is critical for ensuring fair access to services. The vast majority of service demand is to support social care and safeguarding work e.g. interpretation at case conferences and translation of documents which can form part of court papers.
3. Local interpreters and translators undertake the work which includes face to face or telephone interpreting, translation of the written word into alternative languages and Braille translation. British Sign Language (BSL) interpreting is covered by a separate contract.
4. For over 20 years, the Council commissioned translation and interpretation through its in-house service, which in recent years was based within the Communications and Marketing team.
5. In order to deliver translation and interpretation services in a more efficient way, Policy Committee agreed on 25 May 2013 to outsource the service in order to achieve a range of benefits. These included:
  - make savings through the outsourcing of the back-office in house service
  - provide better value for money through a more efficient delivery model
  - deliver an improved quality of service
  - the opportunity for local translators and interpreters to work for the new provider and access training and support
6. Following a procurement process, The Language Shop – part of the London Borough of Newham - was commissioned to provide translation and interpretation services for the County Council. It has over 20 years' experience providing translation and interpretation services to the public sector. It is quality assured through Investors in People, Customer Service Excellence accreditation (previously known as the Charter Mark) and is in the process of securing ISO 9000 accreditation (its assessment is due in June 2014).

7. The contract commenced on 25 November 2013 for an initial 12 month period, with possibility of extension subject to performance. The new arrangements have been in operation for just over five months and this report provides an initial assessment of performance to date. The first month included a transition period for the service to be handed over to the new provider and the Christmas break period. Therefore, to give the most accurate performance information, the data given in this report is for the three month quarter period January to March 2014 (unless otherwise stated).

## Progress

8. The transition to the new arrangements proved successful. Some of the benefits of the new service which have already been realised are:
- £55,000 saving resulting from closure of the back-office in-house service
  - interpretation and translation services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
  - increased visibility of the costs of translation and interpretation - for the first time front line employees (normally social care staff) receive a quote for the work when they book a job
  - telephone interpretation has good potential to help reduce costs, as a viable option for some types of jobs. Since 25 November 2013, a total of 30 telephone interpreting calls have been undertaken and feedback received from services has been very positive
  - effective delivery through the online system used by the Language Shop (to receive bookings, allocate bookings, capture our data for management reporting and pay interpreters)
  - more robust performance management of local interpreters/translators
  - improved management information to help understand costs, trends in demand and performance data which is provided on a monthly basis
  - first major recruitment exercise to attract new interpreters/translators in years, which has included an advertising campaign (important to meet the Council's ongoing needs and to ensure changes in demand in different languages can be met).

## Performance

9. Performance is monitored on a monthly basis, and quarterly contract management review meetings are held. A summary of performance against Key Performance Indicators between January and March 2014 is shown below.

### i) Fulfilment of jobs (core languages) – target 95%

Fulfilment	Number of jobs	%
Completed	481	93%
Unable to complete	35	7%
Total	516	100%

The Language Shop is just below (by 2%) meeting its target of fulfilling 95% of job requests. Jobs listed as 'unable to complete' were due to a shortage of requested languages for some more rarely spoken languages, resulting from changing population trends - plus not all the previously used interpreters applied to work for the Language Shop. It is worth noting that historically the in-house service struggled to recruit to some languages. A proactive recruitment campaign with an advertising budget of £4,000 is underway and has been led and paid for by the Language Shop (this has included purchase by the Language Shop of the back page advert in the Council's County Life

publication which is distributed to all Nottinghamshire households). It should also be noted, that the overall demand for translation and interpretation continues to increase in line with national trends. Therefore in this context, 93% is still a good performance level. Telephone interpreting continues to be an option if face to face jobs cannot be fulfilled or alternatively, interpreters from out of the county can be sourced, but this is more expensive due to the travel costs involved.

**ii) Punctuality of interpreters – target 98%**

<b>Punctuality of interpreters</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>%</b>
On-time	240	99%
Late	2	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>100%</b>

This has been consistently good and is exceeding target by 1%.

**iii) Monthly invoicing of completed assignments – target 90%**

This target has been consistently exceeded at 100%.

**iv) Interpreters requested by the customer match the customer’s requirements - target 98%**

This has been consistently achieved at 98%.

**v) Compliance with the level of appropriate security checks on interpreters and translators (Disclosure Barring Service checks) – target 100%**

This has been consistently achieved at 100%.

**vi) Supplier will provide a 24 hour response to general queries – target 100%**

This has been consistently achieved at 100%. It is worth noting that customer satisfaction with The Language Shop’s service is very high, with 99% rating it as ‘excellent’ or ‘good’. There is the option for the customer to rate levels of satisfaction as part of completion of the interpreter’s time sheet and from those returned, the results are shown below:

<b>Customer satisfaction</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>%</b>
Excellent	218	92%
Good	17	7%
Fair	2	1%
Poor	0	0%
Very poor	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>100%</b>

From the outset of the contract implementation, The Language Shop has demonstrated excellent customer service and responded quickly and effectively to any queries raised.

**Financial implications**

- The £55,000 saving has been made as a result of the outsourcing of the in-house service.

**Public Sector Equality Duty Implications**

11. An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken as part of planning for the transfer of the service and is available as a background paper.

### **Other Options Considered**

12. No other options considered.

### **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

13. Not applicable.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

14. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, the public sector equality duty, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended:

- 1) Policy Committee notes the overall positive performance by The Language Shop to date.
- 2) In view of the positive performance to date, Policy Committee approves in principle an extension of the initial contract for a further 12 months (commencing in November 2014) subject to ongoing satisfactory performance.

**Councillor Alan Rhodes**  
**Leader of the County Council**

### **For any enquiries about this report, please contact:**

Paul Belfield, Group Manager Marketing and Engagement on 0115 9772937 or  
[paul.belfield@nottsc.gov.uk](mailto:paul.belfield@nottsc.gov.uk)

### **Constitutional Comments [SLB 16/04/2014]**

Policy Committee is the appropriate body to consider the matters set out in the report.

### **Financial Comments [SEM 14/04/14]**

The financial implications are set out in the report.

### **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Framework Agreement for the Provision of Interpretation and Translation Services Call-off Contract

Equality Impact Assessment

### **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

ALL