

STATES OF JERSEY



JÈRRIAIS: PROMOTION BY THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Lodged au Greffe on 6th December 2018
by Deputy J.M. Maçon of St. Saviour

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

to request the Council of Ministers to agree –

- (a) that all official signage and departmental letter-headings produced and used by the Public Sector in Jersey should be in Jèrriais with an English translation beneath;
- (b) that, in so far as is reasonably practicable, this policy should also extend to the courts and those bodies wholly or partly owned by the States or in receipt of States funding, with implementation plans to be included in their next annual reports;
- (c) that the implementation of the aforementioned should be as and when materials are renewed, replaced or rebranded;
- (d) that L'Office du Jèrriais should be consulted for any translation service as an official authoritative body;
- (e) that the practicalities of implementing the above policy for publications, websites and social media should be explored and a report presented by the Council of Ministers to the Assembly within 12 months of this proposition being approved.

DEPUTY J.M. MAÇON OF ST. SAVIOUR

REPORT

A rationale for using Jèrriais signage in States Departments

Introduction

Jèrriais is an integral part of Jersey's heritage. It is a living language; a rich repository of our Island's literature and customs, and its survival and revitalisation is essential in maintaining Jersey's unique cultural identity.

The need to increase the visibility of Jèrriais is key in raising its profile and ensuring its longevity. By using Jèrriais signage in government buildings and workplaces, we would signal that Jèrriais is valued within Government, and would set a positive example for the wider community and business sectors. A bilingual corporate identity can showcase an organisation's approach to social responsibility, multi-cultural awareness and community engagement.

Precedents

The use of a minority language in corporate identity can serve to strengthen an organisation's 'sense of place' and to reinforce a distinctive image. On a recent fact-finding mission to the Isle of Man, Wales and Cornwall, Jèrriais teachers saw examples of how bilingual signage has been adopted by the Government in each place. The offices of Cornwall Council are replete with bilingual Cornish-English signage and, in Wales, bilingual signage is ubiquitous. In each place, there exists a palpable sense of pride in the uniqueness afforded to a region by its native language.

Examples of dual language signage in (a) Cornwall, and (b) Wales, are shown below:

(a)



(b)



Good practice

By incorporating bilingual signage in our public institutions, we can demonstrate a renewed commitment to our native language and foster a sense of pride in our unique culture. In doing so, it is vital that we take a forward-thinking, long-term approach, by according Jèrriais the respect it deserves. As such, it is good practice to display both languages in the same size and the same typeface. A strict interpretation may argue that vertical differentiation of languages implies a greater degree of hierarchy than horizontal differentiation, although effective colour mechanisms can mitigate this.

Making Jèrriais more visible

Beyond the development of signage, other considerations that organisations need to make in respect of corporate identity include – logos, websites, social media, stationery, publications, advertising, audio-messaging, e-mail signatures, straplines and disclaimers, front-of-house services, replies to correspondence and telephone calls, and recruitment and training.

Cost implications

If carried out as part of mainstream operations, introducing a bilingual element to corporate identity can be cost-neutral. The main areas in which costs may be incurred appear to be translation and publishing. Since L'Office du Jèrriais offers a free translation service, this would not appear to be a barrier to pursuing bilingual signage. Furthermore, innovative approaches to the design of signage and logos can ensure that production need not incur any significant further costs.

The most effective method of limiting any extra costs deriving from a bilingual approach to corporate identity is good planning, to ensure that bilingualism is ingrained in an organisation's normal practices and becomes part of the broader corporate ethos.

Bilingualism should be considered from the outset in any rebranding exercises. It is especially important for corporate awareness of the minority language to be strengthened when wide-ranging restructuring or organisational reforms are imminent. As such, it would seem that now represents an ideal moment for Jersey to adopt Jèrriais-English bilingual signage at little or no extra cost.

Conclusion

Respect for Jersey's heritage and a pride in our culture are essential to maintaining social cohesion and prosperity within our community. A commitment by Government to Jèrriais signage sends a powerful signal to Islanders that responsibility for our language is taken seriously, and that there exists a willingness to set a positive example for the wider community. At this crucial time of transition for the States of Jersey, we have an opportune moment to show our community that we value Jèrriais, and that we are committed to safeguarding our native language for generations to come.



Financial and manpower implications

Given that this policy comes to be enacted when materials are renewed, replaced, or as appropriate (i.e. rebranding), then the cost of this proposal should be covered within the regular maintenance and marketing budgets.