

## **Culture Committee CC-18-01(min)**

### **MINUTES**

**Date:** Wednesday 21 November 2001

**Time:** 9.00am-12.30pm

**Venue:** National Assembly for Wales

### **Attendance:**

Rhodri Glyn Thomas (Plaid Cymru, Carmarthen East and Dinefwr, Chair)

Jenny Randerson (Liberal Democrat, Cardiff Central, Assembly Minister)

Owen John Thomas (Plaid Cymru, South Wales Central)

Dafydd Wigley (Plaid Cymru, Caernarfon)

Glyn Davies (Conservative, Mid and West Wales)

Delyth Evans (Labour, Mid & West Wales)

Alison Halford (Labour, Delyn)

Rosemary Butler (Labour, Newport West)

Alun Pugh (Labour, Clwyd West) – substituting for Lorraine Barrett

### **Apologies**

Lorraine Barrett (Labour, Cardiff South and Penarth)

## **Officials**

Julia Annand (Committee Clerk)

Stephen Thomas (Deputy Committee Clerk)

Russell Thomas (Culture and Welsh Language Division)

Margaret Evans (Head, Arts, Sport and Lottery Division)

## **Also in attendance**

Euryn Ogwen Williams (Committee's advisor on the Welsh language)

**Declarations of interest:** The Chair declared his membership of the shadow board for Cardiff's bid for European Capital of Culture 2008.

Dafydd Wigley's wife is a prominent member of the arts community in Wales.

Rosemary Butler is Chair of the Board of the Swansea waterside museum.

## **Introductory remarks**

The Chair welcomed Glyn Davies AM who had taken over from Jonathan Morgan as the Conservative representative. The Chair reminded Members of the presentation that afternoon by Vincent Kane of Cardiff Marketing Ltd on Cardiff's bid for European Capital of Culture 2008 and the relevance of the bid to the whole of Wales.

## **Item 1: Committee's review of the Welsh language**

### **Paper: CC-18-01(ps.2&3)**

The Chair informed members that the NHS Confederation Wales, due to present evidence on the Welsh language, had withdrawn. Members expressed concern at this. The Chair agreed to write to the organisation asking them why they had pulled out and seeking an alternative slot in the timetable for them to appear before the Committee.

## **Organisation:**

## Federation of Small Businesses in Wales (FSB Wales)

Representatives:

Llewelyn Rhys

Llewelyn Rhys gave a presentation based on the FSB's paper (CC-18-01(p.2)).

The main points of the presentation were:

- FSB Wales strongly believed that economic development was central to the sustainability of the language in its traditional communities and the development of the language in other communities.
- From a survey commissioned by the FSB of their members in 1999, only 8% of the respondents in Wales used the Welsh language on a daily basis in their businesses. Amongst those that used the language, the vast majority said that this was an advantage to their business. From the 92%, which claimed not to use the language, only some 6% believed that this deficiency in the use of the language was a disadvantage. The review did not give the geographical location of these businesses and this is the only available data.
- There was insufficient data available on use of and attitude towards the language. Information was also needed on the impact of devolution on the costs of promoting the Welsh language.
- The majority of small and medium-sized businesses are family-owned; developing consensus and goodwill among small businesses is essential, especially in areas where Welsh is a minority language of the community. It is important for businesses to consider the needs of their customers.
- The FSB believed that it may be counterproductive to impose compulsory regulations on businesses. Bodies such as the WDA, Welsh Language Board, Business Connect and Finance Wales should promote the language alongside the schemes they already have.
- For Welsh heartland communities to become successful, people need to gain the confidence to venture into business. Economic growth and an improvement in career opportunities/services would boost the private sector, and also the traditional Welsh language heartlands. Many Welsh speaking communities also reside within the Objective 1 area and there may be opportunities here to give the private sector a boost and assist small businesses.

The following points were made in the subsequent question and answer session:

- The Committee is considering the need for statistical data on people's attitude towards the Welsh language. This could be co-ordinated with the Welsh Language Board. The Chair stated that he will be meeting the Assembly's Statistical Directorate on Tuesday 27 November to this end and extended an invitation to other Members to attend. The Committee would be given an update in due course.
- It was established that the businesses affiliated to the Federation ranged from the self-employed individual to a workforce of 250 although the majority of businesses have a workforce of less than 10.
- In reply to a question on the FSB's 1999 survey, Mr Rhys admitted that there was a need for a geographical analysis of the data.
- In reply to a question about the unwillingness of people to set up new businesses, Mr Rhys stated that many Welsh speakers do venture into business in the Welsh communities, but that an economic climate needed to be developed whereby such businesses could prosper.

## **Organisation:**

### **ELWa**

Representatives:

Steve Martin

Enid Rowlands

Enid Rowlands and Steve Martin gave a brief introduction.

They explained that ELWa was a partnership between two councils – the National Council for Education and Training in Wales and the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales. The National Council was formed in April this year and has recently consulted on its draft ten-year corporate strategy.

As part of the consultation process on the National Council's corporate strategy, a Welsh Medium and Bilingual Learning Focus Group was convened early in November to comment on past and present activity and to generate ideas for future development. The Focus Group's assessment of the overall position was that a great deal more needed to be done; more information and data was needed, more teachers needed to be trained bilingually and there

was a need to increase demand.

ELWa emphasised the commitment of both Councils in working together to increase the economic prosperity of Wales – that would be the greatest long-term contribution it could make to the development of the language.

The following points were made in the question and answer session:

- The Chair welcomed the fact that ELWa was looking closely at the creation of opportunities as well as demand in the Welsh language.
- It was noted that demand amongst post-16 students to study through the medium of Welsh was low, largely because opportunities to do so are severely limited.
- The point was made that more children study through the medium of Welsh at primary school level than at secondary level; at secondary level, there is a considerable fall-off in demand.
- ELWa's representatives commented that the availability of choice for all was one of their key concerns. It was vital that courses through the medium of Welsh were available throughout the whole of Wales. This was a matter of equal opportunities.
- It was noted that Wales should build on its bilingual status to develop a multilingual nation. Issues relating to multilingualism in a globalised economy and our links with Europe must be addressed in order for Wales to become more competitive in the global market.
- Provision of Welsh language education was not cheap; an increase in provision needed to be accompanied by greater investment from the Assembly. At present however, not enough is known about the need or demand for such provision. Neither do we know about how many people on Welsh for adults courses become fluent. ELWa looked to the Assembly for guidance and broad targets in this area. The Chair asked ELWa to give its views on what these broad targets should be.
- In reply to a question about the increased demand for translators in Wales, ELWa recognised that there has been a failure to recruit a sufficient capacity of translators in Wales. The Chair asked ELWa's representatives to produce a note for the Committee on how it could help increase both the standards of translation and the numbers of translators.
- ELWa's representatives also said that they would produce a note on creating a bilingual Wales, what it meant and how we could achieve it.

## **Item 2: Culture Strategy**

**Paper: CC-18-01(p.4)**

The Chair introduced the item by welcoming the Minister's inclusive working methods in drawing up the Strategy.

The Minister introduced her Strategy. She said that the paper represented a final draft and was the product of a considerable amount of input and consultation with other bodies. The Strategy built on the recommendations made in "A Culture in Common" and placed fresh emphasis on the importance of individual artists. The Strategy had obvious financial implications, but it was not an unchangeable blueprint. The Minister viewed it as a living and evolving document and said she had been mindful not to pre-empt the outcomes of the Committee's reviews on the Welsh language and sport.

The Minister drew Members attention in particular to the following points:

- A Chair in Community Arts had been established at the University of Glamorgan. The post needed to have a clear all-Wales remit.
- A National Youth Fund was a key component of the Strategy.
- The benefits of cultural tourism continued to be very important and the Minister had asked cultural ASPBs to work closely with the Wales Tourist Board.
- Links with the British Council have already been established. The Council is now a formal member of Cymru'n Creu. The Creative Industries have shown that they can make a massive contribution to the economy.
- In respect of the Music Development Fund administered through the GEST programme, the Education Minister had agreed to extend the programme to 2002-3. The Minister promised to write to the Committee with details of this.
- Local authorities also have an important role to play in the cultural field and to work closely with the cultural ASPBs.

The following points were raised in the subsequent question and answer session:

- The Minister agreed to add in an additional sentence explaining the position in respect of sport in Wales.
- In response to a question about what financial commitment would be needed to make a Welsh language national theatre a reality, the Minister said that there was a commitment to Welsh language theatre outlined in Section 2 of the report, but she promised to take another look at the section and strengthen it if necessary.
- The Minister was asked about the linkage between national remit companies such as Welsh National Opera and community activities – one of the key themes in *A Culture in Common*; the Minister confirmed that a commitment to such a linkage was contained in section 4 of the strategy.
- In response to a question about a possible National Art Gallery for Wales, the Minister said there was an on-going consultation on this carried out by the National Museum and Galleries of Wales. The results of this consultation would be brought before the

Committee next spring.

- The Minister agreed with a Committee member on the importance of securing lottery money for art in schools. She promised to write to the Secretary of State for Wales on this point.
- In response to a comment that the recommendations were not costed, the Minister stated that she did not feel that costing recommendations would be particularly helpful at this juncture. The recommendations were ambitious but officials view them as being realistic and achievable.
- The Minister agreed that mechanisms needed to be in place to link this Strategy with Economic Development activity.
- The Minister was asked to respond in the light of the Auditor General's report into the Arts Council's handling of the funding of the Centre for Visual Arts. The Minister said that she was reluctant to comment until the Audit Committee had considered the report but was confident that the Arts Council would act appropriately on its findings.
- The Minister informed Members that she and the Finance Secretary had recently met representatives of Clwyd Theatr Cymru in an effort to secure the financial basis of that company.
- In response to concerns voiced about VAT on arts and sports seats, the Minister agreed to write to the Secretary of State for Wales in order that the issue be raised at a UK level.
- Overall, the Committee gave a warm welcome to the Strategy and looked forward to its implementation.

### **Item 3: Committee's Forward Work Programme**

#### **Paper: CC-18-01(p.5)**

The Committee was presented with a forward work programme for the next 18 months. The Chair informed members that dates given for meetings between January-March might change because of potential timetable reshuffles in the light of the changes in Conservative party membership of Committees.

The following points were noted in discussion:

- The Committee discussed possible foreign visits as part of its review of the Welsh language. It agreed upon a visit to the Basque Country to assess bilingualism there, in February or March 2002. It was agreed that an open invitation for this visit should be extended to all members of the Committee and that the delegation should include at least one non-Welsh speaker. The Committee asked the Secretariat to firm up dates as soon as possible.
- The Committee agreed upon the need for a presentation from representatives of the

National Botanic Garden of Wales and asked the Secretariat to add this to the agenda of a future meeting.

- The Committee also agreed that it should receive a presentation from Clwyd Theatr Cymru at some point in the new year.
- There was some discussion about whether the Committee needed to take evidence from BBC Wales and S4C on 9 January as part of its Welsh language review, but the majority of members felt that a session questioning broadcasters on their policies towards Welsh language programming would be beneficial. The Minister agreed to postpone the Minister's report scheduled for 9 January to the following meeting.

#### **Item 4: Quinquennial Review of the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales: draft terms of reference**

**Paper: CC-18-01(p.6)**

Martin Rolph of Finance Group introduced this paper. He said that this was a separate review from the review of Cadw which was currently being undertaken. However, there were clear areas of common interest between Cadw and the Royal Commission and further down the line he promised to produce a paper on linked issues from both reviews. The draft interim report for this quinquennial review would come before the Committee in early summer.

The following point was raised in discussion:

- There was some discussion about why the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales came under the portfolio of the Culture Minister, whereas responsibility for Cadw fell to the Minister for Environment, Planning and Transport. It was explained that the Royal Commission was primarily a body of record, and although it has strong links with Cadw it is an entirely separate organisation.

The Committee was content with the terms of reference and looked forward to receiving the final report in the summer.

#### **Item 5: Minutes of the meeting held on 7 November**

**Paper: CC-16-01(min)**

The Minister asked that an amendment to be made under the item headed "Minister's report". She wanted to make it clear that the recommendations of the Publishing Group chaired by the



Deputy Minister would go to her in the first instance and that she would then bring her conclusions to the Committee.

**Committee Secretariat November 2001**