

Minutes of the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee

Date: 16 January 2002

Time: 2.00pm

Venue: Committee Room 2, National Assembly Building

Attendance:

Members

Cynog Dafis, Chair	Plaid Cymru	Mid and West Wales
Jane Davidson, Assembly Minister	Labour	Pontypridd
Lorraine Barrett	Labour	Cardiff South and Penarth
Mick Bates	Liberal Democrat	Montgomeryshire
Pauline Jarman	Plaid Cymru	South Wales Central
Gareth Jones	Plaid Cymru	Conwy
Huw Lewis	Labour	Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney
Jonathan Morgan	Conservative	South Wales Central
Alun Pugh	Labour	Clwyd West

Committee Secretariat

Chris Reading	Clerk
Holly Pembridge	Deputy Clerk

Officials

Richard Davies	Director, National Assembly Training and Education Department
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Keith Davies	Head, Standards and Performance Division (Item Three)
Richard Keveren	Head, Training, Skills and Careers Policy Division (Item Two)
Mike Moss	Training, Skills and Careers Policy Division (Item Two)
Paul Watts	Training, Skills and Careers Policy Division (Item Two)
Andrew Felton	Office of the Counsel General

In Attendance:

Representing Careers Wales:

Jeff Cocks	Chair, Careers Wales Association and Chair Careers Wales Mid Glamorgan
Dr John Llewellyn	Vice Chair of Careers Wales Association and Chief Executive of Careers Wales North West
Mark Freeman	Board Member of Careers Wales Association and Chief Executive of Careers Wales Cardiff and Vale

Representing the Welsh Language Board:

Rhodri Williams	Chair
Meirion Prys Jones	Team Leader: Language Planning Team
Bethan Guilfoyle	Board member

Apologies

- Mick Bates (second half of meeting)
- Janice Gregory (second half of meeting)

Substitutions

None

Declarations of Interest

Cynog Dafis	Registered Teacher; wife is a Registered Teacher
Jane Davidson	Registered Teacher; husband is an FE college lecturer and member of NATFHE Executive
Huw Lewis	Registered Teacher
Mick Bates	Qualified Teacher, member of GTC; wife is a Head Teacher, School Inspector, member of ACCAC and Estyn Committees
Pauline Jarman	Member of Court of Leader of Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council
Lorraine Barrett	School Governor
Alun Pugh	Alun Pugh's wife is a FE college lecturer

Chair's Opening Remarks

1. The Chair announced that the Committee's report on the higher education policy review had been successfully launched the day before at the Welsh College of Music and Drama. The plenary debate would take place on 22 January.
2. Members were reminded that the meeting on 30 January would be held at The Centre for Alternative Technology, Machynlleth. The meeting would start at 1.00pm.
3. Members were asked to declare any interests other than the ones cited on the previous minutes. Pauline Jarman declared that she had ceased to be a member of the court of governors, Cardiff University.

Item One: Report from the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning

Paper: ELL 01-02(p.1)

1.1 In addition to the items in her written report, the Minister covered the following issues:

- **Assembly Government's National Languages Strategy** - there will be a Plenary debate in February;
- **Initial Teacher Training for modern language teachers** - a £4,000 training grant is available;
- **Disaffection** - substantial funding is available through GEST to tackle challenging behaviour - £11 million for 2002-03;
- **Education Bill** - will prompt a review of pupil exclusion procedures and will look at all absences, whether authorised or not;
- **Chief Inspector of Education and Training, Estyn** - the review panel met on 11 January 2002 to undertake a performance review of the Chief inspector and will submit its report in the near future; and

- **Individual Learning Accounts** – the National Audit Office will include the operation of ILAs in its review of ELWa-National Council. It is intended that a new scheme to replace ILAs will be in place by autumn 2002.

1.2 The following points were raised in discussion:

- **European Year of Languages and the National Languages Strategy** – Members expressed support for the strategy and welcomed the opportunity for a Plenary debate. It was stated that bilingualism provided a springboard for multi-lingualism and the Minister suggested that more time should be allowed for modern foreign languages in the national curriculum. In response, the Minister welcomed the Committee's support and agreed to take account of Members' comments during development of the language strategy and as part of the next curriculum review process.
- **Disaffection** – Members enquired about funding for the primary sector; the right of appeal against permanent exclusions; truancy; the involvement of parents; and possible improvements in initial teacher training to raise teachers' awareness of this problem. Members also asked the Minister whether statistics could be provided on exclusions (split between the primary and secondary sectors), technical challenges to exclusion orders, and GEST expenditure by LEAs on tackling disaffection. The Minister responded that officials should establish what data was available and then submit it to the Committee. The Minister stated that the conference in October had been very useful and agreed to report back to the Committee in the spring, once the action plan had been formulated.
- **The Chief Inspector, Estyn** – Members asked for clarification on a number of issues including, the criteria for the review process; who would appoint the review panel; who would take the final decision; and whether it would be a political decision. The Minister responded that she had approved the panel and was satisfied that they were independent and had sufficient experience and knowledge to discharge their duties effectively. The selection criteria included those typical for appointment to the Senior Civil Service. The Minister stated that the question of re-appointment was ultimately a matter for the Privy Council acting on the advice of the Secretary of State, informed by the views of the relevant Assembly Minister. The decision would not be political but would be based on the objective report of the review panel.
- **English / Welsh Baccalaureate** – Members asked if the Minister would comment on recent press reports concerning a proposed baccalaureate in England and implications for that in Wales. The Minister replied that she was unable to comment on the English Baccalaureate, as she had not been involved with it, and that she would report to the Committee on the Welsh Baccalaureate in due course. [It is intended to include the Welsh Baccalaureate on the agenda for ELL Committee after the Easter recess].

Item Two: Careers Wales – Corporate Plan 2002-2005

Papers: ELL 01-02(p.2) & (p.3)

2.1 The representatives of Careers Wales outlined its strategic aims and explained, assisted by a PowerPoint presentation, the main challenges ahead. This can be viewed at Annex A. Careers Wales was in the process of consulting upon its Corporate Plan 2002-2005. Presenters explained that the draft Corporate Plan itself had been distributed to a wide range of stakeholders including ELWa, the Employment Service, employers, unitary authorities, education institutions and the voluntary sector.

2.2 The Minister highlighted that formulating a Corporate Plan for Careers Wales involved an unaccustomed approach: seven individual careers companies would be signing up to one strategy. The Minister said she was proud of the all-age advice and guidance service in Wales, which had been developed both alongside local stakeholders and on a national level. There had been positive feedback from around Wales. The Minister said that she had announced funding of £31m for Careers Wales in December last year

2.3 The Chair invited members to ask questions and the following issues were raised in discussion:

- **Increased demand for services** – Dr John Llewellyn said that the launch of Careers Wales Online had led and would continue to lead to an increase in demand for careers services. Mark Freeman added that Careers Wales’s vision was to see itself at the heart of economic and social prosperity in Wales, helping to deliver a highly skilled workforce. Work had been underway with people already in employment, who were being supported and encouraged in achieving further development.
- **Real targets** – members were interested to see how real targets could be set and attained. Dr Llewellyn stated that detailed targets were set within business plans that were currently being drawn up. These targets would be adapted to fit the working method and would be informed by the consultative process. Some targets had already been achieved i.e. the establishment of a framework for the Careers Wales Quality Award.
- **Gender stereotyping** – there was some interest in how Careers Wales would help counteract this. Dr Llewellyn felt that this was a multi-faceted problem requiring a culture change at all levels of society and within education and employment processes. Resource-intensive work in the primary school sector was an approach that might yield long-term results. There was also a need to look at enhancing what was offered by means of work experience.
- **Information and Communications Technology (ICT)** – it was felt that ICT should have a higher profile within the Corporate Plan. Dr Llewellyn agreed and pointed out that Careers Wales Online was a flagship development. Mark Freeman added that Careers Wales Online was not simply another way of doing the same things: a flexible, adaptable platform for ICT might have the potential to text message young people via their mobile phones and thus engage them more fully. Also, it was hoped that people would be able to access the Internet via their mobile phones or digital televisions again making careers advice and guidance more accessible in a modern medium.
- **Schools’ career departments** – representatives were asked if they felt schools’ careers departments to be a dated concept and what the departments’ responses had been to the Corporate Plan. Mark Freeman replied that Careers Wales recognised the positive role of schools’ career departments and stated that they would continue to be key partners whose work complemented the work of Careers Wales. Increasingly, over the last few years there had been an attempt to reach pupils at the lower end of schools. There was a move to build capacity in schools’ careers departments and help train teachers to assist in giving careers advice and guidance. The Careers Wales Quality Award had helped to raise the profile of work in schools.
- **Capturing the interest of the wider public** – Dr Llewellyn stated that the history of adult careers guidance in Wales had been patchy. Careers Wales had only taken over this work eight months ago, hence outreach success had yet to be fully developed. Developing a wider range of contacts with the Voluntary Sector, which in many areas was already well embedded, was seen as a way forward to engage more adults with the concept of careers advice and guidance.
- **Careers advice given in schools** – there was some concern that schools might give pupils careers advice that was not free from institutional interest. Mark Freeman stated that he was confident that the role of the careers adviser in schools was entirely from an impartial viewpoint and founded upon the best interest of the young person not the institution. He pointed out that there could be some tension if Careers Wales gave advice to pupils concerning providers other than the particular

school's own sixth form.

- **Education and business links** – it was felt that there needed to be continuity through the education system in highlighting to pupils the possibility of starting up their own businesses (in the future). Jeff Cocks explained that funding had been secured from the Knowledge Exploitation Fund and a range of other sources. This funding will be used for training programmes for advisors to be able to give informed advice and guidance on self-employment as a real option on leaving formal education and open people's minds to the possibility of entrepreneurship. Mark Freeman pointed out that it was important to find the right methods and timetables to bring together careers education, guidance interventions and business links experiences together in a meaningful way. Over the last year, Careers Wales had in some areas, been working as young as primary school age and was working closely with Young Enterprise and the Welsh Development Agency (WDA). Members felt it would be useful to include this information in the Careers Wales's strategic aims.
- **Poverty of aspiration/disadvantaged communities and widening participation** – there was some concern that recognition of disadvantaged communities might be excluded from the strategic aims, due to poverty of aspiration in such communities. There was also some interest in how Careers Wales's work would tie in with the Committee's aim of widening participation in FE/HE by 50%. Dr Llewellyn said that the day-to-day work of Careers Wales involved raising aspirations of all people. There had been close involvement with a wide network of partners, including work on a Communities First project and a range of outreach projects. However, one-to-one contact was resource-intensive and careers guidance and advice could only form part of the response to the very complex process of raising aspirations at both individual and community levels.
- **Monitoring of work** – members were interested to know how work could be monitored effectively. Dr Llewellyn stated that there was a potential debate surrounding the issue of outcomes and impact: outcomes would be measured as the effect Careers Wales's work had on people's lives. Careers Wales was also an influencer and supporter and this was hard to quantify. It was felt appropriate to move away from quantitative analysis.
- **Assembly policies** – presenters were asked if they felt there was any gaps on Assembly policies with regard to careers. Dr Llewellyn felt that there might be gaps with regard to the primary sector and also the low-skilled, low-waged group; there would be more evidence to provide on this in the future.
- **Education Business links** – there was some interest in how the work of Careers Wales linked with and could build on the work of Education Business links. Mark Freeman said that Careers Wales was responsible for managing work-experience, mentoring, teacher support and curriculum support. A number of the seven companies had been experienced in these areas before the establishment of Careers Wales in April 2001. For other companies it was a new challenge; it would take some time for a uniform service to be established across Wales. Careers Wales also felt that the concepts of education and business be embedded more explicitly in the Personal and Social Education (PSE) and Work Related Education (WRE) frameworks and these be made into a statutory framework.

Item Three: Policy Review – Welsh Language in Education – Oral Evidence – The Welsh Language Board

Papers: ELL 01-02(p.4a) & (p.4b)

3.1 Rhodri Williams and Meirion Prys Jones outlined the Board's perspective on the Committee's policy review of the Welsh Language in Education, as set out in the papers submitted. The Chair then invited

members to ask questions; the following issues were raised in discussion:

- **Facilitating demand** – members were interested to know what strategic approach should be taken to facilitate the demand for Welsh-medium and bilingual education, especially in Southeast Wales. It was also felt that the usage of the Welsh Language could be successfully developed in non-Welsh speaking schools. Rhodri Williams agreed to an extent and said that the factor of being comfortable with a language was vital. Bethan Guilfoyle stated that she taught in a secondary school in Rhondda, where there had been support from the parents, the local authority and the community. It was felt that the school had developed teaching of the Welsh language far beyond the demands of the National curriculum. A teacher had been employed to help pupils develop their Welsh language skills before pupils entered secondary school. Meirion Prys Jones stated that a major factor in parental choice had been the distance that children had to travel to school. He suggested that Welsh Language education provision should be based more on communities. With regards to early years education, it was felt the solution would be to have more bilingual early years provision which would be beneficial for both parents and children. The Chair commented that with the loss of 40% of pupils leaving Welsh-medium primary education to go to non-Welsh medium secondary education that it was likely that any parental decision was made on the basis of the language that was spoken at home.
- **Assumption** – It was strongly felt that the papers presented by the Board (ELL 01-02 (p.4a)&(p.4b)) carried the assumption that everyone in Wales would eventually become bilingual. It was felt that friction would be caused if Assembly policies were used to help engineer this type of situation, as some communities in Wales might not want the opportunity to become bilingual. Also, it was felt that a negative message could be sent out that those Welsh people who did not speak Welsh were somehow deficient in their 'Welshness'. Rhodri Williams agreed that this situation was neither desirable nor practicable; a gradual approach would be wiser. He outlined that there had been a transformation in attitude to the Welsh language in some areas; parents in former mid-Glamorgan had wanted more Welsh-medium provision for their children. Rhodri Williams added that there was no future for the Welsh language unless those people who did not speak Welsh supported the policies that promoted the language.
- **Compulsion** – there remained some concern that the papers submitted implied compulsion to become bilingual. Rhodri Williams explained that with regards to Welsh-medium teaching, choice was crucial. However, in respect of Welsh taught as a subject, there was an element of compulsion. This element of compulsion was likely to be found in the more rural areas of Wales. He went on to explain that the schemes the Board agreed with the Local Education Authorities (LEAs) reflected the reality of the situation; he felt that Welsh Language provision could be increased substantially but not by 100%. The Board was constantly aware of working within the consensus of Wales.
- **Alternative models** – Members were interested to know what was the better alternative for school models: Welsh-medium and English-medium schools or bilingual schools. Meirion Prys Jones explained that the needs of different areas were diverse. There were already a number of schools operating which offered diversity of provision. Members also asked if there was any evidence for the effectiveness of the different type of school models in attracting and producing Welsh speakers. Meirion Prys Jones said there was a lack of evidence due to a lack of definition of each model. It was felt that there was a great need for research to be carried out in this area.
- **Assessment of demand** – the Committee felt that demand should be assessed properly. The Board was asked what level of teaching support in an English-medium school was required to retain bilingualism. Bethan Guilfoyle stated that human resources needed expansion so that all pupils could be taught bilingually from the age of five until the age of sixteen. Meirion Prys Jones said that children who had received immersion teaching between the ages of three and five had learnt languages very quickly. He told the Committee that from the 40% of pupils who do not go on to

Welsh-medium education, most of those children came from bilingual homes/backgrounds. Research would be valuable for discerning the reasons behind parental choices.

- **Strategy** –it was felt that a realistic strategy that was needed. Members were interested to know what proportions of the likely available pool of potentially qualified Welsh speakers would be needed to service bilingual provision in schools or other contexts over time. It was essential not to make assumptions about the demographics of supply that were completely unrealistic and left targets for development unrealisable. Not only would there be pressures for a greater proportion of the Welsh speaking population to service development in schools than was proportionally the case for the English medium, but that pressure extended also to supporting professions and practitioners in child care, therapies and educational psychology for example. It would be important to do some modelling on this to ensure that the aggregate of development pressures did not become wholly unrealistic and did not encourage expectations that could not be delivered. Members asked the Board to comment on whether the creation of more settings where both languages were used would help bring the languages together and auger well for bilingual education. Rhodri Williams said that targets needed to be ambitious, yet realistic. Teaching needed to be made more attractive to those people who wanted to help the Welsh Language survive and prosper. The Chair pointed out that the supply of teachers was directly linked to the demand for provision.
- **National/Spatial targets** – there was some discussion around whether targets set should be spatial or national. Meirion Prys Jones believed that there was a need for national targets to inform a strategy outlining a sufficient number of people to help meet these targets.
- **Spin** – it was strongly felt that there was a perceived ‘spin’ in the context of the papers and the language they used in making the status of the Welsh language appear more vulnerable than it actually was. It was suggested that the figures presented in the papers could actually indicate that the Welsh language was growing.
- **Welsh for adults** – the Committee felt that Welsh for adults was an area of increasing growth and that it would be helpful to receive some statistical evidence to inform the review process.

Item Four: Draft Strategic Forward Work Programme

Paper: ELL 01-02(p.5)

4.1 The Chair informed the Committee that they could comment on the Committee’s draft strategic forward work programme, covering the period May 2002 to May 2003. Any suggestions from members were to be sent via the Clerk. Subsequently, all subject committee work programmes would be circulated around the respective committees for cross-referencing and comments.

Item Five: Minutes of 12 December 2001 meeting

Paper: ELL 19-01(mins)

5.1 The Committee adopted the minutes of the last meeting

There were two papers to note:

Entrepreneurship Action Plan – progress update

Paper: ELL 01-02(p.6)

Report of the National Childcare Strategy Taskforce

Paper: ELL 01-02(p.7)

The next Committee meeting will be held at The Centre for Alternative Technology, Machynlleth on Wednesday 30 January 2002.

Committee Secretariat January 2002