

## Education and Lifelong Learning Committee

### NATIONAL COUNCIL - ELWa EVIDENCE TO THE EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING COMMITTEE

#### INTRODUCTION

This evidence is provided on behalf of the National Council - ELWa. The National Council – ELWa was formed in April 2001, by bringing together most of the responsibilities of the Further Education Funding Council for Wales (FEFCW), the four Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) in Wales and the Council of Welsh TECs, together with the responsibilities previously held by local authorities for adult and continuing education. It is responsible for funding, planning, securing and promoting post-16 education and training in Wales, except for higher education. It will also assume responsibility for funding post-16 provision in schools from April 2002.

The National Council – ELWa is working with the Higher Education Council - ELWa in developing bilingual learning opportunities in their respective sectors. This is to ensure a co-ordinated approach under the ELWa banner especially in terms of progression, resources and the use of technology. The Councils are also preparing a joint Welsh Language Scheme, as required under the Welsh Language Act 1993. The target date for submission is May 2002.

#### CONTEXT OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL – ELWa’s EVIDENCE

The National Council - ELWa’s evidence to the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee is based upon a thorough review of its inherited policies and operations supporting bilingualism<sup>1</sup>. This review has taken place in the context of the development of the National Council - ELWa’s draft corporate strategy for the next ten years and its Corporate Plan for 2002-05. The evidence presented in this paper builds upon that submitted to the Culture Committee in November 2001.

The National Council - ELWa’s vision for learning in Wales is enshrined in the statement **“Making Learning Work for You – Mynwch ELWa ar Ddysg”**. Its mission is **“To promote lifelong learning and provide world-class learning opportunities for all in Wales to fulfill their potential”**. These declarations are the foundation of all of the National Council -ELWa’s aspirations, policy development and operations.

Bilingualism has been identified as a cross-cutting theme in the National Council - ELWa’s draft corporate strategy. The cross-cutting themes are central to all of the National Council - ELWa’s strategies and policies and they are integral to its internal workings. The corporate strategy recognises the increased demand, and improved opportunities, for bilingual learning post-16. It is the National Council- ELWa’s aim to ensure that individuals, businesses and communities have a real choice of whether to undertake learning bilingually. To this end, it is committed to work with partners to

<sup>1</sup> The words *bilingual* and *bilingualism* are used, for the sake of brevity, to mean the teaching of subjects in Welsh or in Welsh and English and the teaching of the Welsh language to adult learners of Welsh.

achieve a sustainable balance between demand for bilingual learning opportunities and their supply.

There is a strong connection between participation in bilingual education and training and the National Council – ELWa’s cross-cutting theme of equal opportunities. At present there is considerable geographical variation in the opportunities available to participate in bilingual education and training which seems unlikely to reflect either current or future needs. Developing bilingualism is also linked to the National Council - ELWa’s social inclusion cross-cutting theme by ensuring that individuals and communities throughout Wales are able to participate fully in Wales’ cultural life, thereby contributing to developing an inclusive society.

## **DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL - ELWa’s POLICY FOR BILINGUALISM**

The National Council – ELWa inherited policies and operations from the former FEFCW to support the expansion of bilingualism in the further education sector. (See Annex 1).

As part of the consultation on the National Council - ELWa’s corporate strategy, a Welsh Medium and Bilingual Learning Focus Group was convened on 7/8 November 2001 to comment on past and present activity and to generate ideas for future developments. The Focus Group’s assessment of the overall position can be briefly summarised as: schools are making progress, in further education only a small percentage of teaching and assessments are through the medium of Welsh, and in work based training there is little formal Welsh medium or bilingual provision. It is from this inheritance that the National Council – ELWa moves forward. (The Focus Group’s report is attached at Annex 2).

Following the Focus Group’s report, we have begun to prepare a detailed work programme for bilingualism and options for how the work might be undertaken. A small group of external experts, drawn from the larger Focus Group membership, is reviewing suggestions and guiding thinking. The National Council – ELWa will consider recommendations for new policies and operations at its March meeting. Subject to approval, these will be put into action during 2002-03. The National Council – ELWa proposes to keep the group of experts as a valued source of advice and an external perspective.

## **KEY AREAS FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

Based upon the conclusions of the Focus Group, and the recommendations of the group of experts, **the Council will consider the following recommendations at its March meeting.** Some of the changes to policy steers will be through the new national funding system which should be implemented during 2004. In the interim, it is intended to implement pilot projects to test how to use funds more effectively to achieve better learning opportunities. This will include bilingual learning opportunities.

### **Strategy and Leadership**

The National Council – ELWa should take a strategic leading role alongside other major national partners, ACCAC and Welsh Language Board, in developing a post-16 bilingual learning agenda in the context of policy decisions taken by the Welsh Assembly Government, following the reviews by the Culture and Education Lifelong Learning Committee. The benefits of this would be the development of a clear integrated national strategy and policy framework which would:

- give direction and leadership to all key players;
- improve co-ordination between providers and other bodies;
- improve the dissemination and embedding of good practice; and
- stimulate dynamic and innovative approaches.

### **Co-ordination**

The National Council – ELWa should establish an in-house expert resource. These staff would provide the operational means of setting and realising policy objectives and would ensure that there is effective co-ordination, an appropriate learning infrastructure and that resources are well used.

It is intended that appropriate parts of the operational work will be undertaken by other organizations under contract. All existing contracts will be reviewed to ensure relevance with the new strategy, clarity of role and purpose and added value of the contractor. The intention should be to build on current best practice whilst achieving a more coherent and integrated approach.

Within the National Council - ELWa, the in-house resource would provide a focus for other staff, a source of advice, and a means of ensuring that the bilingualism cross-cutting theme is embedded in all aspects of policy development, operations and internal procedures. The in-house expert resource would lead and co-ordinate, but many of the key actions may be the responsibility of other directorates or regions with parts of their budgets earmarked for them. This approach will increase understanding and ownership of the bilingualism cross-cutting theme internally, avoiding the risk of bilingualism becoming isolated in a 'unit'. It will ensure that bilingualism's needs are accounted for in national, regional and local planning, that there is proper consideration in all decision making and actions. To achieve this, the expert resource will have an important role in training staff to raise their awareness and understanding.

## **Development Opportunities**

There are many aspects of bilingual learning requiring investment. Those which have emerged are:

### Teaching Staff / Trainers

There is a shortage of staff able to teach bilingually. Addressing this requires increasing the proportion of Welsh-speaking staff and trainers recruited and providing training and support to new and existing staff to enable them to acquire the confidence and skills to teach through the medium of Welsh. To do this, the National Council – ELWa will work closely with the Higher Education Council – ELWa (which funds initial teacher training) to improve the supply of teachers.

### Raising Demand and Awareness

Meeting the needs of the economy, communities and individuals would entail a powerful demand for Welsh language skills and education. Evidence from employers already shows that bilingualism is important economically. Work by Cwmni Iaith and the Mentrau Iaith shows that employers increasingly want workers with bilingual skills. However, this is not reflected in the numbers participating in bilingual education or work-based training. There are many reasons for this. One of the National Council – ELWa’s most important tasks is to raise student and trainee demand to match the need. Possible early actions could include building upon the Menter a Busnes Gorwelion project<sup>2</sup> to demonstrate the employment value to students of Welsh language skills.

The National Council- ELWa’s Participation and Communications Directorate will have an important role in raising awareness of the advantages of bilingualism.

### Provision

Having invested heavily in Welsh language and Welsh medium education as part of the national curriculum, it is vital that there is provision for students when they enter the post-16 sector.

There is a general perception that the pre-16 national curriculum does not fully develop oral skills. The Welsh for Adults post-19 programme nurtures oral skills but there is currently a gap in provision for the 16-19 age group. There is a need to improve Welsh language fluency in this group so that they are better able to use Welsh in their daily lives and work. This could be particularly beneficial for businesses which have a direct relationship with their customers. It could also give them the confidence and capacity to study bilingually, with a knock-on effect on participation, including progression to higher education. ACCAC has a statutory role to monitor bilingual provision of awarding bodies and it is also responsible for providing curriculum guidance to schools to age 19; some of this guidance also relates to further education institutions. Consequently, it is important that the National Council – ELWa and ACCAC work successfully together.

---

<sup>2</sup> An employer survey undertaken in parts of Wales to identify requirements for bilingual skills and to provide careers services materials from this.

Equally important is addressing the drop in participation at different stages of bilingual education because students do not see the value of remaining in the Welsh language system. Further work needs to be undertaken on the reasons for this<sup>3</sup>, including the possible impact of post-16 provision on pre-16 participation. The National Council – ELWa foresees that it will need to work closely with Estyn, which may consider broad issues such as this as part of its area inspections, as well as more specific issues such as Welsh language provision for adult learners. Estyn will also have a role in identifying good quality and good practice.

From April 2002 the National Council will fund school sixth forms. This additional dimension reinforces the need to develop models of delivery which reflect the linguistic profiles of the different parts of Wales. A key part of this is the role of Community Consortia for Education and Training (CCETs) in local planning, including the need to consider cross-boundary issues and solutions. Whilst developing the role of CCETs, the National Council will need to consider the position of the eight Welsh for Adults consortia which exist to plan provision for adult learners of Welsh.

### Learning Resources

Working in partnership with ACCAC, the National Council – ELWa will consider the investment needed in learning resources. Beyond traditional materials, the opportunities afforded by new ICT and e-learning must be exploited. A strategic approach is essential to do this well.

### Developing Pedagogy

The large pool of bilingual people in Wales provides an excellent basis for developing multi-lingual skills in the population, which affords economic benefits. There is an opportunity to use the experience of Welsh / English bilingual teaching as a test bed to develop effective second language pedagogy more widely.

### Data and Research

Much data is available but there are critical gaps in our knowledge. It is vital that data is collected coherently and comprehensively across all facets of Welsh life, not just the education system. Policy developments also require a soundly-researched evidence base. In particular, the new Sector Skills Council, which will have a special relationship with the National Council – ELWa, should be able to make an invaluable contribution by considering bilingual learning needs as part of sector workforce development plans.

### Targets

Targets need to be established and the resources necessary to achieve them thoroughly identified.

---

<sup>3</sup> Work is already in hand in the University of Wales Welsh Medium Teaching Unit on the reasons for lack of demand in higher education. FEFCW commissioned research by Canolfan Bedwyr has suggested some of the factors in relation to FE provision.

Whilst the extent of the National Council – ELWa’s engagement in the above opportunities is still to be determined, much work is continuing on developing bilingual learning opportunities and new opportunities realised, for example:

- collaborative projects between schools and colleges to develop new learning resources – funded through a project managed by Dysg and initiatives created by Community Consortia for Education and Training;
- translation and dissemination, free of charge, of English language learning materials via the Digital College website; and
- provision of staff training and networking of providers by Sgiliaith – of which the National Council – ELWa is a major sponsor.

### **A COSTED AND PRIORITISED PROGRAMME**

The National Council – ELWa will wish to respond, in partnership with ACCAC, WLB and the Higher Education Council – ELWa, energetically and dynamically to these challenges, building upon the foundations already in place. The particular challenge is to increase demand and supply in sustainable balance in the years ahead to meet Wales’ economic, social and cultural needs, and priorities as determined by the Welsh Assembly Government.

The recommendations to be made to the Council at its March meeting have human and cost implications. These will be assessed as part of the National Council - ELWa’s strategy and policy development and a costed, prioritised timetable of action will be agreed within existing budgets for 2002-2003. Our draft Corporate Plan, 2003–2006, to be submitted to the Welsh Assembly Government in July, will contain proposals for the long term investment/plan for bilingual learning opportunities and the opportunity costs of so doing, within an overall broadly static budget.

## Welsh medium and bilingual provision in the post 16-sector (excluding higher education)

### 1. National Council – ELWa – Inherited Policies and Funding

The National Council– ELWa has inherited a mixture of support initiatives for Welsh language education and training in the post-16 sector as follows:

- **Welsh for Adults (WfA) provision** – is funded entirely by the National Council and involves a wide range of providers who work together in WfA consortia. As the name indicates, this provision is to teach adults Welsh and in the current academic year £3.1m is being spent.
- **National Officer for WfA and WfA examinations** - £100k is provided per year to pay for a National Officer to develop WfA and to fund examinations for learners.
- **Bilingualism Unit** – £55k will be provided this financial year to the new Sgiliaith Unit at Coleg Meirion Dwyfor. The Unit was conceived to serve further education institutions by developing learning resources and offering training and advice on bilingual teaching methodologies. It will now embrace post-16 in its wider meaning, by working with school sixth forms and other providers.
- **Bilingual post-16 provision** - £1.69m has been allocated for 2001/02 as premium funding for FE institutions providing courses through the medium of Welsh and/or bilingually. This is on top of the standard unit of funding. The total funding to FE colleges for Welsh medium and bilingual provision is expected to be some £10 million. Money is allocated using the Recurrent Funding Methodology, which is under review, with a target date of Autumn 2003 for the implementation of major changes.
- **Bilingual Materials via the Internet Project** - £100k a year has been provided to Dysg to manage this project, which produces new internet based learning materials.

### 2. Sources of information

There are several sources of information which can help to inform future policy development:

#### **The funding of bi-lingual and Welsh FE provision (Canolfan Bedwyr Research for FEFCW)**

Commissioned by the Further Education Funding Council in 1999/2000 this considered how FE bilingual and Welsh provision is funded and concluded that the current methodology had not stimulated growth in Welsh medium/bilingual education. It suggested reasons:

- the current approach does not tackle the genuine lack of learning resource materials and making good the deficiency is slow and expensive;
- there are too few staff capable of teaching in Welsh;
- where Welsh medium education is not a core activity, it receives little awareness and recognition in institutions, and it is therefore a low priority; and
- the reluctance of some students to follow bilingual courses for varying reasons such as: peer pressure; eagerness to sever links with 'school traditions'; perceptions that Welsh courses are more work perhaps because of a lack of learning materials and the fact that too few awarding bodies offer tests or exams in Welsh; and students' lack confidence in their Welsh language ability.

The researchers considered the premium for Welsh language and bilingual courses in the recurrent funding methodology and explored alternative funding models. This concluded that it would be best to take into account wider sociological factors as well as numbers of students on courses, types of qualifications, numbers of courses, infrastructure costs etc. In addition, it suggested that payments should reflect teaching methods used (several models were analysed) to support best practice. The report was received by FEFCW in early 2000 and is available on the FEFCW web-site. Its recommendations will be taken into account in the development of the new national funding system, and also in the development of the National Council's strategy and policies.

### **Continuity in Welsh Language Education (Welsh Language Board)**

This research in 1999 found that the future of Welsh is dependent upon the creation of speakers by the education system to maintain the current proportion of Welsh speakers in the population (18.7% according to the 1991 census) or increase it. It reported that, although 20.9% of primary school pupils attend schools where Welsh is the sole, main or part medium of teaching, the proportion drops to 12.9% in secondary schools. In FE institutions less than 2% of students were assessed in Welsh (statistics were not provided for sixth form students and so this is undoubtedly an under-recording of the true position post-16). These data mask regional variations, but overall the fact that only 12.9% of pupils complete education up to the age of 16 in Welsh means that too small a proportion do so to maintain the current proportion of speakers in the population of Wales.

### **A Study for the Need for Welsh/Bilingual Language Skills in North Wales SMEs and Indications for HR Development and Training with regard to Welsh (Cwmni Iaith for Celtec)**

Commissioned by Celtec (in early 2001) the report concluded that support for Welsh medium training has not been as effective as it could have been. It identified a lack of initiatives to support training and provision, and a failure to ensure that Welsh language training is delivered according to demand or facilitated by providers (even though Celtec had expected its providers to have a Welsh language policy). The research found employer demand for Welsh language skills in business but training providers did not deliver the kind of Welsh language training provision required for the economy's needs. Looking to the future, the report recommended, amongst many things, that ELWa should:

- respond to local need by working with strategic and local partnerships;
- make providers aware of ELWa's requirements;
- make learners aware of the benefits of Welsh language skills, including the needs of employers;
- co-ordinate resource development and get providers to work together; and
- support development of a key skills course in bilingual communication - as compulsory or strongly recommended for all trainees.

### **Statistical Evidence**

Data is provided at Annex 1A about bilingual/Welsh medium provision and at Annex 1B about Welsh for Adults.

From Annex 1A it is clear that:

- the number of institutions offering such courses fluctuates but activity is heavily concentrated in six institutions in north and west Wales;
- the number of students enrolled on these courses who are assessed in Welsh has increased but total numbers are very small.
- as a proportion of all the students enrolled on these courses, the number assessed in Welsh/bilingually has declined; and
- the proportion of all students enrolled on courses funded by the former FEFCW assessed in Welsh/bilingually is very low.

From Annex 1B it is clear that the numbers enrolled on Welsh for Adults courses:

- grew substantially for 1994/95 to 1999/00 but have fallen somewhat in 2000/01. It is too early to say why this has happened and whether it represents a longer term trend; and
- due to the method of data collection, it is not possible to analyse the progression of learners but there is strong evidence from other sources that only a small proportion of students become fluent.

Annex 1A

**Welsh medium/bilingual courses in further education institutions**

Academic Year	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000	2000/01
Number of institutions providing courses	17	16	19	19	17	11	12	15
Number of enrolled students assessed in Welsh	2023	2288	2830	5550	4431	3503	4895	5483
Number of enrolled students on same courses not assessed in Welsh	1882	2346	3875	5498	4521	6821	6232	6022
Welsh assessments as a % of all enrolments on these courses	51.8%	49.4%	42.2%	50.2%	49.5%	33.9%	44.0%	47.7%
Total enrolments funded by FEFCW/National Council	136468	193735	255039	298873	304348	308381	353972	435106
Welsh assessments as % of total enrolments funded by FEFCW/National Council	1.5%	1.2%	1.1%	1.9%	1.5%	1.1%	1.4%	1.3%

*Data source: Midfess C*

## Annex 1B

### Funded enrolments on WfA courses between 1994/95 and 2000/01

Academic Year	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01
Number of funded enrolments	15894	18966	20762	21643	21500	23634	21011

*Source: RFM (fundable Form C - best of FEES/MIDFESS including predictions) 1994/95 and 1995/96 are obtained by filtering by [subject of study]='Q520' and FE programme area=18A. No data on sponsored provision were available for 1995/96. 1996/97 is based on enrolments where [programme area]=18A and [superclass code]=FK.357*

**THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR WALES  
FOCUS GROUP REPORT OF WELSH MEDIUM AND BILINGUALISM  
LEARNING 7-8 NOVEMBER 2001**

**INTRODUCTION**

This aim of this report is to inform the development of the Welsh-medium and bilingual learning strategy of the National Council for Education and Training for Wales. The arguments and perspectives derive from the deliberations of a focus group brought together on behalf of the National Council as part of its corporate planning process. In addition the National Council and the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales work in partnership as ELWa and the two Councils will be exploring potential linkages between their Welsh medium policies for the benefit of the post-16 and the higher education sectors. Those with an interest and/or expertise in higher education were therefore represented on the group and many attendees also had a perspective across both sectors.

The National Council was formed in April 2001, by bringing together most of the responsibilities of the Further Education Funding Council for Wales (FEFCW), the four Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) in Wales and the Council of Welsh TECs, together with the responsibilities previously held by local authorities for adult and continuing education. It is responsible for funding, planning, securing and promoting post-16 education and training in Wales, except for higher education. It will also assume responsibility for funding post-16 provision in schools from April 2002. The National Council is consulting on its draft corporate strategy for the next ten years and reviewing its inherited programmes. Its proposed Corporate Strategy and Corporate Plan will be submitted to the Assembly for approval in January 2002.

Bilingualism has been identified as a crosscutting theme in the National Council's draft corporate strategy. The draft strategy recognises the call for increased demand and improved opportunities for bilingual learning post-16 and a commitment to work with partners to better understand the patterns of demand and sustainable balance between demand and supply.

The Higher Education Council is responsible for the funding of Wales' higher education institutions, including teaching; research and 'third mission' outreach work, and higher education provision in further education colleges. The Higher Education Council has submitted evidence to the review of higher education in Wales being carried out by the National Assembly's Education and Lifelong Learning Committee, in which Welsh medium provision has been discussed. Other individuals and organisations have also given evidence on this subject.

The final report of the review may therefore include recommendations which have a bearing on Welsh medium provision in higher education.

The Higher Education Council has, in recent years, fundamentally reviewed its policies in relation to Welsh medium provision in higher education resulting in the introduction of new policies in 2000/01. These focus on encouraging institutions to plan their Welsh medium provision strategically and on developing collaboration and networking in the sector, as well as providing substantial funding in support of these aims. Although the outcome of these new approaches will take some time to feed through into increased Welsh medium enrolments, progress to date is encouraging.

The two Councils have identified bilingualism, and language learning more generally, as an area where they can work together in terms of progression, resources and technology.

The Councils are also preparing a joint Welsh Language Scheme, as required under the Welsh Language Act 1993.

It is anticipated that the Higher Education Council and the National Council will be invited to give evidence to the forthcoming review of the Welsh language by the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee. This review can also be expected to impact on the development of ELWa's policies in this area.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Higher Education Council and the National Council (by virtue of its inheritance from the former FEFCW) have policies to support the expansion of Welsh medium opportunities in the further and higher education sectors. (See Annex 1).

As part of the consultation process on the National Council's draft corporate strategy, a Welsh Medium and Bilingual Learning Focus Group was convened on 7/8 November 2001 to comment on past and present activity and to generate ideas for future developments. The Focus Group's assessment of the overall position can be briefly summarised as: schools are making progress, in further education only a small percentage of assessments are through the medium of Welsh (figures are presented at Annex A), and in work based training there is little formal Welsh medium or bilingual provision. It is from this inheritance that the National Council moves forward.

The remainder of this paper draws on the work of the Focus Group, which considered primarily the National Council's work in this field, but also took account of relevant issues in higher education, and made recommendations about future direction. It is anticipated, subject to National Council approval, that some of the changes to policy will be realised and resourced through the new

national funding system, which will be implemented in 2003. In the interim, it is the National Council's intention to implement pilot projects to test how more effectively to use funds to achieve better learning opportunities. Bilingual and Welsh medium learning will be considered during this phase.

## **THE FOCUS GROUP**

The focus group, consisting of 22 invited representatives, (see Annex 2), plus ELWa staff, was chaired by Dr. Haydn Edwards, Principal, Coleg Menai and National Council member and the facilitator was Prof. Colin H. Williams of Cardiff University.<sup>3</sup>

The declared aim of the National Council - ELWa's emerging strategy is "to increase the number of people who achieve fluency in Welsh and then go on to use it as the medium for learning activities or work place activities" (NC - ELWa, 2001b).

Five key elements of the strategy to transform the demand for Welsh medium learning were identified prior to the deliberations of the focus group. Namely:

- Individuals and communities
- The workplace environment
- Those progressing from Welsh for Adults classes and from Welsh medium schools
- Those who wish to pursue Welsh medium vocational qualifications
- The broad area of lifelong learning.

### **Aims and Objectives of the Focus Group**

1. To understand the current and latent demand and future outlook for Welsh medium learning.
2. To develop strategies to enable the National Council to increase demand at all levels of Welsh medium education and training, and to develop strategies to help develop the supply base.
3. To consider what the priority areas are for action and public investment.
4. To debate the role of the National Council-ELWa and the role of its partners.
5. To identify the implications of 'bilingualism' for learning and teaching.
6. To consider how bilingualism may be embedded as a crosscutting theme across the National Council's activities.

### **The structure of activities and presentations.**

---

<sup>3</sup> In the author's judgement this was both a representative and an influential body of opinion gathered to inform ELWa's strategy. The major absentees were representatives from the Careers Service, the Trade Unions and obviously directly-elected political representatives.

A standard format was adopted for both days, namely a setting of the key issues to be addressed, followed by a series of presentations and open debate and the disbursements of delegates into small-group discussions, which were reported upon in plenary sessions. Throughout the deliberations the chair and facilitator encouraged a 'full and frank' discussion of the challenges, opportunities and failings within the current system as perceived by delegates. In the main this report summarises the key contributions made by the delegates, including the views and opinions of the facilitator who steered some of the discussion to issues which he believed should most pre-occupy the National Council in its current strategic review.

## **Day One: Demand Side Issues**

### **Session 1**

In opening the proceedings both the chair and facilitator emphasised that this was a unique opportunity for delegates to have a direct impact on the formulation of the National Council's thinking and policy development. The first day was dedicated to demand side issues and in the first session three presentations were made

Hywel Evans, Menter a Busnes, summarised the logical difficulties which follow if Welsh language needs and bilingualism are considered in a vacuum. Thus there was an acute need to ensure that the Welsh language and bilingualism both coloured all National Council activities and prompted the development of new, more innovative activities. The challenge for the Council is to plant and root Welsh and bilingual issues into all aspects of its work by ensuring this element is a necessary consideration in all situations-to be delivered in the most appropriate ways. Also experience in other parts of the economic development agenda highlights the need for a specific vehicle to assist in developing new techniques for the mainstream to deliver. Such an instrument, while being integrated with the rest of the sector. could also act as a catalyst for converting radical ideas into reality. In common with several other delegates, Hywel Evans, was exercised by the question of how to assess demand. He illustrated the methodological difficulties in measuring demand, by reference to several studies. For example, the original Future Skills Wales review of the likely skills needs of employers rated Welsh language skills near the bottom of the list of priorities, with communication skills at the top. In contrast a Menter a Busnes programme (Gorwelion)<sup>4</sup> showed a completely different picture. Why the stark contrast? The first investigation relied on a paper/postal questionnaire with items related to Welsh separated from Communication issues. The second adopted a contextual approach involving face to face discussions with employees in the light of their

---

<sup>4</sup> Already some of Menter a Busnes experience has been useful to non-Welsh speaking or bilingual situations. *Cwys* (the farming families programme) is now being used more generally in rural areas. The *Gorwelion* (career horizons) programme's Jobs Directories have been adopted by several Careers Companies as a useful general tool. The approach to developing entrepreneurship has been useful in developing the Entrepreneurship Action Plan for Wales. For further information see [www.menterabusnes.com](http://www.menterabusnes.com)

overall needs for the future. The Menter a Busnes research (based on 734 face to face interviews with employers) showed that 65% would like staff with bilingual skills (44% in manufacturing, 75% in services, 66% retail, and 66% tourism). The presentation concluded with a warning that 'demand' based policy considerations should be treated with caution and that the larger picture of the relationship between the language and the economy should be investigated further.

The second presentation, by Dafydd Iwan, Cwmni Sain and Regional Member of the National Council -ELWa, provided an employer's perspective. He welcomed the involvement of business people and entrepreneurs within the former TEC system but added that the creation of the National Council was of monumental significance and that the opportunity to realise the bilingual skills advantage should not be missed. Seven issues deserved attention, namely: 1) the normalisation of Welsh in an optimum number of institutions and contexts; 2) to maintain stability in Welsh-medium provision, especially at primary school level; 3) to improve the range of teaching materials and resources; 4) to equip assessment agencies with appropriate measurement and evaluation arrangements; 5) to provide language awareness and skills enhancement courses to raise confidence levels; 6) terminological issues, especially in relation to craft industries, manufacturing and specialist businesses; 7) to influence general attitudes so as to appreciate the advantages of bilingual skills acquisition.

The key element in any strategy is the normalisation of bilingualism in the workplace, so that issues related to Welsh and English are not seen as problematic, especially within the context of long-established bilingual communities. All communities in Wales are bilingual, the vast majority of whom have English as a predominant means of communication, but with a significant number of communities which have Welsh as a first language. Given the wide range of contexts wherein Welsh is used in many parts of the nation, it is imperative that the National Council normalise its own expectations as to how Welsh and English are to be promoted through the education system. Over-reliance on suspect demand-led training will not bring about the necessary investment in the system. The Council needs to demonstrate a leadership role in committing itself to the necessary level of resource expenditure so that the real needs of a bilingual workforce can be met. Many companies do not adopt a self-conscious language policy based on anticipated or projected demand; they just operate in a bilingual fashion. Evidence was presented of a wide range of such contexts. Consequently the Council has a golden opportunity, through its strategy to influence and shape the economic and language skills base of society. But this should be done through conviction, not through a demand-led formula for that will always fall short of the real requirements of the economy, given the predominance of English. It is also imperative that we take the opportunity now to create a logical order out of the inherited disorder, which characterises bilingual provision within this part of the education system.

The third presentation, by Kathryn Jones of Cwmni Iaith, dealt with five issues; namely 1) Welsh as a language of and for business; 2) the demand by employers for bilingual skills; 3) the National Council's current provision; 4) the implications of such provision in terms of training capacities; 5) the results of recent research on the role of Welsh in the workplace based on a sample of 126 businesses in North and Mid Wales.

The general conclusions from her analysis were that employers currently utilised the oral rather than the written bilingual skills of their workforce. Employers faced real difficulties in training specialist bilinguals themselves and would welcome a greater emphasis on bilingual communicative skills in the national curriculum. There was a great deal of potential to increase current levels of demand for bilingual employees. There was a conviction that post-16 training should incorporate a larger element of bilingual communicative skills element. There was an acute need for internal staff development within the majority of the companies. Four implications for the National Council's strategy were raised: 1) increased language skills training provision; 2) significant need for data-bases to be created; 3) the creation of an entrepreneurial element within National Council training; 4) urgent need to develop the Council's own language policy and planning.

In terms of bilingual training, it was noted that the National Council did not have a definition of what bilingual training involved in terms of implementing or resourcing courses. Neither did it have an accurate picture of the overall needs of the sectors, as the current reliance on inadequate methods of data collection, rendered the National Council vulnerable to mis-reading the potential for bilingual skills acquisition in specific employment domains. This difficulty is compounded by a number of structural weaknesses in the current provision of Welsh-medium vocational courses. For example, there is:

- A lack of targeted finance to innovate and develop new courses.
- A lack of resources in general and specifically a reticence by the National Council to inject additional finance into this part of the provision.
- A lack of trainers and assessors who are fluent in Welsh.
- A perceived lack of demand for Welsh-medium training in several sectors.

A lively discussion ensued. Participants emphasised the following points:

- There is a need to remedy the historical lack of commitment and subsequent investment in bilingual skills training.
- There is a need for accurate, annual, time-series data on all aspects of the National Council's involvement in this sector.
- The Council needs to make itself more open to the possibilities of its crucial role in developing bilingual training policies. This is both an internal staff development and language awareness issue and an external language policy issue.

- While recognising the salience of demand as a factor, one should not adopt a strategy based solely upon demand-led considerations. The National Council occupies a strategic position to influence the economic base of society by leading from the front and creating a more flexible bilingual workforce.
- There is a danger that if the Council itself is not convinced of the value of bilingual training it will miss several opportunities to main-stream bilingualism within its policy and planning deliberations.
- Consequently several contributors questioned to what extent the staff inherited by the National Council from its prior manifestations were committed and capable of delivering the necessary innovative policies currently emanating from the focus group and other discussions within the profession. Several suggestions were made that the Council needed to deploy committed staff to realise its ambition of creating a skilled workforce able to take advantage of the increased bilingual opportunities in society
- Consideration needs to be given to forward planning over the medium-to-long term. Currently fewer and fewer opportunities are available to exploit the assumed demand for bilingual specialists in most economic domains.
- Careers officers need to be given more directed advice and training on how to encourage youngsters to take advantage of their bilingual skills when entering the marketplace.
- The Council would need to adopt a robust attitude in seeking to secure adequate finances to implement its developing strategy.
- All of the National Council's regional committees committed themselves to a vigorous and effective campaign to influence decision-makers of the need for adequate funding and vigorous leadership.

## **Session 2**

Meirion Prys Jones, Head of Education and Leader of the Language Planning Team, the Welsh Language Board, outlined the Board's statutory strategic overview role for bilingual education. He welcomed the positive commitment which the National Council, the Higher Education Council and their partners were displaying, but warned of the difficulties in achieving the stated goal. He reminded the audience that by March 2002 all local authorities would have secured a degree of bilingual education provision, yet after 16 years of activity many of the original goals which were set for the bilingual education sector were as elusive as ever.

Since 1993 the involvement of the Further Education Funding Council and the TECs in the provision of bilingual skills training had been a relative failure. Consequently there was little of lasting worth which the National Council could build upon. External, independent research carried out by University of Wales, Bangor, together with a recent Estyn report, had demonstrated that the lack of sustained growth in the sector under review by the focus group, was due to a fragmented structure and above all by a lack of central leadership and control. This was a real cause for concern as all the early signs suggested that the National Council was carrying on in the same mould. The current review of

National Council strategy was a welcome sign of a more radical, innovative approach, but would have to be delivered by a committed secretariat and policy-implementation team.

Current thinking about these issues was incomplete, and the existing orthodoxy in documentation, such as that found in 'Future Skills Wales', was inadequate. The National Council's development of provision, based as it is on demand-led supply, is likely to create a fundamental problem as funding is formula-driven. Given the inadequate forward planning no real impact will be made on the system. Occasional and periodic expenditure, such as that experienced by Coleg Menai and Coleg Meirion, needs to be rooted within the system as a permanent commitment so that the formulas devised can be realised over the long term. He asked who will train the providers? Who will prepare the teaching resources in a coherent and co-ordinated manner? There is a lack of top-down strategic planning and investment. For example, in 1993, under the provisions of Section 21 of the 1980 Act, £100,000 was granted to Further Education needs in this sector. The current allocation this year is also £100,000. There has been no commitment to increased investment, let alone expenditure, in this field.

Similarly the Welsh for Adults sector is fragmented with eight consortia and no central planning or co-ordination. Wales was compared with the situation in the Basque Country, which had a far more favourable level of investment, even if the numbers receiving vocational language training were roughly comparable.

The logical implication of such a deficit in Wales was that we were not committed to realising the stated aim of developing a bilingual workforce.

One vital innovation would be the establishment of a Resource Centre for Teaching Welsh to Adults. A powerful message would emanate from this distinguished gathering if we were to call for the establishment of such a Resource Centre. Similarly the establishment of a Post 16 Education Centre would revolutionise the situation. It would have a remit to develop policy, engage in training methods, prepare materials and resources, and conduct a marketing campaign for Welsh in the workplace. All of these are practical, realisable goals meeting real needs. Such centres could call on the participation of experienced practitioners and would represent a powerhouse in this field of bilingual education, able to advance the interests of a bilingual workforce in a fundamental manner.

The second presentation, by Clifford Davies of Powys County Council, focused on Welsh in a comparative, international context. In his overview of the gaps in the education and training system he identified six factors; 1) no core schemes to raise awareness of the linguistic pattern and opportunities at each level - local, Wales, European region; 2) over emphasis on subjects killing core courses and enabling some people to push Welsh into a corner; 3) the lack of core courses on methodology and skills to prepare for the bilingual and multilingual workplace and

society; 4) there is no regular linguistic audit on the linguistic profile of establishments or communities, all we have are the various processes of collecting statistics on numbers and standards in Welsh as an academic subject; 5) the process has started of monitoring continuity in the study of Welsh as a first language but there is no serious study of the movement from second language to first language level; 6) the links between individual establishments with establishments in other European regions follow the lines of French, German and Spanish without studying minority-majority bilingualism in the workplace and community. The Basque experience was cited again in terms of emulating their very detailed language-use evaluation and measurement of children in both a school and home context.

Turning to needs, the speaker emphasised that finance must be invested in a clear framework of core courses for students, work experience, the exchange of ideas between European regions in order to ensure language and enterprise targets. There should be no financing without clear and definite targets.

Six areas within local authority practice were singled out for special attention and additional investment.

1. A core course of language awareness and enterprise - 7, 11, 14-16, 6<sup>th</sup> Form and FE- for everyone.
2. A Learning Development Plan in every secondary catchment in Wales with regular linguistic audits to measure children's competence levels.
3. The work experience of every student should incorporate elements of language skill training and consideration of the tensions engendered by working in a language minority/language majority interface.
4. Greater international, comparative perspectives should be introduced into the county's bilingual working practices. For example, an annual framework for lesser-used languages regional links could be initiated through bodies such as CAER (Education Society of the European Regions) and greater exchange of ideas and students could be initiated in the field of economic enterprise.
5. Language awareness and bilingual skills training courses should be made available for the following a) heads/managers; b) trainers; c) advisers; d) administrators; e) ancillary staff; f) parents.

The ensuing discussion focused on the following considerations.

- That any proposed Resource Centre should bring together or harmonise with current developments within the higher education sector.
- That the National Council should face up to a structural impasse in that c80% of its resources is committed to the statutory educational sector whereas 80% of its deficiencies and problems are in training for the workplace.
- Careful reading of the contrasting documents, 'The National Council - ELWa's Draft Corporate Strategy' (NC - ELWa, 2001) and 'The Learning Country' (NAfW, 2001) suggest that there is very little inter-digitation or mutual

recognition of each other's priorities evidenced by either the National Council or the National Assembly. For example, while the 'Learning Country' makes reference to such issues as life-long education, wrap-around childcare considerations, specific bilingual/Welsh-medium training and Welsh for Adults priorities, the National Council strategy does not make reference to any of these considerations. When the National Council document does make reference to bilingualism (one specific statement of commitment to work with partners to respond to the increasing requirements for bilingualism in the public and private sectors on page 38), no mention is made of investment, prioritisation or planning. Neither does the document profile the needs of Welsh-speaking communities, or offer Welsh as a desirable skill either in terms of general education or workplace training. Finally lack of clear aims, targets and investment, militate against the declared commitment of the National Council (as the documents currently stand) of serving the needs of all in Wales. This will necessitate setting specific targets to monitor developments in Welsh-medium and bilingual post-16 education and training, including Welsh for Adults, as well as contributing to the NafW's own published targets for increasing the numbers of Welsh speakers. This lack of correspondence between NafW thinking and National Council thinking is a serious political, let alone, educational policy weakness and should be addressed in the forthcoming strategy review.

- The Welsh for Adults sector has witnessed considerable growth in some centres. For example, the Welsh for Adults Teaching Centre within the Department of Welsh at Cardiff University has witnessed a 92% growth of successful student throughput in the past six years. Nevertheless there is still considerable unease within the sector nationally as a result of student drop-out rates, the inability of some centres to mount tailor-made courses for the workplace, the relatively poorer resource allocation given to 'Welsh for Adults' in comparison with 'English for Adults', the relative lack of professionalisation of the adult tutor career structure, the lack of central direction and planning, and the difficulty of maintaining a demand-led course in the more specialised occupations and professions.
- The lack of continuity and throughput at successive levels for bilinguals in the education system;
- The weakness of data collection procedures which militated against accurate planning.
- There is no audit of the linguistic characteristic of major institutions,
- No follow up language fluency or competence-building classes for first-language Welsh speakers within the local authority sector.
- No specific teaching/training mechanisms to enable second-language speakers to 'cross the bridge' and perform as first-language speakers.

### **Report of the break-out groups**

Three clusters of questions were set as pointers for intense discussion.

1. What are the key characteristics of current and latent demand and future prospects for Welsh-medium and bilingual learning? What are the gaps in our knowledge? What are our misconceptions/assumptions and blind spots?
2. In view of the limited resources, where are our relative priorities for raising and stimulating demand, for example, Workplace Welsh or a broader cultural emphasis?
3. What are the strategies and practical policies necessary to stimulate demand for learning Welsh and for learning through the medium of Welsh, and to meet new expectations as they arise?

The three group discussions are summarised below in a thematic fashion.

- The initial concern was that although the National Council may now be asking some of the right questions, it had shown little prior consideration to placing bilingual concerns at the heart of its mission statements and strategy.
- Basing future provision on current modes of measuring demand would be damaging, a far more sensitive and accurate method of investigating need, provision, take up and quality of provision were all necessary prerequisites of offering a bilingual service.
- If the National Council were only committed to emphasising the educational and linguistic aspects of Welsh, it would lose the opportunity to reinforce the status and utility value of the language within society and the economy.
- The National Council's role is to direct, steer and influence the bilingual policies of its partner educational agencies and institutions.
- It is essential that detailed planning be undertaken by the National Council to provide and promote bilingual training.
- It is essential that targets be related to performance indicators and to finance, if the system is to be operated effectively at a national level.
- The potential to re-train or promote the bilingual skill levels of current trainers merits serious consideration.
- There is a need for greater specification of the type of educational data needed and an urgent requirement for 'joined-up' analysis of the trends revealed by current data.
- Overall strategic and systemic planning is required rather than the reactive, piecemeal and fragmented approach which dominates.
- There was a firm consensus that a National Resource Centre be established. But there were also several different variants as to what this constitutes and who should be responsible for its financing and policy direction. (See the discussion below pp.11 and 12).
- A Language Planning Centre/Department should be established as a partnership venture between the NAFW, the WLB and academic specialists and practitioners.
- There is great merit in having a standing body of experts, such as those gathered together for this consultation process, to maintain a permanent dialogue, to inform and to advise the National Council in this field.

### Session 3

Two further presentations were made in the evening session.

Anne Keane, Estyn, welcomed the opportunity which the strategic review provided to harmonise both the National Council's and the NAFW's rather different visions for education in Wales. The prime need was to engage in a comprehensive marketing campaign to 'sell' the advantages of being bilingual. Three specific pleas were made in terms of future needs: -

1. to construct a comprehensive statistical data base, one of whose requirements would include a longitudinal Individual Student Record file, tracking options and attainment levels in education.
2. to invest significant amounts both in the training sector for deliverers of various courses and in the necessary teaching materials and resources. There is an acute need for a Virtual Centre and participants would do well to heed the lessons from Learn Direct as a model.
3. to consider a range of language skills for although bilingualism is certainly an essential skill to be developed, so are the advantages to be gained from proficiency in other Modern Languages, which should also be emphasised in the current strategic planning review.

Cefin Campbell, Mentrau Iaith Cymru, reported that the initial general perceptions of the National Council as a new body were largely negative. Need rather than demand was a better way to measure the current strategic innovations as so little of current provision is actually related to experience in the bilingual workplace. There is a lack of precision when we come to defining Welsh-medium training, are we not really talking about bilingual skills development in both English and Welsh? If we are, then there is an acute need to move beyond the preoccupation with Adult Welsh Learners, significant though they may be, and also focus on improving the communication skills of native Welsh speakers, many of whom lack confidence in using their language in new contexts. The idea of language awareness courses for non Welsh-speaking managers is excellent, as so often they have little real understanding of the implications of their actions in socio-linguistic terms. A great step forward would be the establishment of a National Resource Centre, as called for by Williams and Evas in 1997.<sup>5</sup> This would not only contain examples of good practice, but would also provide us with arguments and data to convince doubters within the system of the value of acquiring bilingual competence. If a group of experienced practitioners could be associated with such a Resource Centre, then its key role in influencing social values and especially the role of trainers would be enhanced significantly. There is a real danger that if the recommendations of this Focus Group were not given serious consideration, then the National Council would be seen as a reactive rather than an innovative body. We need now to anticipate what our

---

<sup>5</sup> Colin H. Williams and J.C.Evas, (1997) The Community Research Project, The Welsh Language Board, Cardiff.

requirements would be for the next 10-15 years and plan accordingly. If we can accomplish this it will have been a very positive initiative on the National Council's part to call together this experienced body of practitioners.

## **Day Two: Supply Side Issues.**

### **Session 1**

Arwel George, Head of Ysgol Penweddig and also representing CYDAG, presented statistical evidence related to the growth and activities of Welsh-medium schools. The salient features were that 37 Welsh-medium High schools maintained a Sixth Form (out of a total of 167 High Schools); that in the year 2000, Welsh medium candidates were registered in 27 (out of 33) Advanced level subjects offered by the WJEC; that Mathematics and Science are increasingly taught either through Welsh or in a bilingual mode; that schools continue to review their policy on language of instruction and that Welsh is gaining ground as a medium; given that a decade has elapsed since Welsh was taught to all children in Wales the key question now is what specific provision is made by each and every school to build upon this bilingual foundation? There is a real danger that without strong leadership and direction, the gains made in the lower years of formal education will be lost in the upper years because of a lack of continuity. This is compounded by the relative lack of younger teachers coming into the profession and the preponderance of colleagues aged 50+. The development of bilingualism in all sectors of education would both strengthen our identity and build up our often linguistically fragmented communities.

The second presentation, by Merfyn Morgan, ACCAC, revolved around a series of key questions, the answers to which revealed how fragmented were the structural bases of the provision of NVQs through the medium of Welsh. His first concern was to define the operational term 'Welsh medium' provision, as currently the term incorporated those courses which were conducted entirely in Welsh as well as those in which only some Welsh was used. Very few candidates complete their NVQs entirely through the medium of Welsh; in the majority of cases some of the portfolio evidence and the oral work is in Welsh with the written work produced mainly in English.

Similarly he queried how robust were our evaluations and instruments for measuring Welsh medium proficiency, especially in the higher levels, as the number of candidates were so few. A fundamental organisational issue related to the provision and evaluation of courses.

- Which and how many NVQs were currently on offer? A rough answer was in excess of 800, while there were 3000 possible qualifications related to training for the workplace.

- Which were the major awarding bodies and how many were there? Again, lack of accurate data prevented a comprehensive analysis, but it was certain that there were at least 168 awarding bodies.
- Who provides the training and assessment? An admixture of colleges, training providers, employers and 19 high schools provide the training at present.

Given this fragmentation, what are the key issues to consider? The speaker suggested three:

1. offer and publicise Welsh-medium provision;
2. respond to demand?
3. priority areas.

It was not clear whether or not any of these issues were currently being addressed.

Staffing issues also merited serious cause for concern. What were the appropriate qualifications required of trainers? There was a clear message to the Awarding Bodies that they needed to initiate more appropriate qualification targets. What was the relationship between providers and the Awarding Bodies? How did assessors and external verifiers inter-relate in terms of promoting Welsh-medium provision? Should there not be a deliberate recruiting policy to enhance the capacity of the system to staff Welsh-medium courses? Relevant training considerations were discussed in relation to the FENTO suite of standards/qualifications, and it was asked how realistic would it be to expect providers to collaborate in a more integrated manner given the commercial implications of co-operation versus competition. Two other issues were raised. First the lack of Welsh-medium/bilingual materials in relation to occupational standards, learning/training materials, together with a general lack of information and guidance. Positive steps had been made in relation to the development of Modern Languages and Asian languages taught in the UK, but in Wales the convention should have been to develop bilingual materials onto which the other languages could have been grafted, rather than the other way around as is the case. The speaker queried what the likely levels of available funding would be to remedy the weaknesses in the system. This is especially pertinent if the funding bodies are to launch a specific campaign to prepare much needed NVQ provision through the medium of Welsh. The presentation ended on a note of caution. Although practitioners had a reasonable idea of the state of play in this sector, a lack of accurate data on the use of the training/qualifications in work-related experience, coupled with fragmented data pertaining to post-registration experiences, militated against confident forecasting of future trends.

The third presentation, by Liz Saville of Sgiliaith, dealt with the question as to how bilingualism could become the norm in the post-16 sector? Starting from a current analysis of provision, which was meagre and fragmented, the speaker suggested that with purposeful planning, investment and firm leadership, the inherent bilingual potential of the post-16 sector could be realised. References

were made to the desirability of this aim by citing supporting documentary evidence from Jane Davison's recent policy pronouncements, NAFW advisory papers, previous statements and documents released by the National Council, together with Equal Opportunity norms for bilingual training and accreditation. The foundation for such expectations had already been laid in legislation, the Education Act of 1988, the Welsh Language Act of 1993, and consequently the national curriculum was charged with the responsibility of introducing Welsh into the educational experience of each and every child. These advances could be put in jeopardy were not a similar commitment made within the post-16 sector. Now was the opportunity for the National Council and ESTYN to adopt innovative, radical policies to build upon these foundations.

Four relevant considerations were cited in developing bilingual skills for the workplace, namely:

1. Bilingual/Welsh-medium teaching materials;
2. The training for teachers/lecturers/trainers;
3. The network of external support; and
4. The finance mechanism which would promote development and excellence.

The presentation concluded with three important messages for the National Council in terms of realising the benefits of bilingualism: -

- Ensure the continuity of bilingual skills
- Clarify the status of bilingualism as a cross-cutting theme
- Be daring in the creation of a new funding mechanism for bilingualism.

The fourth presentation, by Einir Wyn Thomas, Welsh for Adults Development Officer of the Welsh Language Board, dealt with the Welsh for Adults sector, which is funded by the National Council-ELWa. The national provision is organised by eight Welsh for Adults consortia, while development work is undertaken in the Welsh Language Board and in the WJEC. Current funding amounts to £3.1 million per annum, with weighting of 1.25, comprised of weighting of 1.0 for provision, 0.2 for development and 0.05 for the consortia. This compares unfavourably with the weighting allocation for ESOL which stands at 1.5. This inconsistency should be addressed as a matter of urgency. Turning to numbers, there has been a consistent and significant growth in WfA enrolments, up from 15,894 in 1995/6 to 21,011 in 2000/01. Much of this growth has been in the Welsh in the Workplace sector which is the fastest growing area, and one in which all sectors, public and private, have shown an interest. Illustration of such diverse growth is provided by the example of Gwent College, which offers 55 courses in the workplace, while the National Language Centre and ACEN provide training for 1500. External support for these activities has also been secured, for example the European Social Fund has supported the work of Swansea University, Powys County Council and CYMAD.

Current development work is funded by the National Council-ELWa, which allocates £100,00 to support the activities of a Development Officer (35k), an

Examination Officer and the ALTE Project (50k) and current examination provision in the WJEC (15k). However, because of lack of investment the field is shrinking. Between 1995-98 the former Further Education Funding Council allocated £600,000 to the field in order to develop provision and resources. In stark contrast to this brief period of adequate funding, the current marginalisation of the field means that there is no funding available for the development of teaching and learning materials to support the 700 part-time tutors. International comparisons suggest how invidious is the situation in Wales. Thus for example, both Wales and the Basque Country, are similar in terms of total population and the proportions speaking Welsh/Basque. However, HABE receives 21-25 millions Euros per annum to fund the Basque provision, development work and training.<sup>6</sup> In the Basque Country there are 40,064 students taught by 1,837 tutors in 140 centres. If Wales is to come anywhere close to matching this level of commitment The National Council and others need to address four issues:

1. To invest in the WfA provision if a bilingual nation is to be created
2. Revise the funding methodology and increase the WfA weighting to 1.5
3. Establish a centre which will have a strategic overview responsibility and undertake the development work
4. Recognise that significant investment is required if the targets set by the NAFW are to be met.

### **Report of discussion in break-out groups.**

The following key questions related to phase and progression were posed to the participants.

1. What are the main obstacles to progression between compulsory school phases, post-16 and adult learning?
2. Where is our information on progression incomplete and how should we rectify this in a timely way?
3. Where are we failing?
4. Is supply meeting (i) current demand (ii) latent demand?
5. To ensure success, what should we do from now on, and when?
6. How do we plan enhancements in provision within an achievable timetable?
7. What strategies are required for the more effective training of trainers?
8. How do we develop effective self-help and mentoring?

Again the deliberations of the participants are presented in a thematic fashion.

---

<sup>6</sup> For details see N.Gardner, M. Puigdevall i Serralvo and C.H. Williams, 'Language Revitalization in Comparative Context: Ireland, the Basque Country and Catalonia,' in C.H. Williams (ed.), *Language Revitalization: Policy and Planning in Wales*, University of Wales Press: Cardiff, 2000, pp. 311-61. See also Zalbide, M. 'Normalización lingüística y escolaridad: Un informe desde la sala de máquinas'. *Revista Internacional de los Estudios Vascos*, 1999, 43, 2, pp. 355-424. For educational and other data visit the website of Eustat the Basque government's statistics organisation at [www.eustat.es](http://www.eustat.es)

- In order to maintain continuity of bilingual education provision it was essential that a more structured and informed relationship be developed between the various institutions at successive levels in the hierarchy.
- A national framework is needed to map out the needs and levels of provision for bilingual training.
- While it is recognised that many Welsh learners participate in the post-16 sector it is also true to note that many of those so engaged, have a very low level of competence in Welsh. Strategies are needed to augment the compulsory school competence levels.
- Because of their relative lack of confidence and maturity it is vital that the 16-18 age group be differentiated in all courses from their adult learner colleagues.
- In similar fashion there are very few opportunities provided to improve the Welsh-medium proficiency of first-language speakers who may need additional language as well as communication skills training in order to operate within specialist domains.
- Whilst recognising that substantial investment and central strategic direction are required, some disquiet was expressed that we may already be losing several significant gains made in and through the system because of a lack of recent leadership.
- One of the National Council's responsibilities could be to make sustained efforts to convince potential employers of the inherent value of bilingualism and possibly multilingualism also. As with all National Council marketing campaigns this should be done in a fairly direct manner through a 'package' of messages stressing the social and economic value of bilingual skills.
- Some participants believed that place-specific and region-specific modules are likely to better meet the needs of the workplace rather than generic courses.
- Those representing schools in south-east Wales expressed the desire that the National Council promote regional partnerships and bilingual networks in that region, as the current environment within Further Education Colleges in the region was unable to reflect a 'Welsh cultural context'.
- All participants agreed that a major investment in bilingual software and IT could help boost many of the current failings without of course being a substitute for investment and training of skilled trainers and educators,
- It was clearly the National Council's responsibility to provide firm and creative leadership in this field. It could only do so by adopting bilingualism as a core value itself and by pressing for a significant investment in all the elements hitherto discussed. The groups, however, recognised the need to prioritise and have medium-term and long-term goals and were anxious to be involved in this process as an advisory body, a semi-formal 'think-tank' informing the Council's deliberations.

## **Session 2**

Cen Williams, representing the University of Wales Welsh Medium Teaching Unit, made the final presentation on the supply side issues. He provided an analysis of the structural weaknesses of the present arrangements, arguing that there was lack of suitable staff, resources, confidence, non-viable groups and an uncertainty as to whether colleagues were engaged essentially in Welsh medium or bilingual teaching; the distinction and pedagogical implications being often blurred. Given the lack of coherence and integrated planning between the pre- and post-16 education a vicious circle had been created whereby there were not enough FE and HE Welsh medium courses. This in turn had a down turn effect on numbers and on the default choice of English rather than Welsh as the medium of instruction. Some attempts had been made to respond to the increased requests for Welsh medium instruction, but the funding requirements militated against long-term provision as numbers could not be guaranteed year in year out. Means of accelerating an individual's bilingual competence could be sought through offering bilingual elements in otherwise unilingual courses. This, however, required institutional planning as regards staff deployment and professional development. Hitherto little co-operative action at an inter-institutional level had been achieved. In the south-east, for example, where the growth in the bilingual schools had been significant, there is an acute need for regional planning of courses, resources and inter-institutional co-operation. All of the above structural deficiencies would be alleviated somewhat by a national planning strategy for the post-16 sector which would help institutions formulate language plans and avoid duplication of expertise and resources. The trigger for this reform would be the establishment of a National Centre for Welsh Medium Teaching.

The University of Wales Board of Welsh Medium Studies have already made the case to the Minister for Education and Life Long Learning (NAfW), as part of the National Assembly's review of Higher Education, for the establishment of a national virtual centre in support of Welsh medium higher education, noting the potential to expand this to cover post-16 education and training as a whole. A detailed and comprehensive documentation of the need for, and likely structure of, such a centre accompanied this current presentation. (See Annex 3) Its justification is that the centre would provide the level of expertise and commitment to transform a hitherto small scale and fragmented bilingual provision. The centre is a response to the growing demand for higher level courses from the former and current students of bilingual high schools and from colleges. The centre would have two sections, a department that would service the academic needs of the constituent colleges and a department devoted to policy and strategy. Within ten years it is anticipated that such a centre would allow a significant measure of choice to applicants within the University sector. The centre would be a tangible manifestation of a more radical and committed attitude on behalf of education decision-makers to serving the needs of university-level bilingual students. Above all, given sufficient adequate funding, it would provide the long-needed central resource infra-structure, to sustain and

develop bilingual education provision so necessary if the goal of a bilingual society is to be realised.

The ensuing discussion warmly endorsed this initiative. Indeed the consensus was that this was an essential instrument for invigorating Welsh-medium provision as a whole. However, many participants raised questions such as whether this centre would/should be a single entity covering the whole range of post-16 bilingual education and training. What would the relationship be between this proposed centre and the National Council? Where in strategic and resource terms would it best fit? If the National Council were to be the principal funding agency for such a centre, it was essential that the Council also monitored the language plans of the respective educational institutions to see to what extent their mission statements were realised as fact in the promotion of institutional bilingualism. Would the Council be best placed to co-ordinate the strategic side of such developments and to use its political influence and power to generate the necessary resources and to fund other cognate developments outwith the University sector? If such a centre were established would there be a *prima facie* case for a National Language Planning Centre within the National Assembly to oversee the development of bilingualism in all aspects of government and service? This ties in with much of the current thinking by other agencies. Thus, for example, the Welsh Language Board has pressed the case for a virtual centre being run centrally by the National Council, with secondary regional sites established. Such a system could also serve as part of the NAFW's community planning agenda, and could also include a vital research remit into Welsh-medium provision, bilingualism and Welsh for Adults. This resource could work in conjunction with the Mentrau Iaith to map the needs of Welsh speakers in the workplace.<sup>7</sup> If such a cross-functional commitment were not made, then once again there could be a danger that the educational system would be asked to bear the burden of responsibility for language promotion and indeed the long-term survival of Welsh.

### **Closing remarks and commitments**

The chair, facilitator and National Council representatives thanked the participants for an engaging and dynamic set of sessions. The facilitator stressed that the key themes he identified had achieved a remarkable degree of consensus. These were: - innovation and fresh approaches, long term detailed data gathering and analysis, creative leadership, normalisation of bilingualism, committed planning, integrated and holistic perspectives on the role of education and training within society and the economy, marketing of bilingual and multilingual skills, harmonisation of ELWa strategy with NAFW policies. It was evident that the National Council had both the authority and the responsibility to make significant advances in the promotion of bilingual education and training. A

---

<sup>7</sup> See the document 54/4 'The Assembly's Review of the Welsh Language : Planning the Future of Welsh-Medium and Bilingual Lifelong Learning', Papers of the fifty-fourth meeting of the Welsh Language Board, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2001, (Welsh Language Board, Cardiff, pp.1-8).

firm commitment was given that key areas for policy development would be discussed at the earliest opportunity and, subject to National Council approval, several of the initiatives would be progressed within the next calendar year. In their turn the participants thanked the National Council for providing this opportunity to inform policy and left the Focus Group event with a keen sense of anticipation.

Note: While the Focus Group presentations and discussions were primarily in the context of the National Council and the education and training provision for which it was responsible, there were some points which were also relevant to the higher education sector and the Higher Education Council. There could be benefits in the two Councils working collaboratively to address these or in developing an “ELWa” approach or position on certain issues.

## **Acknowledgements**

The author is indebted to all the participants for their commitment and contributions. He is grateful to Sian Eleri Hughes, of the Welsh Language Board, who assisted in the recording of the open discussions and feed-back sessions. Ros Granger of ELWa was particularly helpful in providing documentation and evidence, as were all representatives of ELWa present in discussing the implications of proposed policy reforms.

## **References**

NC - ELWa (2001a) Draft Corporate Strategy, National Council-ELWa: Cardiff.

NC - ELWa (2001b) Welsh medium and bilingual learning focus group: briefing notes. ELWa: Cardiff.

Gardner, N. Puigdevall i Serralvo, M. and Williams, C.H. (2000), 'Language Revitalization in Comparative Context: Ireland, the Basque Country and Catalonia,' in C.H. Williams (ed.), Language Revitalization: Policy and Planning in Wales, University of Wales Press: Cardiff, pp. 311-61.

National Assembly for Wales (2001) The Learning Country, National Assembly for Wales, Cardiff.

Welsh Language Board (2001) Document 54/4 'The Assembly's Review of the Welsh Language: Planning the Future of Welsh-Medium and Bilingual Lifelong Learning', Papers of the fifty-fourth meeting of the Welsh Language Board, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2001, Welsh Language Board, Cardiff, pp.1-8.

Williams, C.H. and Evas, J.C. (1997) The Community Research Project, The Welsh Language Board, Cardiff.

Williams, C.H. (ed.), (2000) Language Revitalization: Policy and Planning in Wales, University of Wales Press, Cardiff.

Zalbide, M. 'Normalización lingüística y escolaridad:Un informe desde la sala de máquinas'. Revista Internacional de los Estudios Vascos, 1999, 43, 2, pp. 355-424.

## Annex 1

**Note: Annex 1 is not reproduced for the Focus Group report because the same information is presented in Annex 1 of the National Council's evidence.**

## Annex 2

**CYNGOR CENEDLAETHOL - ELWa  
Y GRWP FFOCWS DYSGU CYFRWNG CYMRAEG A DWYIEITHOG  
NATIONAL COUNCIL - ELWa  
WELSH MEDIUM AND BILINGUAL LEARNING FOCUS GROUP**

**7/8 TACHWEDD/NOVEMBER**

<b>ENW/NAME</b>	<b>CORFF/ORGANISATION</b>
Alison Allan	Cyngor Addysg Uwch - ELWa
Cefin Campbell	Mentrau Iaith Myrddin
Alun Charles	Estyn
Brian Clarke	Coleg Digidol Cymru
Clifford Davies	Cyngor Sir Powys
Helen Davies	DYSG
Haydn Edwards	Coleg Menai; Aelod – Cyngor Cenedlaethol – ELWa
Hywel Evans	Menter a Busnes
Marianne Evans	Cyngor Cenedlaethol - ELWa
Arwel George	Ysgol Penweddig/CYDAG
Ros Granger	Cyngor Cenedlaethol - ELWa
Ellis Griffiths	Ysgol Gwynllyw
Sian Eleri Hughes	Bwrdd yr Iaith Gymraeg
Dylan Iorwerth	Golwg
Dafydd Iwan	Sain/Cyngor Gwynedd
Grenville Jackson	Cyngor Cenedlaethol - ELWa
Ann Jenkins	Cyngor Cenedlaethol - ELWa
Kathryn Jones	Cwmni Iaith
Meirion Prys Jones	Bwrdd yr Iaith Gymraeg
Geraint Wyn Jones	Canolfan Bedwyr
Ann Keane	Estyn
Merfyn Morgan	ACCAC
Geraint Parry	Cyfle
Helen Prosser	Canolfan Dysgu Cymraeg, Prifysgol Caerdydd
Ian Rees	Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor

Elen Rhys  
Rhun ap Iwan  
Liz Saville  
David Lloyd Thomas  
Einir Wyn Thomas  
Sian Thomas  
Cen Williams

Colin Williams  
Martin Wright

Coleg Digidol Cymru  
Acen/Coleg Digidol  
Sgiliaith  
Cyngor Cenedlaethol - ELWa  
Bwrdd yr Iaith Gymraeg  
Fforwm Cymru Wledig  
Swyddog Datblygu Addysg Cyfrwng  
Cymraeg, Brifysgol Cymru  
Adran y Gymraeg, Prifysgol Caerdydd  
CYD