Report of Independent Review Panel on Bilingual Services

Recommendation	Suggested Response
1. We recommend that the National Assembly develops its bilingual communication with citizens of all ages who use social networking websites as a means of listening to voters, increasing openness of debate, and understanding the needs of the public who increasingly use such forums and exchanges. (paragraph 56)	1. This accords with the principles in our draft E-Democracy Strategy. We therefore welcome this recommendation which will be implemented once the Strategy has been approved.
2. We recommend that the National Assembly consider how the expected advancement of technology can enhance bilingualism in its operations through a more detailed and expert consultation. (paragraph 57)	2 & 3. We accept this recommendation and will form a small working group with ongoing responsibility for considering the advancement of technology to enhance bilingualism in our operations, multi-user voice recognition and we will consult with experts in this area.
3. We recommend that the Assembly keep technological developments under review, so as to take advantage of multi-user voice recognition software as soon as it is sufficiently developed to be used efficiently. (paragraph 60)	
4. We recommend that the verbatim text record of proceedings be published in the original language(s) spoken, together with a record of the contemporaneous translation from Welsh to English, as heard in the Chamber at the time. (paragraph 68)	4, 5, 6 & 7. Agree. These recommendations accord with our view that the development of other bilingual services would more effectively engage our customers.
5. We recommend that senedd.tv should become the principal comprehensive stored record for researchers and future historians. (paragraph 71)	Enhancing the Votes and Proceedings and committee minutes by developing a "Citizen's Cofnod" have the potential to increase engagement in democracy – one of our five strategic goals. A project is already being developed to increase engagement in this area.
6. We recommend that the "Votes and Proceedings" and committee minutes be developed into much more citizen-friendly bilingual facility that will, in turn, contribute more to open democracy. (paragraph 73)	

7. We recommend what we have called a fully bilingual "Citizens' Cofnod" – "Cofnod y Werin". It would contain a list of speakers, details of the decisions taken, and offer a politically neutral list of the issues debated and be available by the end of the following day. (paragraph 73)	
8. We recommend that archiving arrangements for the long term retention of Assembly records and public access to them, with the possible assistance of the National Library, be finalised at an early date. (paragraph 80)	8. We have previously undertaken some exploratory work on this. Following an internal audit report on records management, an Information Management Strategy is being developed. Subject to financial constraints, we will ensure that archiving arrangements form part of this strategy so that this recommendation can be implemented.
9. We recommend that research papers produced by the Members' Research Service (MRS) that are downloadable from the website (and all other documents produced by the Assembly) should be published in both languages simultaneously. (paragraph 82)	9, 10, 11, 12 & 13. To further develop the work we have commenced to provide enhanced bilingual services, we will put in place arrangements to ensure that:
10. We recommend that briefings for Members prior to plenary or committee discussion should be bilingual unless time constraints make it impractical. (paragraph 83)	• from now on, all research papers are published bilingually; • research briefings for committees or plenary are made available bilingually unless constraints make it impractical;
11. We recommend that suggested questions for the use of Welsh speaking Members in committee should be available in both languages to facilitate increased usage of Welsh by Members. (paragraph 83)	• at the very least, suggested questions included in such briefings, are available in both languages; • arrangements will be made to enable Member enquiries in Welsh to be dealt with in the same way and with the same speed as English language enquiries; and
12. We recommend that MRS should be resourced to enable it to respond promptly to Members' enquiries in Welsh and that this service should be promoted to	

counteract the current expectation among Members that material in Welsh will be delayed. (paragraph 84)	• relationships with the Translation and Reporting Service will be further enhanced.
13. We recommend that MRS works closer with the Translation and Reporting Service (TRS). (paragraph 84)	
14. We recommend that the voice recognition software used by the TRS should be immediately upgraded. We also believe greater efficiencies could be achieved by its wider use and therefore recommend more extensive use of voice recognition software when preparing transcripts of the Record. (paragraph 86)	14 & 15. We will upgrade the existing software and consider its wider use as noted in the Panel's report and in particular, to explore the potential of using the live simultaneous translation feed to be used as the base text for editing.
15. We recommend that the Commission, at the earliest opportunity, seeks assistance to enable the live simultaneous translation (Welsh to English) feed to be used as the base text for editing. (paragraph 87)	
16. We recommend that the Assembly work with the Welsh Language Board to further the development of Welsh language voice recognition software that could be of considerable assistance in the preparation of all bilingual documentation. (paragraph 88)	16. Agreed. We welcome the opportunity to continue working with the Welsh Language Board.
17. We recommend that all communications between the Assembly and the public should be in both languages except when responding to communications from individual members of the public or organisations when the response should be in the language of the communication received. (paragraph 90)	17. Agreed. The Panel has recognised that this is in line with current arrangements. However, there is a need to apply the same principle to press releases.
18. We recommend that the Assembly ensures that all departments have sufficient staff to enable them to deliver their services to the public and to Members in both English and Welsh	18. Agreed. Language plans are already in place to enhance the bilingual service. These will continue to be monitored and developed.

without being overly dependent on the TRS. (paragraph 91)	
19. We recommend that the Commission make improving the bilingual service provided by security staff a priority, both by training existing staff and recruitment when vacancies arise. (paragraph 92)	19. Agreed. This is an area that we recognised that we needed to develop and the issue of recruiting bilingual staff is addressed in the Security Service's language plan. We will ensure that arrangements are made to improve the bilingual service offered by the existing service.
20. We recommend that bilingual services should be promoted to counteract the current belief and expectation among some Members and Assembly staff that services cannot be provided in Welsh as promptly as in English. (paragraph 93)	20. Agreed. We will ensure that the promotion of our bilingual services is addressed.
21. We recommend that all members of staff should have or acquire some skills in the Welsh language. (paragraph 94)	21 & 22. Agreed. We will take these recommendations forward to ensure that all staff acquire some Welsh language skills and we will further develop our language awareness training.
22. We recommend that there should be more extensive and intensive language awareness training, particularly for new recruits, especially those recruited from outside Wales. (paragraph 95)	
23. We recommend that the Assembly carry out a benchmarking exercise by comparing itself to other Welsh organisations that, along with the Assembly, have the most fully developed bilingual services. (paragraph 96)	23. Agreed. We work with a number of other organisations and developing relationships with other bilingual organisations and undertaking a benchmarking exercise would be good practice.
24. We recommend that there be a thorough re-analysis of posts for which an ability to work through the medium of Welsh is essential and for this to be conveyed in advertisements. (paragraph 97)	24. Agreed. We will review our recruitment arrangements.
25. We recommend that the lessons learnt from the tutoring of Members be applied	25. Agreed. We want to get the best value from our training contract and

to the teaching of staff so that those who take Welsh lessons are able to make an increasing contribution to the provision of Assembly services in the Welsh language. (paragraph 98)	learning lessons from Members' application of their learning would facilitate this.
26. We therefore recommend that consideration be given to creating a high level over-arching post to coordinate this important work better from a Welsh language and bilingual perspective, both in terms of staff skills and multi-tasking and resource allocation. We recommend that a Director or another influential member of the Management Board be given overall responsibility for bilingualism (not just translation) and to act proactively as its 'champion'. (paragraph 101)	26. Craig Stephenson, Head of the Change Programme, will take the lead on taking these responsibilities forward.
27. We recommend that all announcements and public material produced by Members that are funded from the Assembly budget, including letterheads, contact details and surgery advertisements, should be produced bilingually in accordance with the Assembly's bilingual ethos. (paragraph 102)	27. Agreed. We will make these services available and promote them to Members.
28. We recommend that summaries of Welsh devolution and the role of the Assembly be available from the front page of the website in other languages commonly used by those who live in Wales and those who visit the Assembly. (paragraph 103)	28. Work on making a summary on the role of the Assembly available in other community languages used in Wales is planned by the Equality and HR teams. A similar approach will be taken to develop information on Welsh devolution.
29. We recommend that the Assembly creates and publishes a guide to best bilingual practice, together with details of services available to external groups, for those holding functions on Assembly premises. (paragraph 104)	29. Agreed. As we enhance our services for those using our facilities, creating and publishing a guide on best practice bilingual practice seems wholly in line with the bilingual ethos of our organisation.