

Agenda – Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee

Meeting Venue:	For further information contact:
Video Conference via Zoom	Lleu Williams
Meeting date: 29 September 2021	Committee Clerk
Meeting time: 09.30	0300 200 6565
	SeneddCulture@senedd.wales

In accordance with Standing Order 34.19, the Chair has determined that the public are excluded from attending the Committee's meeting in order to protect public health. This meeting will be broadcast live on www.senedd.tv

Registration and private pre-meeting

(09.00–09.30)

1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

(09.30)

2 Ministerial scrutiny session: Minister for Education and the Welsh Language

(09.30–10.30)

(Pages 1 – 12)

Jeremy Miles MS, Minister for Education and the Welsh Language

Owain Lloyd, Director of Education and Welsh Language

Bethan Webb, Deputy Director – Welsh Language

Research Brief

Welsh Government written evidence paper



Break

(10.30–10.45)

3 General scrutiny of the Welsh Language Commissioner

(10.45–11.05)

(Pages 13 – 23)

Aled Roberts, Welsh Language Commissioner

Dyfan Sion, Office of the Welsh Language Commissioner

Gwenith Price, Office of the Welsh Language Commissioner

Research brief

4 Scrutiny of the Welsh Language Commissioner’s Annual Report 2020–21 and Assurance Report 2020–21

(11.05–12.05)

Aled Roberts, Welsh Language Commissioner

Dyfan Sion, Office of the Welsh Language Commissioner

Gwenith Price, Office of the Welsh Language Commissioner

[Annual Report 2020–21](#)

5 Papers to note

(12.05–12.10)

- 5.1 Response from the Minister for Social Justice to the Chair of Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee and the Chair of Equality and Social Justice Committee on the Afghan refugee crisis**

(Pages 24 – 27)

- 5.2 Letter from the Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport and Chief Whip to the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on the ownership of Channel 4**

(Pages 28 – 30)

- 5.3 Letter from the Welsh Language Commissioner to the Chair of the Local Government and Housing Committee**
(Pages 31 – 32)
- 5.4 Letter to the Welsh Government following the Ministerial Scrutiny session with the Minister for Economy and the Deputy Minister for the Arts and Sport and Chief Whip**
(Pages 33 – 37)
- 5.5 Letter to the Welsh Government on the impact of the sale of Bad Wolf**
(Pages 38 – 39)
- 6 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of this meeting**
(12.10)
- 7 Private debrief**
(12.10–12.20)
- 8 Discussion of Forward Work Programme**
(12.20–12.30) (Pages 40 – 47)

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WRITTEN EVIDENCE PAPER TO THE CULTURE, COMMUNICATIONS, WELSH LANGUAGE, SPORT AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Minister for Education and Welsh Language

Introduction

This paper provides evidence in advance of my appearance before the Committee on 29 September 2021. The invitation asked for information on the following areas:

- i. Spending and support for organisations to recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic;*
- ii. An assessment on how the pandemic has affected the Cymraeg 2050 targets, and action taken to minimise its impact;*
- iii. Your priorities for supporting and promoting the Welsh language for the duration of the Sixth Senedd;*
- iv. Your timetable for the introduction of further Welsh Language Standards Regulations and any additional proposed legislation.*

The response below focuses on each of these issues in turn.

Background

In July this year, we published the [*Cymraeg 2050 Work Programme for 2021-26*](#) outlining the work to continue to implement *Cymraeg 2050* during the Sixth Senedd. By publishing the Work Programme early in this Government's term, we are maintaining the momentum that has grown since launching *Cymraeg 2050* in 2017 and clearly stating our intentions for the next five years.

Cymraeg 2050 is a strategy that spans a long period, therefore we knew that changes in society could mean having to adapt our priorities over time. Of course, we have had to do so earlier than expected due to the pandemic, and the new Work Programme reflects this as we continue the journey to double the daily use of Welsh, and towards achieving a million speakers.

i. *Spending and support for organisations to recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic*

In order to implement *Cymraeg 2050*, we are working across Government and beyond. The third sector organisations funded through the grant to promote and facilitate the use of Welsh¹ have an important role to play, along with Mudiad Meithrin, the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, the National Centre for Learning Welsh, the Welsh Language Commissioner and others.

Throughout the pandemic, we have maintained close contact with our partners by communicating openly and clearly with them, by providing advice and support, and by co-operating and co-planning. We will continue to maintain this close contact into the future.

It is fair to say that COVID-19 has presented our partners with a number of challenges in implementing *Cymraeg 2050*, but I have been greatly impressed by the way in which they have responded over the last year and a half – not only in order to survive, but often in successfully diversifying too. I am confident that much of this new and innovative work will become part of our new practices in the future.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, despite the difficult financial position, we have managed to allocate additional funding to support our partners when possible, e.g. £1.3m in 2020-21 to support the Urdd following its loss of income and redundancies.²

During this financial year, we have managed to earmark an additional £2.4m to deliver Welsh language policy from the COVID-19 Response Reserve, as follows:

¹ The organisations are: the Urdd, the National Eisteddfod, the Welsh language initiatives (mentrau iaith), Merched y Wawr, Young Farmers, Cymdeithas Eisteddfodau Cymru, local Welsh language newspapers (papurau bro) and Cymdeithas Cyfieithwyr Cymru (the Association of Welsh Translators and Interpreters).

² My predecessor presented the previous committee with an evidence paper in January this year detailing the additional funding allocated since the emergence of COVID-19.

- **Late immersion provision**

The new *Cymraeg 2050* Work Programme includes all-important targets for children in Welsh-medium education, including 26% of year 1 learners to be educated through the medium of Welsh by 2026. The most recent figure (for 2020/21) is 23%.

Late immersion provision is an essential part of the jigsaw and demand for this provision, or the need to incorporate immersion teaching methodologies into mainstream schooling, has been exacerbated by COVID-19. Anecdotal evidence at local level seems to suggest that more families are relocating to Wales from across the border, leading to a rapid increase in demand for late language immersion provision.

During this financial year, additional funding of £2.2m has been allocated from the COVID-19 Response Reserve to support late immersion provision across all 22 local authorities in Wales. This funding will allow LAs to safeguard existing late immersion provision (language units in schools or standalone centres) and expand in areas where there is currently limited provision. Funding will also allow immersion centres to support rapid re-immersion in Welsh language skills amongst all learners following an extended period with no or limited contact with the Welsh language as a result of consecutive lockdowns.

- **The National Eisteddfod**

During this financial year, additional funding of £0.2m has been allocated from the COVID-19 Response Reserve to support the National Eisteddfod. The Eisteddfod is an iconic Welsh language cultural event that not only celebrates our unique Welsh culture but also embraces diversity within Wales. Due to the pandemic, the 2020 and 2021 Eisteddfodau were postponed. As a consequence, the Eisteddfod has faced financial challenges – with no income generation opportunities available (as well as having to pay contractual costs of cancelling the 2020 Eisteddfod and the need to pay core running costs). This in turn meant that the Eisteddfod had to undertake a compulsory redundancy process to reduce their staffing levels from 12 to 6 members of staff.

The additional funding secured will support the Eisteddfod to rebuild and ensure they have the necessary resources to plan the 2022 and 2023 National Eisteddfodau. Funding will also support a community and social inclusion pilot project: the 2022 and 2023 National Eisteddfodau will be held in Ceredigion and on the Llŷn Peninsula, respectively – areas that have seen relatively high levels of inward migration and high demand for second homes.

We will continue to co-operate closely with our partners in order to move forward together towards a million Welsh speakers.

- ii. [*An assessment on how the pandemic has affected the Cymraeg 2050 targets, and action taken to minimise its impact*](#)

Cymraeg 2050 stated that our plans for delivering the strategy would need to be adapted over time in response to changes in society. The COVID-19 pandemic has meant that many of our interventions and those of our partners have had to change or cease, and new interventions have had to be created. Naturally, our response to COVID-19 and its impact on the use of Welsh is central to our new Work Programme, and the main elements of the *Cymraeg 2050* strategy are clear and remain despite the pandemic.

However, we do not yet know what all the implications of the pandemic will be on meeting the *Cymraeg 2050* targets. The Office of National Statistics is expected to publish all Census findings, including Welsh language data, between spring 2022 and spring 2023. In response to this, we will continually review the targets and related [trajectory](#), and adapt our work programmes accordingly.

But despite the pandemic, we have managed to reach a number of targets that were set in the first *Cymraeg 2050* work programme (2017-21):

- One of our key targets is to expand Welsh-medium provision in the early years as an access point for Welsh-medium education. To achieve this, we set a target to open 40 new groups by 2021. Over the past 3 years, we have funded Mudiad Meithrin to lead on this expansion through their *Set up and Succeed (Sefydlu a Symud)* programme. In spite of the pandemic, we have achieved this target: 43 new groups have been opened as of this month (September 2021). Another 12 groups are planned for this current financial year.
- There were also encouraging transition rates between pre-school and Welsh-medium primary education (from 86.4% in 2015/16 to 88.1% in 2019/20).
- The percentage of Year 2 children (usually 7 year olds) assessed through Welsh as a first language increased by just under 1 percentage point (from 22.0% in 2015/16 to 22.8% in 2020/21). Although the target of 24% by 2021 has not been met, there are encouraging signs in younger cohorts, where 23.8% of Reception class children (usually 5 year olds) were taught in Welsh in 2020/21³.
- In section (i) of this paper, we refer to additional funding for immersion provision – this will support our work to reach this target. 21st Century Schools capital projects will also be central in our efforts. The first round of Welsh-medium capital funding during 2018 supports 46 projects across 20 local authorities, that will lead to 2,818 Welsh-medium childcare and education places. The pandemic has impacted this work to some extent as the completion dates for some projects were pushed forward until later in 2022. But most of the 46 projects are progressing well, with 8 already completed (e.g. the Cwm Gwendraeth Welsh Language Centre, Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Evan James, and Ysgol y Wern) and over £16.1m has been claimed to date. Applications for the second share of the Welsh-medium capital investment will be submitted by 22 October 2021.

³ Note that teacher assessment data was not collected during 2020/21, therefore the data is based on Pupil Level Annual School Census data for 2020/21.

- We had to adapt the timescale for submitting the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs) following COVID-19. Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) Regulations 2019 set a timescale for local authorities to submit their first ten year plans for approval by January 2021, and for the plans to be implemented from September 2021. This timescale was not found to be practical in the light of the pandemic, and so the commencement date for the next WESP round was moved from 1 September 2021 to September 2022⁴ – the current WESPs will be extended until the new plans come into force at that time. However, remote working has presented us with new opportunities to support local authorities. We held 10 virtual sessions (some in Welsh, others in English) with local authority officers and members of Local Education Fora, to support them in preparing their WESPs. 170 officials attended the live sessions, and many more have listened on-line since. The feedback has been notably positive which has led us to arranging further sessions for the autumn term.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have been working across the Government and with our partners all over the country to respond to a rapidly changing situation, seeking to mitigate any negative impacts on *Cymraeg 2050* and seeking to maximise opportunities that come our way. This has varied from offering additional funding to some grant partners to support them as events were postponed and funding streams disappeared overnight, to ensuring Cysgliad is available free of charge (it has been downloaded by more than 7,000 individuals), holding a campaign to support parents whose children are in Welsh-medium education, and holding an audit of community language use.

In December 2020, we published the result of that audit in the form of a Government Social Research Report, under the title [*The effects of COVID-19 on Welsh language community groups: survey results*](#). This report analysed the activity of Welsh language community groups in light of COVID-19. The development of the report was guided by a Welsh Language Partnership Council sub-group.

In July 2021, we published our [*response to the report*](#). Here are some of the general themes of the response:

- Recognising and encouraging the concept of monolingual Welsh language spaces will be central to our work – creating spaces in which we can freely use our Welsh without barriers.
- A community empowerment model will be central to our work – as well as the work we fund.
- We will reach out beyond organisations we fund and beyond Welsh language organisations in order to encourage more people to take action to support our language. And we will expect the organisations we fund to do the same.

We will further discuss some aspects of our response under the heading below.

⁴ This was done through the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020.

On 14 September, the initial results of the 2019-20 Language Use Survey were published, in [Welsh language use in Wales, 2019-20](#). The survey is used to measure progress against our target of doubling the daily use of Welsh, which is also one of our national indicators in relation to the Welsh language. The survey stated that 10% of people aged three or older spoke Welsh daily and could speak more than just a few words of Welsh. This is the same percentage as in the Welsh Language Use Survey 2013-15. It is important to note, however, that the survey came to an end prematurely in March 2020 because of the pandemic, and so it is not yet clear what the impact of COVID-19 will be on the daily use of Welsh in terms of the language use survey.

iii. [**Your priorities for supporting and promoting the Welsh language for the duration of the Sixth Senedd**](#)

As Minister for the Welsh Language, supporting Welsh speakers to use our language – promoting the *use* of Welsh – is the core purpose of a large part of my role. This paper in its entirety therefore addresses the supporting and promoting of the Welsh language. Below are details of some relevant aspects of our work that have not been previously discussed (this is not a comprehensive list):

- It is our aim to revise our **Grant Scheme** to Promote the Welsh Language in order to see how we can further increase the use of Welsh.
- We will look at our **business sector** activity to see how that work could be evolved, developed and adapted in order to contribute to increasing the number of businesses / co-operative companies and / or community companies operating in Welsh.
- We will continue to implement our [Welsh Language Technology Action Plan](#), focusing immediately on creating systems that will use **technology** to aid the work of translators. We will aim to create a ‘zone-specific’ system for medical translations in the first instance.
- Also in the technology field, we will work with **procurement systems** in order to make it easy for software developers (and commissioners) to develop software that provides the best experience for Welsh language users. Our aim in this is to increase the numbers using Welsh language technology, which will of course contribute to our target of doubling the daily use of Welsh.
- We will implement our [National Policy on Welsh Language Transmission and Use in Families](#) in order to help **parents** to use their Welsh with their children. In the first place, we will look at work in areas unrelated to the Welsh language that use behavioural sciences to work with parents. This will feed into future interventions stemming from the policy.
- We will use the responses to the [recent consultation](#) on the **linguistic infrastructure** of the Welsh language to develop a final policy that will set out how we will make it easier for people to use resources such as dictionaries, terminology databases and Welsh language corpora. An effective linguistic infrastructure is essential to help people procure and use the language.

The following are also included in the [Programme for Government](#) of our Sixth Senedd, and therefore form an important part of our priorities:

- Legislate to strengthen and increase our Welsh language education provision (through a **Welsh Medium Education Bill** – see section (iv) of this paper).
- Address the high numbers of second homes in some of our communities. We are currently developing a **Welsh Language Communities Housing Plan** to be published in the autumn – we will hold a consultation on its content. Our aim is to secure opportunities for Welsh language communities to thrive, and to make it possible for young people to remain or return to those communities.
- Expand the role of the **Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol** – we have allocated an additional £0.810m to the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol during this financial year to support strategic projects across all further education colleges, that will develop teaching capacity in Health and Social Care; Childcare and Public Services – priority areas highlighted in the [Further Education and Apprenticeship Welsh-medium Action Plan](#).
- Expand our Welsh language **early years** provision.
- Provide free access to the **Urdd Eisteddfod** in 2022.
- Introduce a pilot project which will incentivise young Welsh speakers to **return from universities** to help teach Welsh in schools.
- Take steps to protect Welsh **place names**.

iv. [**Your timetable for the introduction of further Welsh Language Standards Regulations and any additional proposed legislation**](#)

Increasing the use of Welsh is a priority for us – indeed, doubling the daily use of Welsh is one of *Cymraeg 2050*'s two main aims. In order to set the direction of the Welsh language standards programme for the future, we want to understand exactly how the standards already set are helping Welsh speakers to use our language more often. The general picture formed on the basis of that understanding will help us to decide how best to use the standards system to contribute to increasing the use of our language in future. We have begun to discuss this with the Welsh Language Commissioner, and those discussions are ongoing.

We have made a commitment in the Programme for Government to bring forward a Welsh Medium Education Bill this Term. The purpose of the Bill will be to strengthen and increase the provision of Welsh-medium education across Wales in order to meet our targets in *Cymraeg 2050*.

We have already taken important steps in this area. We have strengthened the subordinate legislation that supports the planning of Welsh-medium education by local authorities through their Welsh in Education Strategic Plans, and have consulted on non-statutory guidance in relation to Welsh-medium provision. I am eager to explore what more we can do in this field in order to make Welsh-medium education more accessible and fair.

We have also committed in the Programme for Government and in the *Cymraeg 2050* Work Programme for 2021-26 to give Transport for Wales new powers to better integrate rail, bus and active travel and regulate them in order to meet the Welsh Language Standards.

Jeremy Miles MS

Minister for Education and Welsh Language

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Agenda Item 5.1

Jane Hutt MS
Y Gweinidog Cyfiawnder Cymdeithasol
Minister for Social Justice



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref JH-/10435/21

Jenny Rathbone MS & Delyth Jewell MS
Chairs
Welsh Parliament

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10 September 2021

Dear Jenny & Delyth,

Thank you for your letter of 20 August on behalf of both Senedd committees regarding the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan and support being provided by the Welsh Government to Afghan refugees.

On 26 August, I published a Written Statement setting out what we know and what our next steps are in relation to supporting those evacuated from Afghanistan, you can read more in the link below;

[Written Statement: A distinctive Welsh response to the Afghanistan evacuation \(26 August 2021\) | GOV.WALES](#)

I intend to also address the Senedd next week to provide a further update on our work so far. Wales is a Nation of Sanctuary and we must do all that is possible to ensure Afghan interpreters, refugees and their families are able to find a warm welcome and integrate effectively in our communities.

We are working closely with the Home Office, Welsh local authorities and others to help sufficient accommodation and ensure appropriate integration support is put in place. Two weeks ago, the First Minister and I met and listened to key stakeholders across Wales, including representatives of the Afghan community, to look at how we can all work collaboratively to provide the best support possible for those fleeing Afghanistan. This work will continue over the coming weeks.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

How many Afghan refugees do you anticipate will be given sanctuary in Wales and is there a timeline for their resettlement?

It is important to note that there are two schemes with different eligibility criteria being progressed. The Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) provides accommodation and support to those who worked directly alongside British Armed Forces in Afghanistan. Separately, the UK Government has announced an Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) the scope of which is yet to be defined. Only the ARAP is currently in operation and, although families arriving could be said to have a well-founded fear of persecution if they remained in a Taliban-controlled Afghanistan (the UN definition of a refugee), the UK Government does not bestow 'refugee status' upon these arrivals.

We understand that approximately 8,000 people have arrived in the UK with ARAP eligibility and the UK Government has also announced that 5,000 people per year will be supported under the ACRS. We intend for Wales to play a full part in both of these schemes and every Welsh local authority has pledged to provide support. As with most asylum dispersal and refugee resettlement operations, Wales will seek to embody our commitment to being a Nation of Sanctuary by at least meeting, and aiming to exceed, our 4.7% population share of the UK. This means a minimum expectation of supporting 611 individuals within the first 12 months of operation of the schemes. At this point it is not possible to give a more accurate number on those we intend to resettle as a nation.

It is important to note that Welsh local authorities all supported families under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme and our asylum dispersal areas have been in the top areas of asylum seekers supported per head of population for many years. Wales is committed to the Nation of Sanctuary vision and only the challenging availability of larger properties will limit our progress.

Resettlement operations have already begun in Wales and the initial work to relocate ARAP eligible families will continue throughout September. The timetable for resettlement work for the ACRS cohort will depend on UK Government decisions for when the scheme becomes operational.

What assessment has the Welsh Government made of the adequacy of accommodation arrangements for refugees arriving in the UK, particularly in light of the tragic death of an Afghan child in Sheffield earlier this week?

The tragic death of 5 year-old Mahammed Munib Majeedi on 18 August was a sobering reminder of the need to ensure temporary accommodation arrangements are carefully considered and risks are minimised. We have worked closely with all partners over recent weeks to seek accommodation standards which will provide good quality temporary support for families. On 16 August, I wrote to the Secretary of State for Communities, Housing and Local Government to make clear that any hotels procured in Wales would need the consent of both Welsh Ministers and the relevant Welsh local authority. Unfortunately, we are aware that one hotel has been procured in Wales and the consent of neither key stakeholder was sought. We are working at pace to assess the adequacy of support arrangements at this location and work with partners to put in place the support needed.

Has the Welsh Government secured the additional funding needed from the UK Government, as described in your comments to the BBC?

We have written to the UK Government to pledge our commitment to help in any way that we can and to seek urgent clarity on a number of important issues, from potential

consequential funding for health and education, to contingency accommodation planning arrangements to the scope and support to be provided under the new Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme. I have also raised these matters directly with UK Government Ministers at recent Four Nations meetings but we are yet to receive satisfactory responses to our queries. On 6 September, the Prime Minister gave a commitment in the House of Commons to write to Devolved Administrations setting out the funding details available in Wales and we await that letter.

What arrangements are being made for the UK's four-nations' summit, confirmed by the Prime Minister to Parliament on 18 August?

On 27 August, I attended the Four Nations meeting, chaired by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Michael Gove MP. I raised the concerns expressed by members of Welsh Afghan community members about the evacuation efforts and worries about the safety of their families, urged the involvement of Welsh Government officials in the design and operational planning of new schemes, and sought urgent clarity on a number of matters.

A second Four Nations meeting was held on 6 September with the new UK Afghan Resettlement Minister, Victoria Atkins MP, to provide an update on recent developments. Further engagement with Devolved Administrations has been committed but our officials are yet to be engaged properly in the design or operational planning of these schemes. We also note that the Prime Minister committed to meeting with representatives of the Welsh Government during his statement to Parliament on 6 September.

How many Welsh local authorities have offered support and can you please provide details of the types of support offered by each local authority?

Every Welsh local authority has pledged support for these schemes and work is underway to ensure pledges turn into firm property offers as soon as practicable. Around half of our local authorities have already welcomed in at least one Afghan family under these schemes and will be working carefully to put in place the wider support package needed – as they have done so well under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. It is also worth noting that our asylum dispersal areas will also be supporting many more Afghans in their areas and have done so consistently throughout the conflict in Afghanistan.

It is a source of great pride that every Welsh Local Authority has committed to supporting Afghan nationals. Wales has a long tradition of supporting those seeking sanctuary and we will continue that tradition under these new schemes.

How do plans to support Afghan refugees compare to the support offered to Syrian refugees in 2015?

We have yet to receive any firm details from the UK Government about how the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) will operate. We have urged the UK Government to effectively mirror the arrangements which operate under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme in terms of funding level and method of operation.

We have also asked that the UK Government consider the ACRS as part of the UK Resettlement Scheme (also known as the Global Resettlement Programme) which Welsh local authorities had already signed up to support. The UK Resettlement Scheme was intended to provide a more generic and responsive scheme to ensure crises in any part of the world could be directly linked to a safe and legal route to sanctuary. Establishing yet another new scheme may mean that local authorities have to navigate democratic processes again before placements can be offered.

What is the Welsh Government's view on the eligibility criteria for priority support for Afghan refugees and do you support the UK Government position to give priority to women and girls?

I have already urged the UK Government to ensure that the newly announced Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme takes special consideration of the vulnerability of women, children (including boys), LGBTQ+ individuals, religious and ethnic minorities (including the Hazaras), and those with family members already resident in the UK. Inevitably, given the scope of the ACRS (5,000 beneficiaries per year) and the number of those who may fear persecution at the hands of the Taliban, some more nuanced eligibility criteria are likely to need to be employed to ensure those most at-risk can be supported in the UK. We want the UK Government to engage with us on this and also seek the advice and support of the UNHCR.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke above the first letter.

Jane Hutt AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Cyfiawnder Cymdeithasol
Minister for Social Justice

Agenda Item 5.2

Dirprwy Weinidog y Celfyddydau a Chwaraeon, a'r Prif Chwip
Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport, and Chief Whip



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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13 September 2021

Dear Oliver

I am writing in response to the UK Government consultation on a potential change in ownership of Channel 4 Television Corporation.

Our conversations with key stakeholders in Wales following the announcement of the consultation have highlighted concerns that there is little evidence to justify a change in ownership, with stakeholders unanimously agreeing that any sale would only be to the detriment of Welsh audiences and the independent television sector in Wales.

The Welsh Government recognises the significant value of Channel 4's unique public service model and remit as both a publisher and a broadcaster. With all content commissioned from a currently vibrant independent television sector its remit encourages independent programme making. The role the channel plays in offering distinctive, innovative content that appeals to diverse communities and to young audiences in particular is hugely important as we seek to increase the diversity of content that meets the needs of all viewers. This is also the case in areas such as news, where the relatively weak indigenous news infrastructure in Wales is supplemented by UK broadcaster news services.

It is likely that under new private ownership the organisation would have new motives, new goals and be ultimately driven by profit. This would inevitably lead to a reform of the current operating model, with a significant proportion of production output brought in-house. Should this happen there is a real risk that we would lose independent companies across the nations and regions of the UK. As highlighted in the independent EY report on the possible consequences of privatising the Channel, published by Channel 4 on 10th September, up to 2,400 jobs could be at risk in the creative sector, which could significantly reduce Channel 4's economic contribution in the supply chain (with value of around £2bn being transferred from SME's in the creative economy, to a new private owner). The report suggests most of that impact would be felt in the nations and regions of the UK.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Alongside the concerns of independent companies fearing that they would see a decline in commissioning from the Channel, our stakeholders have also questioned how any new owner of the Channel would deal with Intellectual Property. Whilst it has been stated that this would be protected under new ownership, the independent production sector in Wales would need firm guarantees that this is the case to ensure producers can continue to exploit their IP in overseas markets, as the current model allows.

There is also a risk that much of the free to air content would be lost if the channel is privatised. The universality of public service broadcasting is of significant importance in Wales as a means of ensuring all audiences, regardless of circumstances, can access content. Loss of universal access would be devastating in some circumstances. For example, Channel 4 was the only channel to air the Paralympics 2021 on free to air terrestrial TV.

Whilst we believe that there are still improvements to be made to how Channel 4 operates in Wales, the recent *4 all the UK* Strategy has seen a marked improvement in how Channel 4 supports our independent sector and makes a significant contribution to the UK Government's levelling up agenda. We have seen an increase in commissioning content from within Wales, an increase in direct company investment, and a real commitment to work in partnership to address the skills issues in the sector and most importantly equality and diversity. We are working with Channel 4 to agree a Memorandum of Understanding with Creative Wales to build on this positive partnership working. Whilst some of these are a core part of the Channel 4 public service remit, they are not commercial or indeed profitable activities and are unlikely to appeal to a private buyer. It is also considered that they would be very difficult to enforce in the event of a sale.

We furthermore cannot see any evidence that backs up the current thinking that Channel 4 would be difficult to sustain in public hands, as more viewers switch to streaming services such as Netflix. In fact, Alex Mahon has recently stated publicly that Channel 4 revenues are up, cash balances are up and funding is available to invest in the future and in new content. Channel 4 performed well during the pandemic and the recent report on Channel 4's performance across the UK demonstrates its strong financial position. It is unclear why this action is now being considered when work is already underway to ensure a fit for purpose regulatory framework for an evolving public service media landscape, such as the Ofcom *Small Screen: Big Debate* review on the future of public service broadcasting.

I urge you to listen carefully to the voices of the independent sector across the UK during this consultation process. In the last 12 months, when other parts of the economy have seen a deep decline as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the television sector continues to thrive. We cannot underestimate the damage that privatisation of Channel 4 would do to the sector. It is naïve to think that any private organisation, following a sale, would accept obligations that are difficult to fulfil and not profitable.

I am copying this letter to Angus Robertson, Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, External Affairs and Culture and Jenny Gilruth, Minister for Culture, Europe and International Development, Scottish Government and Deirdre Hargey, Minister for Communities and Gordon Lyons, Minister for the Economy, Northern Ireland Executive. I am also copying this letter to Lord Gilbert of Panteg, as Chair of the House of Lords Communications and Digital Committee, for consideration as part of the Committee's inquiry into the future of Channel 4.

I look forward to hearing your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dawn Bowden'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a small dot at the end.

Dawn Bowden AS/MS

Dirprwy Weinidog y Celfyddydau a Chwaraeon, a'r Prif Chwip
Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport, and Chief Whip

John Griffiths MS
Chair
Local Government and Housing Committee

SeneddTai@senedd.cymru

15 September 2021

Dear Mr Griffiths

Consultation – Priorities for the Local Government and Housing Committee

Thank you very much for the opportunity to take part in the consultation above. My office wrote to you on 19 July to ask you to consider the Welsh language in your work as a committee. I attach a copy of the letter for your information. The letter discusses a number of key issues in the context of delivering the Cymraeg 2050 strategy. I ask you to consider those issues, please, when choosing the priorities that you will set for the committee when planning its work programme. The following needs are clear:

- Legislation and policies need to be scrutinised in detail to ensure that consideration of the Welsh language is mainstreamed into them.
- The committee should ensure that the Welsh language is protected and promoted as public organisations work together formally more and more.
- There needs to be consistency in the policies of Welsh planning authorities in the context of the Welsh language.
- The Welsh Government must provide guidance on how to assess the impact of planning on the Welsh language and how planning policies should promote the use of the Welsh language.

Another key issue to which the letter referred, which is currently the subject of intense public debate, is the housing situation in Wales. A second homes crisis has been

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Welsh Language Commissioner
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Correspondence welcomed in Welsh and English

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highlighted in a number of communities across Wales and a report on the issue was published by Dr Simon Brooks in March 2021. Since then, the Government has announced measures to respond to the report's recommendations.¹ We believe that the Committee should scrutinise the adequacy of these plans and the timescale for their implementation to ensure that they will indeed respond adequately to the challenge.

As noted in the previous letter, the committee has a vital role to play in the effort to reach the Cymraeg 2050 targets. I would be happy to work with you in aiming for this goal.

Yours sincerely,



Aled Roberts
Welsh Language Commissioner

Copy to: Delyth Jewell MS, Chair of Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee

Vaughan Gething MS
Minister for Economy
Dawn Bowden MS
Deputy Minister for Arts, Sport and Chief Whip
Welsh Government

Dyddiad | Date: 23September 2021

Pwnc | Subject: Ministerial scrutiny session: Minister for Economy and Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport and Chief Whip

Dear Vaughan and Dawn,

Thank you for attending the Committee meeting on Wednesday 15 September 2021. As noted in the meeting, I am writing on behalf of the Committee to seek further information on a number matters discussed during your evidence session. These are outlined under the relevant subheadings below.

Distribution of ministerial responsibilities

The Committee would be grateful if you could confirm which of you is responsible for which aspects of your respective ministerial portfolios. Information outlined on the Welsh Government website does not provide such a breakdown. The Committee would also be grateful if you could outline how your respective portfolio areas contribute the Welsh Government's target of 1m Welsh speakers by 2050. This information would assist the Committee and stakeholders in raising specific issues with the appropriate government minister.

Strategic approach to culture

The Committee welcomed your commitment to creating a new cultural strategy. It is accepted that there are number of factors that will influence the formation of these strategies, including the continued impact of the pandemic and forthcoming UK Government spending review. You stated during the meeting that the priorities for the cultural strategy are set out in the Programme for Government. This Programme includes a laudable aim of ensuring such sectors thrive during the forthcoming term. Despite listing some outputs, the Programme does not outline specific details that

would underpin such a strategy. The Committee notes that you intend to publish your strategy early next year. In the meantime, the Committee would welcome an outline of your current thinking around the goals you hope that your strategy will achieve. This would include the specific activity, funding allocations and timelines for achieving these goals.

Further to your overarching strategy for culture, the Committee would also welcome details of sector specific strategies you will have, or will be considering. Would you be able to provide a list of the sector specific strategies that fall within your ministerial remits? The Committee would also be grateful if you are able to also provide any action and funding plans associated with these strategies. Specifically, will you be updating the [Event Wales: A Major Events Strategy for Wales](#) document?

As per your commitment during the meeting, the Committee is keen to work with you on the development of your forthcoming cultural strategy as well as other strategies which fall under the Committee's remit. The provision of such information would greatly assist the Committee in doing so.

Programme for Government commitments

The Welsh Government's Programme for Government also states that "the arts, tourism and sport are of vital importance to both the Welsh economy and to our national life, and the Welsh language is a national treasure which belongs to every individual in Wales." The Programme also commits to widening access and harnessing creativity. The Committee agrees that these proposals are worthy, however there is a lack of detail pertaining to each of the specific outputs outlined in the Programme. The Committee would like to better understand Welsh Government's approach to the specific commitments outlined under the heading 'Push forward towards a million Welsh speakers, and enable our tourism, sports and arts industries to thrive'.

Please can you set out your goals, delivery plans and funding allocations for the following commitments:

- ensuring that Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic histories are properly reflected throughout our cultural and heritage sectors including in National Museums;
- creating a Creative Industry Research and Development Fund;
- establishing a National Music Service;
- investing in Theatr Clwyd;
- establishing a Football Museum;
- establishing a National Contemporary Art Gallery.

Further, the Committee would also welcome regular updates on Welsh Government's progress against each of these initiatives. Would you be willing to provide quarterly updates to the Committee on your progress?

UNESCO World Heritage status and a Museum for north Wales

I know you will agree with the Committee that the recent success north west Wales being awarded UNESCO World Heritage status is to be welcomed and celebrated. We would be grateful if you could outline your plans to build on this recent success. Likewise, we would be grateful to know if there are similar strategies in place to promote other sites in Wales such as Blaenavon, Pontcysyllte and the castles of Gwynedd?

The Committee also welcomes your proposal to develop a museum for north Wales. Though it is early days in your Programme for Government, the Committee would like to better understand how a museum for north Wales would be constituted. As you will be aware, the network of museums which form the National Museum of Wales all have a specific purpose and remit. For instance the National Slate Museum in Llanberis recreates the story of the Welsh slate industry; an industry which “once roofed the world”. Given your proposal to create a new museum for north Wales, could you outline in which material way will it be different to the current museum that exists in Llanberis? Is it your intention to expand the current museum on site or to create a brand new museum? The Committee would welcome any information you can provide to help it better understand how the proposed museum will conserve, document and showcase life in north Wales, and whether it is intended to replace the National Slate Museum. It would be helpful for this information to include targets, delivery plans and funding allocations.

Historic Wales

The Committee noted the outline you provided of the ongoing Historic Wales partnership between Cadw, the National Museum, the National Library and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales. In order for the Committee to better understand this partnership, could you provide details of the partnership including any written agreements for its operation (such as a memorandum of understanding), the partnership’s work programme and its outputs to date. The Committee would also be grateful if you could confirm that Welsh Government ministers will not seek to amalgamate these organisations during this Senedd term.

Television and film strategy

According to the Welsh Government’s Trade and Invest website, as a result of government support, the creative industries is one of the fastest growing sectors in Wales. It is noted that the sector has annual turnover of £1.9bn and employs over 58,000 people; which is a 52 per cent increase on ten years ago. The Committee believes this shows impressive growth in the sector and government support can ensure this grow continues. The predecessor Committee in the Fifth Senedd recommended that Welsh Government should publish a strategy which sets out its vision of Wales’ screen industry. The Committee would welcome details of your strategy for developing this sector with an outline of action plans, funding allocations and targets.

Creative Skills Body for Wales

The Committee noted the written statement issued on Thursday 16 September 2021 regarding a new Creative Skills Body for Wales. The Committee welcomes this important development in ensuring that skills and talent are developed to meet the demand created by an ever growing creative industries sector. The Committee has a number of questions following your statement:

- Is this new initiative being created as an additional arm of Creative Wales rather than as a separate body in of itself?
- In terms of governance, can you confirm the membership and structure of the steering group that will guide its work? Will it be down to the Creative Wales board to oversee this work and ultimately be responsible for its operation?
- How much funding is being provided on annual basis for the initiative?
- What is the five year roll out plan for expanding the work of the body to include other creative sectors?
- What targets have been set for the body in terms of number of placements and training opportunities created?
- How many all-age apprenticeships do you expect the initiative to create between now and 2026?
- How do you intend to monitor the progress of all this work?

Strategic approach to Welsh journalism

I am sure you will agree that the role of a strong native media in a democratic society is of utmost importance. This would include providing those who wish to vote in elections with fair, impartial information to allow them to make informed choices on who should run the country.

You will be aware that Welsh newspapers have seen continued decline in their print circulations, as have UK daily newspapers. While print circulation has dwindled, online traffic has soared. Despite this, news organisations have struggled to monetise this increasing traffic. Other than a few examples, they have been reluctant to charge for access to their content, instead relying on digital advertising, the bulk of which is hoovered up by Google and Facebook. The result has been newspaper closures, job losses and market-consolidation by the big players. The Committee is keen to understand the Welsh Government's approach to supporting the provision of impartial news journalism for Wales. Is the Government providing public funds to news media organisations? And if so, what assurance process and impartiality standards do they have to meet before being awarded such funding? The Committee would be grateful if you could provide a note on these matters.

Sports and leisure

The Committee would welcome an update on the Welsh Government's overall strategic approach to sport in Wales. This would include the overarching objectives you have and the approaches being considered for both elite and community level sport in Wales.

You also noted, as referred to at the start of this letter, that you are committed to widening access to several sectors. The Committee assumes this applies equally to sport and physical activity. Could you please set out your approach to widening access to sport in Wales over the next five years?

Remit letters for sponsored bodies

Finally, the Committee noted that you intend to outline your intentions and set targets for the cultural, heritage and sports sectors in forthcoming remit letters to the relevant Welsh Government Sponsored Bodies. This approach is welcomed. Could you provide an outline of the types of objectives you will set each Sponsored Body in these forthcoming remit letters including any targets on widening access and participation? The Committee would be grateful for a copy of these remit letters, once published, in order to assist with its scrutiny of your work.

I would be grateful if you could provide a written response to these questions by 21 October 2021, in order to inform our future work programme.

Yours sincerely,



Delyth Jewell MS

Chair

Culture, Communication, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Vaughan Gething MS
Minister for Economy
Welsh Government

Dyddiad | Date: 23 September 2021

Pwnc | Subject: **Impact of the sale of Bad Wolf**

Dear Vaughan,

As discussed in the Committee meeting on Wednesday 15 September 2021, the Committee wishes to better understand the implications of the sale of production company Bad Wolf on the creative industry sector in Wales and the Welsh Government.

Bad Wolf is one of the leading television production companies in Wales and understanding the impacts of its sale is of utmost importance to the Committee. To this end, the Committee would welcome answers to the following questions:

- During the Committee meeting you noted that over £8.5 million has been paid out against the original £9 million award to the company. Could you confirm how this funding was split between grants or loans?
- Does the Welsh Government expect to recoup any outstanding funds, be it in the form of loans or grants, when the sale of Bad Wolf is completed?
- Can you provide details of any other current contractual agreements between the Welsh Government and Bad Wolf, and the extent to which these commitments have been fulfilled?
- Can you confirm what arrangements exist, if any, between the Welsh Government and Bad Wolf with regards to the ownership of Wolf Studios Wales? If any arrangements exist, what income has this generated for the Welsh Government in the past five years?
- During the Committee meeting, you noted the positive supply chain impact that Bad Wolf has had on the Welsh economy. Could you provide an estimate of the number of direct and

indirect jobs created as result of Bad Wolf's operations? Could you also provide an estimate of the total economic impact of Bad Wolf on the Welsh economy?

- Can you confirm the amount (both in pounds and as percentage) of Bad Wolf's "below the line" production budget spent in Wales over the last five years?
- What commitments will you be seeking with any potential owner of Bad Wolf that it will maintain its Welsh operation, including maintaining its operations at Cardiff Bay?
- Do you have any concerns arising from the sale that the potential new owner may choose to move production to other low cost locations or those areas which may provide better funding incentives?

In order to inform the work of the Committee I would be grateful for a reply by 7 October 2021.

Yours sincerely,



Delyth Jewell MS

Chair

Culture, Communication, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee

c.c. Dawn Bowden MS, Deputy Minister for Arts, Sport and Chief Whip

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Agenda Item 8

By virtue of paragraph(s) vi of Standing Order 17.42

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