

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

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Meeting Venue:	For further information contact:
Hybrid – Committee Room 5, Tŷ Hywel	Lleu Williams
Meeting date: 10 November 2021	Committee Clerk
Meeting time: 09.30	0300 200 6565
	<a href="mailto:SeneddCulture@senedd.wales">SeneddCulture@senedd.wales</a>

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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](http://www.senedd.tv)

## Registration and pre-meeting

(09.00 – 09.30)

### 1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

(09.30)

### 2 One-day inquiry into heritage, museums and archives

(09.30–10.20)

(Pages 1 – 18)

Christopher Catling, The Secretary (CEO), Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales

David Thomas, Head of Public Services, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales

Nest Thomas, President, The Federation of Museums and Art Galleries of Wales

Sharon Heal, Director, Museums Association



## **Break**

(10.20–10.30)

### **3 One-day inquiry into heritage, museums and archives**

(10:30–11.20)

David Anderson, Director General, National Museum Wales

Neil Wicks, Chief Operating Officer and Deputy Director General, National Museum Wales

Pedr ap Llwyd, Chief Executive and Librarian, National Library for Wales

Owain Roberts, Deputy Chief Executive and Librarian, National Library for Wales

## **Break**

(11.20–11.30)

### **4 National Museum Wales and Arts Council of Wales: delivery of joint projects**

(11.30–12.10)

David Anderson, Director General, National Museum Wales

Kath Davies, Director of Collections and Research, National Museum Wales

Nia Williams, Director of Learning and Engagement, National Museum Wales

Rebecca Nelson, Director of Finance and Accounting Officer, Arts Council for Wales

Diane Hebb, Director of Arts Engagement, Arts Council for Wales

### **5 Papers to note**

#### **5.1 Response from First Minister on International Relations**

(Pages 19 – 22)

#### **5.2 Response from Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport and Chief Whip: update on culture and the arts**

(Pages 23 – 28)

**5.3 Call for information from the Press Recognition Panel (PRP) on press regulation in the UK**

(Page 29)

**5.4 Response from the Minister for Education and Welsh Language**

(Pages 30 – 34)

**6 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the public from the meeting for the remainder of the meeting**

**7 Private debrief**

(12.10–12.30)

**7.1 Draft correspondence to DCMS: for discussion**

(Pages 35 – 36)

Document is Restricted

Eich cyf/Your ref  
Ein cyf/Our ref

Delyth Jewell MS  
Chair  
Culture, Communication, Welsh Language, Sport  
and International Relations Committee

01 November 2021

Dear Chair

I am writing in response to your letter of 8 October which requested further information on our international relations work following your session with my officials in September.

### International Strategy, Action Plans and Overseas Offices

The decision to move International Relations into the First Minister's portfolio allows me to lead on the delivery of our international work across government. I have a dedicated department which oversees the delivery of our international work as outlined in our International Strategy. The department takes forward our international engagement through the activity set out in our action plans, it delivers our Wales and Africa activity led by the Minister for Social Justice, and it supports Welsh exporters, works with inward investors and develops an effective trade policy for Wales under the Minister for Economy. The department also works across Welsh Government in areas such as Climate Change, Education, Science and Innovation, Major Events, Culture, Sport, Welsh Language and Communications to support their international work where appropriate. All of our cross-government work is brought together through the action plans which were published at the end of 2020 and provide more detail on the delivery activity contained within the International Strategy.

Each of the action plans contains a series of short and long term objectives which contain a mix of tangible and intangible outcomes. Where outcomes are tangible, such as our ambition to create a global network of 500,000 Welsh diaspora, measurable targets are in place at key points throughout the five year lifespan of the International Strategy. We also have KPIs in place with third party delivery partners where applicable.

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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.

I note the Committee's request for an annual report in relation to the activity of our Overseas Network and my officials will provide this information at the end of the financial year.

### Budgets

An outline of the budget allocated to fund our International Engagement activity since 2016-17 is set out below:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Budget</b>
2016-17	£390,000
2017-18	£410,000
2018-19	£355,000
2019-20	£920,000
2020-21	£1,848,000
2021-22	£3,220,000

The reason for the increase in funding in 2020-21 and 2021-22 was an increase in budget agreed as part of the International Strategy.

This is further broken down for the last two financial years by action plan, and cross-cutting activity, as follows:

	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>
Priority Regional Relationships and Networks	£30,000	£100,000
Public Diplomacy and Soft Power	£1,274,000	£1,332,000
Diaspora Engagement	£180,000	£260,000
Wales and Africa – contribution to the separate Wales and Africa budget to deliver extra support to the Size of Wales Mbale Tree Planting programme – a commitment in the International Strategy.	£350,000	£350,000
Cross-cutting activity	£14,000	£1,178,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,848,000</b>	<b>£3,220,000</b>

The International Engagement budget funds activity including bilateral engagement, St David's Day, international celebrations such as Diwali, major international events (e.g. World Expo, Rugby World Cup), initiatives such as our Wales in Germany 2021 programme, marketing, communications and our diaspora contracts. Our overseas network of offices supports this activity, as does the International Relations team in Wales working with stakeholders in Welsh Government, Wales and internationally.

### Wales and Europe

The relationship with the EU continues to evolve post-Brexit and, whilst we continue to consider what Wales wishes to achieve through its European engagement, the context is also evolving given ongoing difficulties in the EU-UK relationship. I look forward to a considered, engaged and business-like approach from the UK Government, particularly around the Trade and Co-operation Agreement (TCA). However, until this is better resolved and there is a stable relationship between the EU and the UK, our strategic approach will be lacking a key foundation. Nevertheless, I do believe that it is helpful to be clear about what the principles and purpose of our European engagement are, and to continue to develop these in a transparent and concrete way. Our approach is governed by the recognition of the need for positive engagement with Europe on the basis of the principles and for the

reasons set out in my [January 2021 letter to Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen](#). As I said there, I want Wales to “play a constructive role as a bridge between the EU and those in the UK who continue to be guided by the sound principles that have helped to found and to develop the EU’s policy-making, as well as ours.”

The EU-UK relationship continues to evolve. Our future engagement with the institutions will therefore also evolve, particularly the way that UK Government and Devolved Administrations work with the specialised committees, and similar entities, established under the TCA. In the meantime, officials maintain formal contact with institutions where possible and appropriate; but also with the individuals who make up those institutions such as MEPs, individual officials and Brussels representatives of Governments. The imminent appointment of the Welsh Government’s Representative on Europe, recently advertised, will add a positive and significant extra dimension to this.

## Covid-19

The action plans, which support the International Strategy, were developed against a backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic and published in November 2020. They have been developed with Covid-19 in mind and take into account the restrictions placed upon us with regards to the travel and face to face meetings that are associated with developing our international relations.

The pandemic has resulted in a shift to digital-first communication in the international sphere. Since March 2020, we have successfully delivered a series of digital engagements, including the Wales in Germany 2021 themed year, Diwali 2020 and digital events to celebrate St David’s Day. This approach has enabled us to engage with more people internationally and reduced barriers to engagement, such as cost and time to travel. This experience has been valuable and will have a lasting impact on the way we work – hybrid events will be the future, delivering engaging experiences to digital and in-person audiences.

However, it has also been very clear during this period that face-to-face meetings and events are still important to deepen our existing relationships and forge new ones. These benefits cannot be replaced by purely digital engagement – hence the continued importance of our overseas offices.

## Other Areas

The priorities for our cross-cutting international work are contained within the [International Relations through Public Diplomacy and Soft Power action plan](#) published in 2020. This sets out our work using Sport, Culture and the Welsh Language as a means to develop our international relations as well as the communications and branding used to amplify our messaging. The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic remains at the forefront of our approach to undertaking our international activity and, where necessary, we will adapt our approach to take account of any limitations placed on us either here in Wales or overseas.

The [2020 Anholt Ipsos Nations Brand Index \(NBI\) report](#) was published in September 2021 and is an assessment of Wales’ international and domestic reputation. 2020 was the first year that Wales took part in the NBI so this sets the baseline for any future surveys and studies.

Future Meetings

Finally, I note the list of dates that you have provided in order to facilitate my appearance before the Committee. My Diary Secretary will respond in due course.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Drakeford". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M'.

**MARK DRAKEFORD**



Vaughan Gething AS/MS  
Gweinidog yr Economi  
Minister for Economy

Dawn Bowden AS/MS  
Dirprwy Weinidog y Celfyddydau a Chwaraeon, a'r Prif Chwip  
Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport, and Chief Whip

Delyth Jewell MS  
Chair Culture, Communication, Welsh Language,  
Sport and International Relations Committee

20 October 2021

Dear Delyth

### **Ministerial scrutiny session: Minister for Economy and Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport and Chief Whip**

Thank you for your letter of 23 September seeking further information on a number of matters discussed during our recent evidence session. This letter provides the additional information you have sought under the same relevant subheadings.

#### **Distribution of Ministerial responsibilities**

You have asked about the distribution of responsibilities within the portfolio. Many of the issues of interest to the Committee are cross portfolio or cross government in nature and require a flexible approach. The First Minister has no plans to publish a more detailed breakdown of portfolio responsibilities

You also asked how our portfolio areas will contribute to the wellbeing goal of a thriving Welsh language, and of reaching one million Welsh speakers by 2050. The [Cymraeg 2050 strategy](#) continues to be an area of focus and we expect the Welsh language to be thoroughly embedded in all that we all do, celebrating bilingualism and enabling the people of Wales to use the language as part of their everyday lives. The results of the 2021 Census will be known during this term of Government, and we will update the Cymraeg 2050 action plan for the strategy, but the three main themes will remain – increasing the number of Welsh speakers, increasing the use of the Welsh language, and creating favourable conditions in which the Welsh language can thrive.

One example of this is the activity delivered through Creative Wales which also supports our ambitions for the Welsh Language. Support for the publishing industry through the Books Council of Wales includes investment in the Welsh language through publishing grants, delivery of the tender for the Welsh language digital news service, learners' series, bilingual platforms, and the #lovereading channel on the AM platform. Our public service broadcasters play a vital role in contributing to the Welsh Government's priorities for the

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Welsh language through servicing the needs of Welsh language audiences and the provision of educational resources to support Welsh language learners and speakers. The Memorandum of Understanding we are developing with S4C will identify opportunities to strengthen our partnership working in this area. These are just some examples of how this portfolio contributes to this target.

### **Strategic approach to culture**

As we set out in the Committee session, our focus for this term will be on delivery of the Programme for Government commitments across this portfolio and our strategic approach is underpinned by this.

You also asked specifically about the Major Events strategy. *Event Wales: A major events strategy for Wales 2010-2020* was launched in the immediate aftermath of Wales' successful hosting of the 2010 Ryder Cup. Following the success in delivering that strategy we are now considering future strategic objectives. We had hoped to commence this in 2020 but the pandemic response has had to take priority.

In regards to Tourism, we published the Tourism Recovery Plan ("[Let's Shape the Future](#)") earlier this year.

### **Programme for Government commitments**

You asked us for our goals and plans under a number of our Programme for Government commitments. Using your ordering, we offer the following comments:

*Ensure the history and culture of our Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities are properly represented by investing further in our cultural sector and museum network.*

Work in this area will be a priority for the whole of this government term. We have made some initial progress. For example, earlier this month we agreed funding of £98k to support the local museum sector in Wales. This funding will establish a greater understanding of the collections held by museums across the country, and of the ethnically diverse histories they currently include. It will also enable us to clearly identify the gaps in representation, and support meaningful engagement with diverse communities to start addressing these gaps.

*Creating a Creative Industry Research and Development Fund*

We have supported research and development in the creative industries by:

- Delivering the Creative Wales TV and Digital Development Fund;
- Supporting R&D in the Strength in Places programme;
- Applying to the BFI for funding for an innovative pilot to map the sustainability of the screen industry

We will explore options to further support research and development in the creative industries in 2022/23, including the need for a Research and Development Fund, in the context of existing activity.

*Establishing a music service*

This commitment is being led by the Education Department and my officials are working closely with them.

### Investing in Theatr Clwyd

Officials are actively reviewing the final outline business case developed by Theatr Clwyd and will be able to update the Committee on progress later in the financial year once the Comprehensive Spending Review has been completed.

### Establishing a Football Museum for Wales

We are working with Wrexham Museum's designers to complete the outline business case and will update the Committee on progress later in the financial year once the Comprehensive Spending Review has been completed.

### Establishing National Contemporary Art Gallery

The digitisation of the National Art Collection, a key first step to delivering this project, is proceeding at pace with a vast number of items already captured. During the pandemic, as a result of the work done to digitise the collection, we were able to publish a selection of contemporary art, chosen by NHS Staff into a number of different Hospital settings including vaccination centres and has provide valuable visual aid in encouraging movement for recovering patients.

### Updates

We note your request for quarterly updates on progress with the Programme for Government commitments. We are happy to update the Committee regularly on progress but suggest this is provided once a term so that the focus remains on the importance of delivering, not reporting on, these initiatives. On this basis, we will aim to provide our first formal update by the end of January 2022.

### **UNESCO World Heritage status and a Museum for North Wales**

The Committee has raised several points around our newest World Heritage Site and plans for the other world heritage sites in Wales.

### Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales World Heritage Site

The inscription of the Slate Landscape on the World Heritage Site list by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee is a great success for Wales's heritage.

The Slate Partnership responsible for the nomination has now reorganised into a revised governance structure to implement the management plan drawn up to accompany the nomination. This comprises a Board, Steering Group and thematic groups focussed on conservation, public engagement and economic development who will take forward actions aimed at ensuring that the World Heritage Site delivers on the commitments that will benefit local communities in the region.

Core actions for the next year include:

- completing the designation of historic assets
- preparation of individual management plans for all historic elements
- adoption of draft Supplementary Planning Guidance
- completion of the National Lottery Heritage Funded LleChi community engagement project.

The remaining three World heritage Sites – the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape, the Castles and town walls of Edward I in Gwynedd and the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal already have developed Management Plans and governance structures in place.

### Museum of North Wales

Amgueddfa Cymru has commissioned consultants to undertake a feasibility study in relation to the redevelopment of the National Slate Museum at Llanberis. This work includes exploring spatial requirements, the vision for the existing museum and for the wider site. The Welsh Government has provided £0.5m in funding to support this phase of the work, which is scheduled for completion in January 2022.

### Historic Wales

The Historic Wales partnership has provided a useful forum for exploring collaborations between the four member institutions and some important initiatives have been started such as:

- the partnership between National Museum and Cadw at Caerleon Roman Fortress
- an action plan to understand and address skills gaps across the partnership.

The pandemic has resulted in an understandable hiatus in progress but has also provided an opportunity for reflection. The senior teams recently came together in a workshop to consider how the partnership can build on identified opportunities and address current and future challenges.

We confirm there are no plans to amalgamate any of the partner organisations during the current Senedd term.

### **Creative Wales**

The Committee asked for specific information around various aspects of the work of Creative Wales. These are as follows:

#### Television and Film Strategy

Since Creative Wales was launched in January 2020, the focus has been on leading the sector through the pandemic. Creative Wales is:

- working with industry through its stakeholder groups and the Creative Wales Non-Executive Board to develop an action plan for the screen sector, to be published by the end of the financial year.
- redesigning its production funding so that it better meets the needs of the sector and aligns with the new Programme for Government commitments.

Creative Wales has continued to support the sector during this time, through production funding and development funding schemes. Since the launch of Creative Wales, 33 projects have been approved with an associated award level of £9.5m. This is further amplified when taking into account further induced private sector investment that is conditioned as part of agreements.

#### Creative Skills Body for Wales

Our Written Statement issued on 16 September set out our agreed approach to delivering the Creative Skills Body internally through Creative Wales within six months.

Delivering the Creative Skills Body in this way will build on the skills work already being delivered by Creative Wales and ensure future resourcing will be focused on supporting creative skills and talent initiatives in Wales, rather than being spent on the costs of setting up of a new organisation.

Further work is underway to agree the detailed delivery arrangements for the Creative Skills Body and an update will be provided to the Committee in due course.

### Strategic approach to Welsh journalism

The Committee asked some questions around the funding and impartiality of news journalism for Wales:

- The Welsh Government provides funding to media organisations through a range of mechanisms. Funding specifically targeted at news organisations, through the Independent Community Journalism Fund (ICJF), was awarded to publications which are members of the ICNN (Independent Community News Network), which requires publications to adhere to standards as laid out in the Editors Code of Practice.
- Where media organisations are supported by cross-economy funding, such as the Welsh Government's Economic Recovery Fund, organisations are expected to comply with the standard terms and conditions of the grant.
- Creative Wales is exploring further options to target public funds to support an increase in coverage of news, on an arms-length basis, and have set aside £100,000 from the Creative Wales budget for this.
- These options will be developed with our partners and will consider how we can ensure impartiality standards are met by organisations in receipt of funding.
- As part of this work we are establishing a Wales Public Interest Journalism Work Group, working with the National Union of Journalists, to bring together a range of stakeholders from industry, unions, broadcasters and academia to provide recommendations on issues relating to the journalism sector to support the long-term sustainability of public interest journalism in Wales.

### Sport and leisure

The Committee also asked for an update on our plans for Sport and Leisure. Sport is of vital importance to our economy, our health and wellbeing and generally to our national identity. One of our ten wellbeing objectives includes enabling the sport industry to thrive, and the Programme for Government makes clear our specific commitments for sport are to:

- Promote equal access to sports and support young and talented athletes and grassroots clubs;
- Invest in our world-class sports facilities; and
- Invest in new facilities such as 3G pitches.

Through Sport Wales we are investing in a range of initiatives to achieve our common goal of greater participation in sport and physical activity. This includes significant capital investment in modern, accessible and attractive facilities that encourage people of all ages and abilities – whether at community or elite level – to engage in sport and physical activity.

We know from research carried out by ComRes on behalf of Sport Wales that we need to do more to better understand how to support specific groups to become more physically active and enjoy the benefits of sport. Increasing opportunities to be physically active is key to ensuring our citizens are healthy and well. This is supported by our Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales strategy. During this term of Government we will work with stakeholders to help create an environment where it is normal and easy to be physically active, particularly focusing on new and diverse audiences and under-represented communities.

### **Remit letters for sponsored bodies**

Finally, turning to remit letters for our sponsored bodies, these will include a focus on widening access and participation, and the key deliverables are aligned with our priorities as published in the Programme for Government. Once the remit letters are issued, sponsored bodies will work to reflect the key deliverables in their operational plans. Targets will be agreed with officials and progress against key deliverables will be monitored as part of quarterly monitoring meetings.

We would be happy to share the final versions of the remit letters with the Committee once these have been issued.

We hope that you will find this additional information helpful.

Yours sincerely,



**Vaughan Gething AS/MS**  
Gweinidog yr Economi  
Minister for Economy



**Dawn Bowden AS/MS**  
Dirprwy Weinidog y Celfyddydau a  
Chwaraeon, a'r Prif Chwip  
Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport, and Chief  
Whip

## Share your views on press regulation

I am writing to inform you that the Press Recognition Panel (PRP) has launched a public call for information to gather views on press regulation in the UK.

The PRP was created in 2014 following the Leveson Inquiry into the culture, practices, and ethics of the press in the light of criminal activity by some news publishers, including phone hacking.

The PRP is part of the system of regulatory oversight intended to protect the interests of the public and provide access to redress for journalistic malpractice whilst also ensuring the freedom of the press.

Our Royal Charter requires us to report annually on how well the system is working. In producing our independent report, we would like to consider the full range of perspectives of people interested in and affected by our work.

Please see our [Call for Information document](#) for further information.

The call for information closes on 3 December 2021. I hope you will share your views with us.

# Agenda Item 5.4s

Gweinidog y Gymraeg ac Addysg  
Minister for Education and Welsh Language



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref: MA/JMEWL/2934/21  
Ein cyf/Our ref: MA/JMEWL/2934/21

November 2021

Dear Delyth,

Thank you for your letter, dated 8 October, following the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee meeting on 29 September, where we discussed my portfolio. In your letter, you ask for further information on some areas, and it is my pleasure to present that information below.

## Vaccine passports

You have asked for the latest information on progress made to ensure the COVID-19 pass is available in Welsh, and that the electronic process of applying for a pass is available bilingually.

Welsh Government has been working with NHS X in order to provide a digital service for our citizens so that they are able to show their COVID-19 vaccine status and COVID-19 test results where necessary. The COVID pass was launched bilingually on 15 October 2021, meaning people can show their vaccine status and COVID-19 test results on-screen bilingually, or produce a bilingual pass to be downloaded or printed as a bilingual pdf. In early 2022, we will also begin substantial work to explore the NHS' log-in system, with a view to developing this function bilingually alongside work to develop a new NHS app in Wales, that will be bilingual from the start.

## On-line learning

You have asked for information on National Centre for Learning Welsh (the Centre) figures and figures for those using the *Say Something in Welsh* and *Duolingo* app.

According to the latest data published by the Centre in relation to the 2019/2020 academic year, they had 17,505 individual learners. 85% of the Centre's provision is currently on-line, either through virtual classes or self-study courses, or a combination of both. The next set of data will be available on 31 March 2022.

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We do not have information on *Say Something in Welsh* user numbers, but 2,000 learners following the Centre's courses this year will receive free *Say Something in Welsh* provision to support their learning. *Duolingo* report that their app have 276,080 active users practising their Welsh within the United Kingdom (476,000 globally). In 2020, Welsh was the language that grew the most in popularity on *Duolingo* in the United Kingdom – with a 44% increase in users compared to 2019. The Centre has launched a new partnership with *Duolingo* so that the app can be used to support classroom learning, and to attract more to take Welsh lessons.

In your letter, you refer to provision for learners and Welsh-speakers where there are issues in terms of digital access. You also ask for further information on our response to the [report on the effects of COVID-19 on Welsh language community groups](#), where we discussed the action we will take to address barriers to accessing digital networks and increasing digital skills, in response to the second recommendation on 'Digital Inclusion'.

Thanks to government support, a number of programmes are already being implemented to widen digital access in Wales, including broadband programmes, and others to increase digital skills. We will continue with our efforts to widen access to technology during the second *Cymraeg 2050 Work Programme from 2021 to 2026*. We have also published the [Welsh language technology action plan: progress report 2020](#) which details the components that will further increase the use of the Welsh language in technology. We are also currently using and developing procurement systems that drive the market for bilingual software that provides a positive experience for Welsh language users.

### **Welsh language use within the community**

You have asked for further information on our commitment in the *Cymraeg 2050 Work Programme for 2021-26* to 'establish and support a commission to strengthen the position of Welsh as a community language'.

It is my intention to appoint a Chair for the commission by January 2022. I emphasise that the commission is not a bricks and mortar organisation, rather a group of specialists who are able to advise me in progressing our agenda in relation to Welsh language use within the community. Establishing a commission is one of the recommendations in Dr Simon Brooks' report, [Second homes: developing new policies in Wales](#). The commission will look specifically at the future of Welsh as a community language. In his report, Dr Brooks highlighted the fact that traditional Welsh-speaking areas share socio-economic, social and cultural characteristics, thus sharing the same challenges in relation to their long-term sustainability. My aim is for the commission to look in detail at a number of areas that can impact or threaten communities where a substantial percentage speak Welsh. I will publish more detailed information about the work of the commission in due course.

### **Proposed Welsh Medium Education Bill**

You expressed an interest in hearing more about the proposed Welsh Medium Education Bill.

Every child wanting to attend a Welsh-medium school should be able to do so – wherever they live in Wales. Every local authority in Wales provides Welsh-medium education in order to meet this policy aim. However, we are aware of examples where access to Welsh education is not always equal, and that there are common barriers such as distance from a child's home and accessibility of transport to another school where there is no room at the

closest Welsh school. Decisions on transport policy, in line with the 2008 Learner Travel Measure, are made by local authorities.

We have already taken important action in this area. We have strengthened the secondary legislation supporting the planning of Welsh-medium education by local authorities through their Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs). The WESP sets a clear ambition and expectation for local authorities in planning Welsh-medium provision.

I am keen to explore what else we are able to do in this area. We have committed to introducing a Welsh Medium Education Bill during this Senedd term to ensure all learners in any part of Wales can be educated through the medium of Welsh if that is their wish, and to ensure we are on the right track to reach our targets in *Cymraeg 2050*. This builds on, and is in the spirit of, the new Curriculum for Wales.

I am also keen to ensure that learners are given the opportunity to continue on their journey to acquire Welsh language skills during the post-16 phase. The *Cymraeg 2050 Work Programme for 2021-26* commits us to extend the role of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, and develop proposals for the Welsh Medium Education Bill to place the Coleg on a statutory footing.

It will be for the First Minister to consider a timeframe for introducing the Bill as part of the Legislative Programme.

We will consider implementation of the legislation as we develop the legislative proposals.

## **Welsh Language Standards Regulations**

You have asked for more information on current work to establish a better understanding of how the Standards have increased the use of Welsh.

I am keen to consider all Government interventions through the lens of Welsh language use. In relation to the standards specifically, I have asked the Welsh Language Commissioner to undertake a piece of work relating to the 'language journey' of users and organisations.

This information will be helpful in establishing a better understanding of what prevents people from using Welsh language services. I am keen to understand the barriers and challenges from the user's standpoint, and also from the standpoint of organisations providing services in relation to all categories of Standards that apply to them, so that we are in a position to help overcome these barriers. I do not intend to place any conditions on the work as it is the Commissioner who is best placed to decide how to undertake the task.

This work is part of the common process of considering the impact of legislation. The conclusions will influence any standards prepared by us in future.

## **National Eisteddfod of Wales**

You have asked for details of the £200,000 earmarked for the National Eisteddfod from the COVID-19 Response Fund and its financial situation in the longer term.

Discussions continue with the National Eisteddfod to ensure they have the necessary resources to organise and hold the Ceredigion Eisteddfod in 2022 and the Llŷn and Eifionydd Eisteddfod in 2023. The aim is to use this funding mainly to support a specialist team to help with the work. As I have noted, part of this funding will support social and

community inclusion and will create new opportunities to attract audiences that have not usually attended this important festival.

We hold regular discussions with the National Eisteddfod to consider their work and vision for the future. We will continue to hold these discussions and will explore what further support is needed in order to ensure a thriving future for the Eisteddfod for future generations.

### **Late immersion provision**

Every local authority in Wales is expected to meet the demand for late immersion provision within their counties. Those needs vary from county to county, and the models and immersion arrangements are therefore different. The following authorities have established arrangements in place to offer late immersion education, either in a centre or in a unit on school premises, in a location that is independent of the school or by a peripatetic arrangement: Gwynedd, Anglesey, Conwy, Denbighshire, Ceredigion, Flint, Wrexham, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, Powys, Swansea, Cardiff, the Vale of Glamorgan, and Newport.

On 14 September this year, I announced that £2.2m was available to support local immersion and late immersion plans. We have received a positive response from local authorities, schools, Welsh language organisations and educational organisations. Every education director and senior education official was informed of the financial investment through the connections of the Welsh Local Government Association and the Association of Directors of Education in Wales, and through direct contact with the local authorities themselves. My officials in the Welsh Language Division facilitated two virtual sessions for education officers in local authorities, regional consortia and school practitioners where presentations were given by peers in other counties on existing immersion arrangements, and also to discuss more practical matters regarding the application, monitoring and evaluation arrangements. Every county has been informed that they have the same opportunity to apply for up to £100,000 funding by completing an Expression of Interest form.

We have received applications from most counties and they have been assessed. I look forward to being able to announce the result of that process very soon.

I am confident that our local authorities and partners will take advantage of this opportunity to expand Welsh-medium late immersion provision in schools and centres. I see this as an important step in our response to the challenges arising from COVID-19. This investment will support learners on an educational pathway to be Welsh-speakers, as well as supporting language progression in the light of COVID-19, and I continue to look forward to seeing exciting, innovative and important plans developed over the coming year.

### **Other matters**

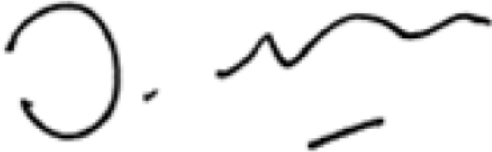
You have asked for my [response](#) to the recommendations of the review of the National Centre for Learning Welsh. It was published on the Government's website on 22 October. I published a [Written Statement](#) for Senedd Members informing them of this.

You also asked for my response to the statement by the National Museum for Wales and the Arts Council of Wales on the Widening Access Report. The report is a matter for the organisations in question – I have emphasised numerous times in my work that I am eager for each one of us to own the language, as it belongs to us all. Increasing the numbers that

take an interest in the Welsh language, learn our language and use it, is of the highest importance for me.

In our document published in July, with our 5 year Work Programme ([\*The effects of COVID-19 on Welsh language community groups: government response\*](#)), I responded to a recommendation by the Welsh Language Partnership Council's Increasing the Use of Welsh Sub-group, (that steered the research and created recommendations on that basis) regarding the Arts Council of Wales and Sports Wales. I look forward to working with both organisations over the next five years in order to understand how we can work in partnership to increase the use of Welsh.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large 'J' followed by a series of wavy lines and a short horizontal stroke at the end.

**Jeremy Miles AS/MS**  
Gweinidog y Gymraeg ac Addysg  
Minister for Education and Welsh Language

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