

Agenda – Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 3 – Senedd

Meeting date: 24 September 2015

Meeting time: 09.00

For further information contact:

Sarah Beasley

Committee Clerk

0300 200 6565

SeneddCELG@Assembly.Wales

Private pre-meeting (09.00 – 09.15)

1 Introductions, apologies and substitutions

2 Legacy inquiry: First Minister of Wales

(09.15 – 10.15)

(Pages 1 – 24)

Rt. Hon Carwyn Jones AM, First Minister of Wales

Bethan Webb, Deputy Director, Welsh Language, Welsh Government

Awen Penri, Head of Welsh In Education Development Branch, Welsh Government

Break (10.15 – 10.30)

3 Legacy inquiry: Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty and Minister for Finance and Government Business

(10.30 – 11.45)

(Pages 25 – 49)

Lesley Griffiths AM, Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty

John Howells, Director of Housing and Regeneration, Welsh Government

Amelia John, Deputy Director, Fairer Futures, Welsh Government

Jane Hutt AM, Minister for Finance and Government Business

Jeff Andrews, Specialist Policy Adviser, Welsh Government



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Jo Salway, Deputy Director, Strategic Budgeting, Welsh Government

4 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the public from the meeting for item 5

5 Legacy inquiry: First Minister of Wales, Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty and Minister for Finance and Government Business – consideration of evidence

(11.45 – 12.00)

Break (12.00 – 12.45)

6 Legacy inquiry: Minister for Public Services

(12.45 – 14.00)

(Pages 50 – 65)

Leighton Andrews AM, Minister for Public Services

Owain Lloyd, Deputy Director, Reforming Local Government, Welsh Government

Bon Westcott, Deputy Head of Community Safety, Welsh Government

7 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting

8 Legacy inquiry: Minister for Public Services – consideration of evidence

(14.00 – 14.05)

9 Inquiry into the BBC Charter Review – consideration of scoping paper

(14.05 – 14.20)

(Pages 66 – 68)

10 Historic Environment (Wales) Bill: consideration of draft report

(14.20 – 15.00)

(Pages 69 – 123)

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Paper for the Welsh Language Evidence Session - Communities, Equality & Local Government Committee

In a letter from the Committee Chair on 2 July inviting me to a Committee meeting in the autumn to discuss my responsibilities with regards to the Welsh Language, I was asked to provide a paper beforehand on the following issues:

- the Welsh Language Commissioner's Annual Report for 2014-15
- an update on what has been achieved so far in the first year of the Bwrw Mlaen strategy
- an update on the implementation of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, including the introduction of standards
- details of how the Welsh Government intends to take forward issues around the Welsh language in implementing the Donaldson review.

These issues are discussed below in turn.

Welsh Language Commissioner's Annual Report 2014-15

I note the content of the Welsh Language Commissioner's latest annual report. This was a very important year for the Commissioner as the Welsh Language Standards (No. 1) Regulations 2015 were passed by the Assembly. This means that the Commissioner can now carry out her regulatory and enforcement duties in respect of the Welsh Ministers, local authorities and National Park authorities. The action taken by her via statutory powers in response to complaints by the public shows how important her role is in ensuring that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than English.

I also note the Commissioner's achievements with regards to promoting Welsh amongst businesses and the third sector and maintaining an overview of other essential areas such as the translation profession, lexicography and language standardisation.

The first year of *Bwrw Mlaen*

For further details on what has been achieved since publishing the Bwrw Mlaen policy statement in August 2014, see the Annex at the end of this document.

The main achievements include:

Chapter 1 - The Welsh Language and the Economy

- Business Wales has been a first point of contact for businesses, and has started to invest the £400,000 earmarked for the economy.
- Research has been done into the use by business of Welsh-language channels in order to increase our marketing and communication

activities and improve awareness of Welsh-language services. This included a series of Welsh: The Business Brand events.

- We have held a series of workshops in the Teifi Valley Growth Zone to discuss the role of Welsh in business.
- We have had discussions with a number of national and international organisations on developing digital content and software.
- The 'Cymraeg – Byw Dysgu Mwynhau' (Live, Learn, Enjoy) website has been launched as a one stop shop to facilitate and encourage people to use Welsh.

Chapter 2 - Better strategic planning for the Welsh language

- Over £2.25 million of capital funding has been invested to develop 10 Welsh Learning Centres and Spaces.
- The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 includes 'a thriving Welsh language' as one of the seven national well-being goals.
- The Minister for Education and Skills has approved all local authority revised Welsh in Education Strategic Plans.
- On 17 July, the Minister for Education and Skills published the Welsh Medium Education Strategy annual report on the progress made during 2014-15.
- The Planning (Wales) Act 2015 received royal assent on 6 July, which requires local authorities to consider the effect of local development plans on the use of Welsh.
- The Welsh Government has continued to mainstream the Welsh language ensuring that the Welsh language is a central consideration when developing new policies and reviewing existing policies, in order to prepare for the implementation of the standards.
- We have provided advice and guidance to councils to help them promote Welsh e.g. we have helped Powys County Council to establish a Welsh Language working group.

Chapter 3 – The use of Welsh in the community

- We announced an additional investment worth £1.2 million over two years. This included £750,000 to develop the work of the Mentrau Iaith and to strengthen their national structures and train their staff.
- Additional funding was also allocated to Mentrau Iaith Cymru to enable them to support the network of Mentrau Iaith.

- The Welsh Government allocated a total of £3.61 million to 34 organisations through the Welsh Language Promotion grant scheme in order to encourage Welsh-language activities in the community. Almost £300,000 of additional funding was allocated through the Bwrw Mlaen fund to encourage innovation.
- Funding has been given to various organisations such as the Mentrau Iaith, Urdd Gobaith Cymru, the National Eisteddfod, and Young Farmers' Clubs in order to provide a variety of activities for **children and young people** in the community.
- Trywydd has been trialling training for youth workers, and has developed a toolkit.
- During this year's National Eisteddfod we announced that we are allocating £220,000 to expand the Welsh Language Charter across north Wales schools during 2015-16.
- During 2014-15, we implemented the main recommendation of the Welsh for Adults Review Group, which was to establish a National Entity to strategically develop work in this field on a national level. On 12 May 2015, it was announced that the Entity would be established in the University of Wales Trinity Saint David.
- Following the publication of Professor Donaldson's report on the curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales, we will be changing the regime for the teaching and learning of Welsh in English-medium schools in consultation with the education sector. See below for more details on the next steps.

Chapter 4 – Changing linguistic behaviour

- The **Y Llais** brand has been launched to reinforce the message that there are opportunities to use the language in every aspect of our lives.
- The **Pethau Bychain** behaviour change campaign has been launched which concentrates on presenting the Welsh language as a series of small, achievable activities.
- The new website **Cymraeg –Live Learn Enjoy** was launched in March 2015.

The Welsh Language Measure

In readiness for the implementation of the new standards regime, the work of establishing the Welsh Language Tribunal has been completed. Keith Bush QC has been appointed as President, and a further 4 members have been appointed as Tribunal members: Nicola Jones (Legal member); Isata Kanneh

(Lay member); Sara Peacock (Lay member); and Sara Williams (Lay member).

The Measure also makes provision to provide for an Advisory Panel for the Welsh Language Commissioner. Three new members have been appointed to the panel and will serve a three year period from 1 April 2015 – 31 March 2018. The new members are Nick Speed, Heledd Iago and Meinir Davies.

Welsh Language Standards

Welsh Ministers are responsible for preparing the Regulations to make Welsh language standards specifically applicable to organisations. Standards are prepared to:

- improve the services Welsh-speakers can expect to receive from organisations in Welsh
- increase the use people make of Welsh-language services
- make it clear to organisations what they need to do in terms of the Welsh language
- ensure that there is an appropriate degree of consistency in terms of the duties placed on bodies in the same sectors.

In accordance with the Welsh Language Measure, standards fall into the following categories:

- **Service-delivery standards** will be imposed in relation to the delivery of services in order to promote or facilitate the use of the Welsh language, or to ensure that it is treated no less favourably than English.
- **Policy-making standards** will require organisations to consider what effect (including how it will have positive effects and not have adverse effects) their policy decisions will have on the ability of persons to use the language and on the principle of treating Welsh no less favourably than English.
- **Operational standards** deal with the internal use of Welsh by organisations.
- **Promotion standards** will require organisations to adopt a strategy setting out how it proposes to promote and facilitate the use of Welsh more widely.
- **Record-keeping standards** will make it necessary to keep records about some of the other standards, and about any complaints received by an organisation. These records will assist the Commissioner in regulating the organisation's compliance with standards.

The Welsh Language Standards (No. 1) Regulations 2015 were approved by the National Assembly for Wales on 24 March 2015 and came into force on 31 March 2015. These Regulations allows the Commissioner to impose standards on Welsh Ministers, Local Authorities and National Park Authorities.

The Commissioner has commenced the process of imposing standards on these organisations. She has consulted with them on draft compliance notices, and has advised that she plans to issue final compliance notices in

September 2015. Organisations will have to comply with standards from a date set by the Commissioner in the compliance notice, but a minimum of 6 months must pass between receiving the notice and having to comply.

The Commissioner concluded her second standards investigation on 6 February 2015, and presented the conclusions to Welsh Ministers in May 2015. The second standards investigation encompassed 119 organisations from a variety of sectors. It included organisations that provide services in the fields of health, education, emergency services, visitor attractions, Welsh Tribunals, and broadcasting. In accordance with the Welsh Language Measure, I am currently in the process of giving due regard to the Commissioner's conclusions. I will issue a full response to her investigation in the autumn 2015. This will include a timetable for preparing Regulations to make standards specifically applicable to the organisations in the second investigation.

The Commissioner's third standards investigation concluded on 18 August 2015, and included 64 organisations. The organisations were some Government Departments, providers of social housing, water companies, and the Royal Mail and Post Office. I am expecting to receive the Commissioner's conclusion in relation to this investigation in October 2015.

Implementing the Donaldson review.

In March 2014, the Minister for Education and Skills appointed Professor Graham Donaldson to undertake a comprehensive review of curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales. Professor Donaldson's report, 'Successful Futures', was published by Welsh Government on 25 February 2015. On 30 June, the Minister for Education and Skills accepted all of the recommendations in the report.

Professor Donaldson identified 4 key purposes for the curriculum that set the foundations for our children and young people to be:

- ambitious, capable learners ready to learn throughout their lives;
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work;
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world; and
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

Welsh language

In undertaking his independent review, Professor Donaldson considered the reports of a number of independent reviews commissioned by Welsh Government, this included the Review of Welsh second language at Key Stages 3 and 4, chaired by Professor Sioned Davies. Professor Donaldson's conclusions are reflected in his report, which include recommendations on the place of Welsh Language in the curriculum. Professor Donaldson suggests

that there is a need to improve the relevance and quality of teaching and learning of Welsh language in English-medium schools, he proposes a greater focus on children and young people's ability to communicate confidently in everyday setting in Welsh language, with an emphasis on its increasing role in workplace settings.

One of the six key principles in our education improvement plan for 3 to 19-year-olds in Wales, 'Qualified for Life', outlines our commitment to building "Confidence and pride in Wales as a bilingual nation with the strength and assurance to nurture both languages". Welsh Government policy is for the Welsh language to have a firm place in the curriculum in all schools for children and young people from 3 to 16.

There are no plans to change this position. However, there is a need to address a range of significant challenges in the teaching and learning of Welsh as a second language both in primary and secondary schools in Wales. I welcome Professor Donaldson's recommendations in this regard.

Pioneer Schools

As part of an all-Wales partnership, schools and practitioners, as well as other key stakeholders, will be at the forefront of the design and development of our new curriculum. The Minister for Education and Skills invited our regional education consortia to work with their schools across Wales – primary, secondary, special – to apply to be Pioneer Schools. Pioneer Schools, will help to shape the details of the new inclusive curriculum.

Pioneer Schools represent a critically important and a very exciting opportunity to be part of a team that will play a key role in ensuring better learning and higher standards for all of our children and young people and ultimately for Wales itself.

Timeline

The Department for Education and Skills is currently developing a plan which will set-out how Professor's Donaldson's recommendations will be taken forward. This will be published in the autumn.

ANNEX: An update on what has been achieved so far in the first year of the *Bwrw Mlaen* strategy

Chapter 1 – The Welsh language and the Economy

Business Wales has been a first point of contact for businesses, providing information, advice and support through various channels. We have also started investing the £400,000 earmarked for the economy in *Bwrw Mlaen* on specific projects which has led to more activity in Welsh through our business channels. We have also taken advantage of international events such as the NATO Summit and UK Investment Summit Wales, as well as Cardiff Airport as a gateway to the rest of Wales, to market the Welsh language as the language of business.

We have conducted **initial research** to explore why businesses do not utilise the Welsh language channels currently available, and what mechanisms might encourage greater take up, and have increased our **marketing and communication** activity to increase awareness of existing Welsh language services and best practice. This included campaigns in Golwg, the Papurau Bro, national radio, and S4C weather reports, and has resulted in increased activity and take-up of Business Wales services in Welsh.

We have also held a series of **Cymraeg: The Business Brand** events in Cardiff, Caernarfon, Aberystwyth and Llanelli, and Welsh language division officials worked closely with Economy and Tourism officials to mainstream the Welsh language across Government services.

Officials also continued to have an overview of the Anglesey Energy Island programme. As well as working across Welsh Government departments and with Anglesey and Gwynedd County Councils, we are also members of Horizon work boards, which consider the linguistic impact of the development, as well as the Skills and Employment Group.

And in relation to the **Teifi Valley Growth Zone**, following the Task and Finish Group report, over the summer and autumn we are conducting a series of workshops in the area to discuss the role of Welsh in Business and how to strengthen the business brand. The results of these workshops will help set the future direction of projects in the field, including identifying current gaps in provision and research.

We have taken steps to promote the **value of Welsh as a skill in the workplace** as a result of the 'Welsh language skills needs in eight sectors' report published in April 2014, and are working to create a link between Welsh and the workplace. This research has provided evidence to enable skills development programmes and projects to target those sectors and areas where there is the greatest demand for Welsh skills.

Regional Skills Partners have used the results of the survey in their local skills strategies, and this will be developed further during the coming year and will inform future skills programmes and policies.

In the case of **digital content and software**, we have held discussions with a number of organisations to facilitate the work of developing new resources. These vary from universities to high profile individuals and companies in the field e.g. Nuance and Twitter.

This year our Translation Service launched a new website, **BydTermCymru**, which includes open access downloads of specialist translation memories on the Meta-Net pan-European platform. Furthermore, Welsh interfaces were commissioned for international Apple apps such as PlaneFinder, Steppy II and Alto's Adventure.

And in the 2014-15 round of the Welsh Language Technology and Digital Media Fund, grants were awarded to ten new projects, including the University of South Wales to convert GATE language technology resources to Welsh, and the Language Technologies Unit at Bangor University to develop its work in the field of speech technology. Also, in line with our commitment to make it easier for community groups and third sector bodies to take advantage of technical resources, grant funding was allocated to Menter Môn's **O Glust i Glust** project to make it easier to conduct meetings in Welsh in the community.

On a practical level, in order to facilitate and encourage people to use Welsh, we have created a new section on the **Cymraeg – Byw Dysgu Mwynhau** website to bring together in one place all our YouTube videos which show how to change popular software interfaces to Welsh. Another section of the website includes a selection of Welsh mobile apps.

We have also commissioned **digital resources in the field of education** (in 2014–15, about 65 per cent were digital or contained digital elements), and continue to work with the BBC and S4C to offer content on digital learning website Hwb.

Chapter 2 – Better strategic planning for the Welsh language

We have used **Capital Investment Funding** of over £2.25 million to develop 10 **Welsh Learning Centres and Spaces**, with the aim of creating dynamic centres in our towns and communities, and to give community-based projects a basis to be self-sufficient. These will promote the use of, and immersion in, the Welsh language, giving local authorities, colleges and universities the opportunity to work with community partners to enable people to learn or practice their Welsh.

As well as the Welsh language standards (see above), *Moving Forward* challenges us to improve strategic planning for the Welsh language, and to ensure that the language is higher up on policy agendas within the Welsh Government and beyond. The Policy-making Standards and Promotion

Standards will play an important role in this respect, and the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** includes ‘a thriving Welsh language’ as one of the seven national well-being goals which underpin forward planning by public bodies. Welsh Language Unit officials have fed into the process of producing guidelines to remind organisations how duties under the Welsh Language Measure contribute to their duties in relation to the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015.

In the field of **health**, in June *Words into Action* was held – The Welsh in Health and Social Services and Social Care Conference and Awards. The aim of the event was to share good practice in order to strengthen Welsh language services, and to act as a catalyst to achieve the aims of ‘*More than just words*’.

As mental health issues (such as dementia) can affect patients’ ability to use their second language (especially as the condition deteriorates), having a standardised assessment in Welsh is essential for the care of Welsh speaking patients. Recently, the Alzheimer Society’s cognitive assessment toolkit was translated by Bangor University, thereby validating three of the cognitive assessment measures from a linguistic point of view. This is the first ever toolkit to provide a series of cognitive assessments in Welsh.

Since the passing of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the introduction of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans and Assessing Demand for Welsh Medium Education (Wales) Regulations 2013, it is now a statutory requirement for local authorities to prepare **Welsh in Education Strategic Plans**. The 22 plans submitted were considered in detail by the Welsh Ministers. Three plans were approved and the other 19 were approved subject to revisions. All local authorities have also had their Revised Welsh in Education Strategic Plans approved. 5 were approved as submitted and 17 with modifications.

A five year action plan was published with the **Welsh Medium Education Strategy** in April 2010. A three year evaluation of the Strategy is in progress. An interim report was published in November 2014, and it is hoped that the final report is published in autumn 2015. We will then review the Strategy and the targets before setting the direction for the next period of implementation.

The **Planning (Wales) Act 2015** received royal assent on 6 July. The Act contains new powers which require planning authorities to give consideration to the Welsh language as part of their development plans and when considering planning applications.

The Welsh Government’s planning policy states that effects on the use of Welsh should be considered when preparing local development plans, and these implications were formalised in the new Act. It is now necessary for planning authorities to include an assessment of how their planning policies and plans impact on the language when conducting a Sustainability Appraisal. This will ensure that every local development plan, as well as strategic development plans and the new National Development Framework, reflect the

Welsh Government policy of encouraging growth in the use of Welsh. Planning authorities are expected to maintain an evidence base concerning matters relevant to the development plan, and the new act confirms evidence concerning the use of Welsh to be one of those important factors.

The Act provides clarity to local planning authorities that the effect on the use of Welsh can be a material consideration when making development management decisions – i.e. decisions on applications for planning permission. The priority given to the Welsh language has not changed as a result of the Act, however the language is named specifically in order to give planning officials and local councillors assurance and confidence.

In order to continue to **mainstream the Welsh language** across the organisation, we have ensured that the Welsh language is a central consideration in developing new policies and reviewing existing policies, launching a framework for assessing the impact of new Welsh Government policies on the Welsh language. A language awareness e-learning module was also prepared to improve staff awareness of the history, demography, legislation and policies relating to the Welsh language.

On 22 June, a draft **Compliance Notice** was received from the Welsh Language Commissioner, listing the standards she proposes to impose on Welsh Ministers, as well as the date those standards will come into force, under section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. We provided a response to the short consultation that followed, and hope to come to an agreement on the content of the final Compliance Notice in September 2015.

Since the beginning of April 2015, a comprehensive series of engagement sessions has been conducted with staff about the implications of moving to the new standards system. One significant element of the sessions is discussing the organisation's ability to work bilingually, without over-dependence on the Translation Service. Divisional Bilingual Skills Strategies, which consider the need to provide bilingual services in relation to the organisation's Welsh language skills, are revised continuously.

At **local authority** level, we have provided advice and guidance to councils to help them take steps to promote Welsh. For instance, in response to the decline in the number of Welsh speakers in Powys between 2001 and 2011, the Council has committed to establishing a Working Group to consider the current position of the language in the county, and to draw up recommendations on how the Council can reverse the situation. The Council intends to assess its services according to opportunities for people to use Welsh, treating Welsh no less favourably than English, and opportunities to promote Welsh.

The Council received guidance from Welsh Government officials and members of other local authorities before setting up the Working Group and conducting the first meeting in June this year. Officials from the Welsh

language division and the Education Department gave a presentation during that first meeting.

We will continue to work with local authorities to make them aware of the steps we expect them to take in relation to the Welsh language as the process of Local Authority reorganisation continues

Chapter 3 – The use of Welsh in the community

In order to build on the recommendations in Cardiff University's independent review of the work of the Mentrau, the Welsh Language Action Plans and Aman Tawe Welsh Language Promotion Scheme, we announced an additional investment worth £1.2 million over two years. As part of this additional spend, £750,000 was earmarked to develop the work of the **Mentrau Iaith**, including strengthening their national structures to provide a comprehensive training programme to grant partners' staff, as well as resources to market the Welsh language in the community.

Additional funding was also allocated to Mentrau Iaith Cymru to enable them to support the network of Mentrau Iaith. As a result of this additional funding, Mentrau Iaith Cymru were able to appoint two new officers to help the Welsh Government create marketing campaigns to promote the use of Welsh in communities, and develop a comprehensive training programme for Mentrau Iaith staff.

In relation to **Welsh language activities in the community**, the Welsh Government allocated a total of £3.61 million to 34 organisations through the Hyrwyddo'r Gymraeg (Promoting the Welsh Language) grant scheme. Almost £300,000 of additional funding was allocated through the *Moving Forward* fund to encourage innovative projects in areas where there is a high percentage of Welsh speakers, or areas of strategic importance – during 2014-15 sixteen projects were supported with this funding.

Acting on the recommendations of the **National Eisteddfod** report, at the Montgomeryshire and the Marches event held in Meifod this year a number of new elements were further developed and were popular with those attending the festival. These included specific 'village' areas for food and entertainment, folk, crafts and drama. Large, colourful banners were set above each area to denote the different 'villages', with a special Maes B Café image in the shape of a teepee for young people proving very popular as a place to relax and listen to live music. 150,776 attended the event this year.

With Welsh Government support, amongst other developments were the establishment of a new Eisteddfod website, and through Bwrw Mlaen grant funding a group of young people from the area had an opportunity to learn about performing in a band, arranging gigs and filming videos. Looking forward to 2015/16, a part time coordinator has been employed by the Eisteddfod to promote the music scene for young people.

Our main schemes in relation to **families** are Twf and Tyfu gyda'r Gymraeg. Twf is the biggest scheme, and operates across north and south-west Wales in order to encourage parents or carers who speak Welsh to transmit the language to their children. Tyfu gyda'r Gymraeg is our current programme to support parents or carers to transmit Welsh to their children and increase their confidence to use the language with them.

We have continued to fund a range of organisations to provide a variety of activities for **children and young people** in the community. This work included the allocation of grants to organisations such as the Mentrau Iaith, Urdd Gobaith Cymru, the National Eisteddfod, and Young Farmers' Clubs. Contracts were also allocated to Community Music Wales, Literature Wales, and Trywydd for the Supporting Language Use Project for children and young people (24 schools took part in the project during 2014-15).

To coincide with this community aspect, Trywydd developed and trialled training for youth workers, and developed a toolkit which will be a useful resource to influence and support young people's use of Welsh.

During this year's National Eisteddfod I announced that we are allocating £220,000 to expand the **Welsh Language Charter** across north Wales during I 2015-16.

The Charter, which has been trialled in Gwynedd, was developed in primary schools as a framework to encourage children to use Welsh in a social context. Under the Charter, each school assesses the use of Welsh amongst its pupils, before developing an action plan which works towards a gold, silver or bronze level. The Charter encourages everyone – from pupils, parents, governors and the wider community – to play a part.

Building on the success of the pilot project in Gwynedd, which has seen an increase in the social use of Welsh amongst young people, the Charter will now be extended to include Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham during the next year. Gwynedd Council will be responsible for doing this, with the aim of developing the Charter into a national programme.

On 12 May this year following a competitive grants process, it was announced that the University of Wales Trinity St David had been successful in their application to be the **National Entity for Welsh for Adults**. The Entity will lead work in this field strategically on a national level going forward, and will also implement the other recommendations of the Welsh for Adults Review Group. Work to implement the other recommendations of the review has included:

- developing new funding arrangements
- developing a new curriculum for future courses
- developing new assessment arrangements to be trialled in September 2015
- implementing a national marketing campaign via social media.

Chapter 4 – changing linguistic behaviour

Raising awareness and encouraging people to use the language in every aspect of their lives is crucial, and we have developed a series of marketing campaigns and brands with the aim of contributing to changing linguistic behaviours.

In August 2014, the **Y Llais** brand was launched to support the Welsh Government and our partners to promote Welsh activities, events and services, and to reinforce the message that there are opportunities to use the language in every aspect of our lives: to live, learn and enjoy.

The **Pethau Bychain** behaviour change campaign was launched in the 2014 National Eisteddfod, which concentrates on presenting the Welsh language as a series of achievable things, and using suggestions from individuals to show their peers that making small changes to include more Welsh in their daily lives is easy.

Campaigns were conducted targeting different audiences, e.g. the Pethau Bychain Competition for young people aged 14-25 years to coincide with skills week (Autumn 2014), and the C'mon Cymru campaign to coincide with the 6 Nations rugby championship and St David's Day.

The new website **Cymraeg – Byw Dysgu Mwynhau (Live, Learn, Enjoy)** was launched in March 2015 (the first of the Welsh Government's sub-sites to use the new domain **.cymru**), which is a portal for all kinds of information about the Welsh language. And as well as the **Cymraeg: The Business Brand** events held to promote the use of **.cymru** amongst businesses, the new domain was also a part of the Cymraeg and **@iaithfyw** social media plans.

We have also been conducting research in order to improve the effectiveness of our techniques, for example to consider at which point an individual is influenced to change his or her behaviour with regards to the Welsh language, as well as the common aspects which we would like to influence. And a series of workshops and meetings were held with various partners to consider how we can change our behaviour as a government in terms of presenting people with information and reasons for using Welsh.

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Lesley Griffiths AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cymunedau a Threchu Tlodi
Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty
Y Pwyllgor Cymunedau, Cydraddoldeb a Llywodraeth Leol
Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee
CELG(4)-22-15 Papur 2 / Paper 2
Ein cyf/Our ref: SF/LG/2127/15



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Christine Chapman AM
Chair, Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

27 July 2015

Dear Christine,

Thank you for your letter of 15 June, regarding the legacy work of the Committee. You requested an update on progress against a number of Committee recommendations in relation to my portfolio, however, you included a reference to the Inquiry into Human Trafficking. This falls to the Minister for Public Services, and I understand he has addressed your queries in a separate letter.

In addition to the inquiries referenced in your letter I also include an update on the Inquiry into Disability Related Harassment in Wales. Undertaken in 2011, the Welsh Government response was issued by my colleague, the then Minister for Finance and Leader of the House. We accepted all of the recommendations contained within the report and have made significant progress in delivering against them.

We published *Tackling Hate Crimes and Incidents: A Framework for Action* in May 2014, alongside a supporting annual delivery plan. This has been formed across three key objectives on prevention, supporting victims and improving multi-agency working so is linked to a number of recommendations from the inquiry report. The Framework was developed through a Task and Finish Group, which included representation from the Disability Hate Crime Action Group. It also includes a specific objective to deliver training and awareness in service delivery.

A review by the Equality and Human Rights Commission has evidenced the work being taken forward across Local Authorities in Wales. This has helped to establish current practice across Wales. For example, 20 out of 22 Local Authorities have an objective in relation to tackling hate crime or have identified a specific disability hate crime objective. The Welsh Government funded eight Regional Community Cohesion Coordinators support tackling hate crime and harassment as part of their work. The *Strategic Equality Plan* for 2012-2016 also includes a specific objective to tackle hate crime and bullying.

The Inquiry into the Provision of Affordable Housing in Wales reported in April 2012. In his response, the then Minister for Housing, Regeneration and Heritage accepted 13 of the 14 recommendations, with one recommendation accepted in principle. With the publication of the *Housing White Paper*, the enactment of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and the introduction of the Renting Homes (Wales) Bill it is clear the Welsh Government has taken the challenges in this area seriously.

Within our Programme for Government we committed to deliver an additional 10,000 affordable homes within this Assembly, and we are on track to do so with almost 70% of those homes in place. Cooperative housing is being developed at a number of sites across Wales which will deliver over 100 affordable cooperative homes. Cadwyn Housing Association will be launching the first cooperative housing scheme over the summer. We have also brought 4,471 empty properties back into use against a target of 5,000 and our recent legislation in respect of the Right to Buy will safeguard social housing stock. We introduced, and extended, *Help to Buy – Wales*. To date there have been over 1,600 completions through the scheme with three quarters of these coming from first time buyers.

In terms of public sector land, progress has been made with the database, with approximately 21,500 entries in Wales. In the first three years of this administration 2,090 additional affordable homes have been delivered on land made available by the public sector. The Welsh Government's Land Release for Affordable Housing programme is expected to deliver in the region of 400 affordable homes within this administration, with a further 100 in the future.

I am working with the Minister for Natural Resources to ensure alignment between housing policy and planning policy. I am also working with colleagues and stakeholders across the private, public and third sectors to deliver a range of options for people seeking affordable housing in Wales. The house-builders are integral to this and regular discussions are held with them about options and proposals.

Meeting the terms of one recommendation in full, the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 provides Local Authorities with discretionary powers to introduce a council tax premium of up to 100% of the standard charge on long term empty homes in their areas.

The then Minister for Housing, Regeneration and Heritage accepted 8 of the 23 recommendations set out in the 2013 Inquiry into Home Adaptations. A further 11 recommendations were accepted in principle. As stated in the response, we have undertaken our review into adaptation services, in line with the commitment in the *Housing White Paper*. We have established a Working Group to take forward the development of an enhanced national system for adaptations. The Group is meeting this month to finalise arrangements with a view to roll-out in spring 2016.

I have not progressed the recommendations rejected by my predecessor.

The Inquiry into the Future of Equality and Human Rights in Wales reported in August 2013. The then Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty accepted five of the recommendations and accepted a further three in principle. A number of these related to the need for greater legislative competence, and this is a matter the Welsh Government raised with the Silk Commission. Discussions as to the precise nature and extent of the UK Government's position as set out in the *Powers for a Purpose White Paper* are continuing. As part of those discussions we want to ensure there is no lessening of powers within current competence.

These discussions are particularly important in light of the UK Government position on the Human Rights Act and their stated intention to consult on any changes.

Turning to the other recommendations, a concordat between the Welsh Government and the Equality and Human Rights Commission was signed by my predecessor in March 2014. The Commission is not able to accept core funding from the Welsh Government. However, we are able to commission specific projects from them, on a chargeable basis. We have also engaged with Simon Hoffman of Swansea University and Professor Teresa Rees of Cardiff University as suggested. Socio-economic considerations are being taken forward through the provisions of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Finally, the Inquiry into Barriers to Home Building in Wales. As part of my House-Builder Engagement Programme it is my intention to continue working with key partners to understand barriers to development. I recognise some of these are more significant, and it may be possible to resolve them through policy interventions.

My colleague, the Minister for Natural Resources, leads on matters relating to planning policy in Wales. As I have already stated, we are working together to ensure alignment of planning policy and housing policy in Wales. The Welsh Government is committed to seeing the planning system becoming an enabler of appropriate development, which supports national, local and community objectives. Currently there are 16 adopted Local Development Plans in Wales out of a total of 24, and these include land for new home building.

Following discussions with the Design Commission for Wales, my officials have been engaged in raising awareness of alternative and non-traditional approaches to home building. In addition to subject specific design guidance, opportunities to influence standards within the private sector are provided through implementation of National Planning Policy and statutory Building Regulations.

The Welsh Government's Development Quality Requirements, the standard which social landlords need to use when building homes through the Social Housing Grant, has recently been reviewed. The Review Group, which included representation from across the sector, made a number of recommendations for change. However, the fundamental requirements are the same and I have agreed the revised Standard in principle, subject to the statutory requirements for public consultation.

We are also continuing to look for innovative ways to fund house building within Wales. For example, designing a second phase of the innovative Housing Finance Grant which we expect to provide in the region of 2,000 additional new affordable homes. The Committee will also be aware Stamp Duty Land Tax is due to be devolved to Wales from April 2018. Legislation is likely to be introduced in the next Assembly, subject to the will of that Government.

You have also asked for an update on Welsh legislation falling to my portfolio. The Mobile Homes (Wales) Act 2013 has been fully implemented and all the secondary legislation to introduce the new licensing system for mobile home sites is in place.

Work is currently underway on implementing Part 1 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 which will introduce a registration and licensing scheme for landlords and letting and management agents in the private rented sector. Statutory Instruments to introduce elements of Part 1 of the Act are in place covering the establishment of a single licensing authority (Cardiff Council), training requirements and information, periods and fees. It is expected the scheme will formally be in place in October 2015. Implementation of the remainder of the Act will take place over a longer time frame.

I would be happy to provide you with more information on these matters at the Committee session scheduled for 24 September.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lesley Griffiths". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping 'L' and 'G'.

Lesley Griffiths AC / AM

Y Gweinidog Cymunedau a Threchu Tlodi
Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty



Ein cyf/Our Ref: SF/JH/2104/15

Christine Chapman AM
Chair, Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

27th July 2015

Dear Christine,

Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee legacy work: request for update on progress against Committee recommendations.

Thank you for your letter of 15 June, requesting an update on progress against the Committee's recommendations regarding equality impact assessing the Welsh Government's budget.

Enclosed is a table at Annex A, providing an update on the recommendations contained in your report '*Equality considerations in the Welsh Government's budget*'.

Yours sincerely,

Lesley Griffiths AC/ AM
Y Gweinidog dros Cymunedau a
Threchu Tlodi
Minister for Communities & Tackling
Poverty

Jane Hutt AC/ AM
Y Gweinidog Cyllid a Busnes y
Llywodraeth
Minister for Finance & Government
Business

Response to the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee’s request for an update on progress against the Committee’s recommendations

In November 2012 the Committee made seven recommendations in regards to the Equality Impact Assessment of the Budget. This table provides an update on action taken by the Welsh Government as a result.

Recommendation	Progress update
<p>1. Publish the EIA of the draft budget alongside the draft budget in order to underline the importance of the document as a tool of financial scrutiny.</p>	<p>Following the Committee’s recommendation, the Draft Budget 2014-15 EIA was published on 8 October 2013 alongside the Draft Budget. Each year since, we have published an Impact Assessment of our spending plans alongside our Budget proposals. We have also looked to continuously improve our approach year on year, by widening our considerations to include socio-economic disadvantage, children’s rights, Welsh language and sustainable development, in addition to the focus on equality. In line with this, we published the Strategic Integrated Impact Assessment (SIIA) of the Draft Budget 2015-16, which was focused on the strategic decisions taken in the context of preparations for the Draft Budget 2015-16.</p>
<p>2. Take a more systematic approach to assessing equality impacts, rather than providing a narrative about how equality impacts were assessed</p>	<p>The Welsh Government accepted that the Impact Assessments undertaken when considering the Draft Budget should be more systematic in their approach. There are various steps we have identified and taken as a focus for improving our Impact Assessment of our spending plans, particularly in terms of the inclusion of consideration of impacts on socio-economic disadvantage, children’s rights, Welsh language and sustainable development, and in terms of the collection and use of evidence.</p> <p>Understanding the links between equality and the other areas of impact assessment allows us to add value to the way in which we make decisions. It enables us to consider the full range of potential impacts, and make a spending decision informed by that understanding..</p>

	<p>Potential impacts that have been identified have been supported by evidence and engagement with protected groups. Evidence used to support and shape the decisions taken for Draft Budgets has included the information and knowledge already held by the Welsh Government, together with previous EIAs and ongoing consideration of children's rights, sustainable development and Welsh language. The Budget Advisory Group for Equality (BAGE) has also made a valuable contribution to the evidence base.</p> <p>The period over which we have been developing our approach to Impact Assessments has been characterised by budget reductions. It has been incredibly difficult to accommodate these without impacts on those who depend on services. Where significant impacts on any of the protected groups were identified, departments were asked to provide further evidence and details of action to either mitigate negative impacts or enhance positive impacts.</p>
<p>3. Contain an assessment of the cumulative impact of multiple changes across departments, so assessments are not segregated.</p>	<p>The Impact Assessments of the Draft Budgets for 2014-15 and 2015-16 have included information that considered each protected characteristic and the potential impact that the collective spending decisions might have.</p> <p>To support the Draft Budget 2015-16, this was published in the Review of Evidence on Inequalities in Wales.</p> <p>We are aware that the evidence around particular protected characteristics is very limited, which makes it extremely difficult to assess accurately the potential impact of our spending on these protected groups. Our continual assessment of each of our policies and strategies and our ongoing engagement with these protected groups is helping to improve our evidence base. It will continue to do so over time, increasing the robustness of our impact assessment of our spending plans each</p>

	year.
4. Include more of a focus on gender.	<p>The Welsh Government has, over recent Draft Budgets, had an increased focus on considering equality and the effect on groups with protected characteristics has continued to be central to the budget process and we have sought to promote each of the protected characteristics, and as such we have sought to promote gender equality through our budgetary decisions.</p> <p>Over the term of this Government, and in response to the economic downturn, one of our key priorities has been the need to protect jobs and growth. As part of this, the Welsh Government has committed to widening the opportunities and accessibility of employment to women in Wales.</p> <p>The Welsh Government, in conjunction with European Social Fund ESF funding, has supported the Women Adding Value to the Economy (WAVE) project. The aim of this is to understand and address the ways in which gender pay inequalities are reproduced through occupational segregation in employment, through the ways in which women's work is contracted and through the operation of pay systems.</p> <p>It is also clear that women will be disproportionately hit by the UK Government's decisions on Welfare Reform, and may be disproportionately negatively affected by the tightening financial environment and reducing public services. We are seeking to mitigate these where possible.</p> <p>The Welsh Government currently provides funding to gender specific organisations in Wales, including £261,838 over 3 years for an all Wales Women's Network (WEN Wales). The network can bring issues facing women to the attention of the Welsh Government. To ensure this the Women's Equality Network (WEN) Wales is represented on the BAGE. Their expertise and contribution to the evidence base</p>

<p>5. Give an indication of how equality has been considered throughout the financial planning process, with the EIA acting as demonstration of this, rather than being a reactive document that accesses potential impacts after the decisions have already been made</p>	<p>feeds into our EIA considerations.</p> <p>EIAs are undertaken at the start of the decision-making process, ensuring the financial decisions made are fully informed by relevant equality considerations. As such, the financial decisions made and described within the Draft Budget EIA detail the potential impacts which have informed them.</p> <p>Policy decisions, including spending decisions, are assessed in the round, and the Welsh Government remains committed to mainstreaming, and embedding, the considerations of impacts on the people of Wales at the outset of policy development.</p> <p>Departments are instructed to have regard to cross-cutting themes, not only equality but also socio-economic disadvantage, children’s rights, Welsh language and sustainability development. In taking this approach, we have worked to avoid a checklist approach that prohibits an integrated approach to policy development. We are also committed to continually assessing each of our policies and strategies and our engagement with protected groups will help to improve the evidence base and therefore improve the EIA process.</p> <p>In the context of the budget, this means, in many cases, we have already taken steps early on in the budget setting process to mitigate negative impacts. However, reducing budgets will inevitably mean some negative impacts on different groups. Our EIAs help us to understand the impacts and mitigate the negative impacts where possible.</p>
<p>6. Include a copy of the EIA template used to identify equality impact, copies of (or links to) the actual EIAs (which were referenced</p>	<p>The Welsh Government provides a suggested template for the completion of an EIA, and this template is available on the Welsh Government internet page at: http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/equality-diversity/?lang=en</p>

in the EIA document)	<p>Welsh Government Departments complete Equality Impact Assessments as part of their policy development or review of their policies and programmes and spending decisions. These are subsequently published on the Welsh Government internet, alongside the relevant policy/ decision.</p>
<p>7. Include a summary of changes that have been made as a result of the EIA process</p>	<p>Through our impact assessments, we are striving to ensure our investments are focused on tackling inequalities and poverty - to deliver a thriving economy and support diverse communities, where equality of opportunity is promoted and protection is provided for those who are most disadvantaged.</p> <p>Equality Impact Assessments have been taken on all of the spending decisions made by Ministers since the publication of the Draft Budget 2011-12. This has ensured that the decisions taken have been informed and influenced by equality considerations. As highlighted previously, against a backdrop of reducing budgets, we recognise that there will be some negative impacts. In this context, the focus does not rest solely on changes but on understanding the the full range of impacts in reaching a decision, and mitigating negative impacts where possible.</p> <p>Changes in budget proposals made between the Draft Budget and the Final Budget have been detailed in the Final Budget documentation.</p> <p>We have been consistently clear that our key investments continue to be health, schools and universal benefits, and also maintaining support for communities, and as such the focus of our spending plans on our main priorities of: health; growth and jobs; raising educational attainment; and supporting children, families and deprived communities.</p> <p>. Targeting funding in these areas has provided support for those who need it most and support Programme for Government priorities. With this in mind, we have used</p>

	<p>the strong evidence that improving educational outcomes and increasing skills can help individuals both in gaining employment and in increasing their earning levels, thereby helping to prevent poverty.</p> <p>The allocations to the Health and Social Services budget have helped ensure we meet the future challenges facing our health service and secure the long term sustainability of the NHS in Wales. They reflect our commitment to the health and well-being of the people of Wales, and protecting, and providing additional funding has allowed for positive impacts for all the protected characteristic groups across Wales.</p>
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Lesley Griffiths AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cymunedau a Threchu Tlodi
Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Y Pwyllgor Cymunedau, Cydraddoldeb a Llywodraeth Leol
Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee
CELG(4)-22-15 Papur 4 / Paper 4

Ein cyf/Our ref: SF/LG/2438/15

Christine Chapman AC/AM
Chair, Communities, Equality and Local
Government Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

8th September 2015

Dear Christine

Ahead of my attendance at Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee on 24 September, I am writing to update the Committee with the attached paper on progress from the Budget Advisory Group for Equality.

I am copying this letter to the Minister for Finance and Government Business.

Lesley Griffiths AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cymunedau a Threchu Tlodi
Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty

Budget Advisory Group for Equality

The Budget Advisory Group for Equality was established in December 2012, following a commitment in the Equality Impact Assessment of the Draft Budget 2013-14. The Group provides advice, support and challenge to improve equality considerations of our budget process. It provides a forum for sharing and discussing the nature of inequalities in Wales and is a valuable source of expertise and a key channel for engagement.

Membership

In 2012-13, the BAGE was chaired by the Minister for Finance and Government Business, who had responsibility for equality. The Group meets four times a year.

Since July 2013, the group has been co-chaired by the Minister for Finance and Government Business and the Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty. The following groups are represented at the BAGE:

- AGE Cymru
- Disability Wales
- NHS Centre for Equality and Human Rights
- Stonewall
- UNCRC Monitoring Group
- Wales Race Forum
- Wales TUC
- WEN Wales
- WCVA
- WLGA

Caroline Joll, ex-emeritus economist, Cardiff University, provides expert advice and the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) also sits on the group as an independent observer.

Summary of work

In January 2015, the Group reviewed its Terms of Reference and remit, formulated a work programme to undertake in-depth discussions and considerations of aspects of Welsh Government programmes and policies and requested a web presence on the Welsh Government's Internet site.

To date they have discussed housing policy and the Foundation Phase Evaluation. During the remainder of the year, the group will discuss educational attainment and protected characteristics and Communities First.

Transparency

A web-page has been set up on the Welsh Government's Equality and Diversity pages. This explains the work of the Group and hosts meeting agendas, papers and minutes of past meetings. These can be found at:

<http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/equality-diversity/budget-advisory-group-for-equality/?lang=en>

Lesley Griffiths AM
Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty
September 2015

Agenda Item 6

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

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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref SF/LA_/2126/15

Christine Chapman AC / AM
Chair, Communities, Equality and Local
Government Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

30 July 2015

Dear Christine,

Thank you for your letter of 15 June regarding the legacy work of the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee. I apologise for the delay in responding.

You requested an update on progress in two of the Committee's inquiries within my portfolio - Community Safety in Wales and Progress with Local Government Collaboration, along with information on the implementation of Welsh legislation. You have asked the Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty for an update in relation to the Inquiry into Human Trafficking. Matters relating to your inquiry into Human Trafficking also fall to my portfolio, and I have included an update on those recommendations.

The inquiry into Community Safety in Wales, was undertaken in 2011 and responded to by my colleague, the then Minister for Local Government. At that time we accepted five of the six recommendations, and rejected one. Since that time significant progress has been made.

As part of its Programme for Government, the Welsh Government committed to fund 500 Community Support Officers. These Officers have been in place since October 2013. In February the report of the Universities Police Science Institute (U PSI) into the role and effectiveness of the additional 500 Community Support Officers on the streets of Wales was published. The research suggests our additional officers are visible on our streets and that they are meeting the public's expectations by dealing with low-level crime and anti-social behaviour.

Domestic Abuse remains a priority for this Government, with continued engagement with the Police and Crime Commissioners, the Chief Constables, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and others. ACPO is represented on my Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Advisory Group. We will be working closely with ACPO in developing our National Strategy, in line with the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015.

Regular meetings are held with the four Police and Crime Commissioners for the Welsh forces and the four Chief Constables. The four Chief Constables also attended Cabinet on 23 March. The Police Liaison Unit within the Welsh Government has been strengthened and now comprises five officers and staff, who have regular contact with Welsh Government officials on a range of policy matters.

The matter of police station closures is now the responsibility of the Police and Crime Commissioners.

The rejected recommendation related to services and posts jointly funded by the Welsh Government and the Home Office. As my predecessor stated, it is not for the Welsh Government to meet reductions in funding from other sources. The latest information on police budgets for 2015-16 was published on 17 June.

With regard to the inquiry into Progress with Local Government Collaboration, this made six recommendations, of which the Government accepted five and accepted one in principle. The response, issued by my colleague, the then Minister for Local Government and Government Business, was published alongside the Commission on Public Service Governance and Reform. The position on public services in Wales, and specifically on Local Government in Wales, has moved significantly since that time.

One of the 20 high level actions outlined in the document *Devolution, Democracy and Delivery: Improving Public Services for People in Wales* reiterated the need to ensure collaborations and partnerships are well aligned to ensure clarity, reduce complexity and avoid duplication. In the context of Local Government reform it is particularly relevant that we ensure, wherever possible, that existing and future collaborations align with the boundaries of the new merged Local Authorities.

On 17 June the Welsh Government's preference for the future configuration of Local Authorities in Wales was announced. Co-terminosity between Local Authorities and other public services such as Health has been a key consideration in thinking about the future map of Local Government in Wales. Work is already underway to identify the most strategically important regional collaborations, and shows they are broadly well aligned with proposals and consistent with the Welsh Government's Regional Collaborative Footprint.

The *Power to Local People* White Paper set out the future relationship between Welsh Government and Local Government, as well as considering scrutiny of regional collaborative working. Overview and scrutiny committees have also been given powers to review and scrutinise Public Services Boards through the Well-being for Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Resourcing issues will be considered within the Regulatory Impact Assessment for the draft Bill on mergers and reform to be published in the autumn.

In the meantime I and my officials will continue with our programme of engagement with Local Government. I have established the Public Service Leadership Panel, which most recently met on 16 July, and includes representation from across the public sector. I spoke at the Welsh Local Government Association Conference in June and a programme of official level meetings will be taking place over the summer.

With regard to the Inquiry into Human Trafficking, your letter to my colleague, the then Minister for Local Government and Government Business, contained a number of recommendations which we have considered very carefully. Raising awareness and building the evidence base are an integral part of the Anti-Slavery Delivery Plan for 2015-16 and the Anti-Slavery Coordinator continues to work with colleagues across the public sector. One example of this is the Wales Anti-Slavery Conference hosted on 14 July. There has also been a focus on strengthening relationships with Law Enforcement Agencies, and the Committee will be aware of the number of high profile investigations and prosecutions which have taken place across Wales and the UK.

In the context of the UK Government's Modern Slavery Act 2015, we have seen Local Authority engagement strengthened. Dr Gwynne Jones, Chief Executive of Anglesey County Council, represents Local Authorities on the Anti-Slavery Leadership Group and there is good representation from the sector across our regional fora. I published the second Anti-Slavery Coordinators Annual Report in November 2014 and we held a national conference in January 2015. We are currently redeveloping the Live Fear Free website, which will go live later this year. The website will contain a section dedicated to the anti-slavery agenda, further raising the profile.

You have also asked for an update on implementation of the provisions contained in Welsh legislation falling to my portfolio. Both the Local Government (Bylaws) (Wales) Act 2012 and the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 have been implemented. Implementation arrangements for the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 are in hand, with the appointment of the first National Advisor, Rhian Bowen-Davies, announced on 15 July. Ms Bowen-Davies will take up the role from 28 September and I look forward to working with her.

I would be happy to provide you with more information on these matters at the Committee session scheduled for 24 September.

Best wishes,

Leighton Andrews

Leighton Andrews AC / AM

Y Gweinidog Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus
Minister for Public Services

Agenda Item 9

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

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