Kirsty Williams MS
Minister for Education

29 January 2021

Dear Kirsty,

**Welsh Government Draft Budget 2021-2022**

At the meeting of the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee on 14 January, Members undertook scrutiny of the Minister for Mental Health, Well-being and the Welsh Language on the budget allocations that support and promote the Welsh language. During our discussion with the Minister, Members raised issues about budget allocations for the Welsh language that sit within your portfolio.

Members were interested in efforts to increase the numbers of teachers able to teach through the medium of Welsh, and why targets for increasing their number, as set out in the Cymraeg 2050 strategy and action plan, have not been met. The Minister for Mental Health, Well-being and the Welsh Language acknowledged there was a particular problem in trying to recruit secondary school teachers. She told the Committee that you have had very positive meetings with the Welsh Language Commissioner and the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to discuss plans for increasing the number of Welsh-medium teachers and supporting all teachers to develop their Welsh language ability.

Please can you update the Committee on the discussions you had with both organisations, and any actions agreed? In particular, we are interested in the £3.65 million expenditure on the sabbatical scheme. I understand an evaluation report of the scheme is due to be published before the end of February. Can you comment on how you will be using the findings of the report to increase participation? Are there any plans to review the targets for this scheme in light of the participation rate so far?

The Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol has contacted me directly to note that it has not received any additional funding to provide develop Welsh-medium provision in the post-16 sector. To enable them to make the difference needed in increasing provision, the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol has suggested an investment of £800,000 from the Government’s Further Education budget for 2021-22, increasing this each year thereafter (£1.4m 2022-23, £2.5m 2023-24 and £3.2m in 2024-25). Can you confirm that the funding it has is sufficient to implement the action plan you as Minister launched in 2018 to develop Welsh-medium provision in the FE sector?

Finally, can you comment on the challenges facing the Welsh Language Project in Patagonia, and the current status of the Welsh Government’s funding allocation to support the project in partnership with other key stakeholders? What conversations are you having with the delivery partners to ensure the scheme continues or adapts during the uncertainty over international travel?
In order to inform the work of the committee and the Plenary debate on the Draft Budget I would be grateful if you could respond by 2 March.

I will be copying this letter to the Chair of the Finance Committee to inform its scrutiny of the Draft Budget.

Yours sincerely,

Bethan Sayed MS
Chair of the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee