



Paul Davies AS
Chair
Economy, Trade, and Rural Affairs Committee
SeneddEconomi@senedd.cymru

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Dear Mr Davies

Considering the Welsh language in the Committee's work

I am writing to you at the beginning of the sixth Senedd term to urge you to ensure that the Committee gives full consideration to the Welsh language in all aspects of its work.

In the Cymraeg 2050 Welsh Language Strategy the Welsh Government announced the vision of reaching a million Welsh speakers and increasing the percentage who speak Welsh daily to 20%. The strategy includes milestones to measure the success of its achievement, with the first milestone in 2021 and the next in 2026. During the sixth Senedd term it will be necessary to take a serious approach to holding the Government to account for the extent to which the Strategy is being achieved and the milestones reached. In that respect it is vital that the Welsh language is mainstreamed into wider legislation and policy and I am concerned that there is insufficient scrutiny of the impact of wider legislation and policy on the Welsh language in general. Indeed, Eluned Morgan, the previous Minister for Mental Health, Wellbeing and the Welsh Language, stated in a scrutiny session:

... I would suggest that actually, rather than just holding me to account when it comes to the budget, [...] that actually you ask the other Ministers, who've got huge amounts of money, what they're doing within their budgets in relation to the Welsh language.”
(Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee meeting, 25 February 2021)

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I emphasise that the Welsh language should not be seen as a cultural issue alone as it is a living language in all communities in Wales and a main language in many of them. Those communities face a number of social and economic challenges that in turn challenge the viability of the Welsh language in those communities.

The Commissioner published a manifesto document¹ for the 2021 election stating that a wide range of factors affecting the Welsh language need to be considered. In the context of the committee's remit that document underlines that it is vital that the Welsh language is seen as a factor that can assist business growth and economic development. We recommended that the government should:

- Include an expectation for businesses seeking financial support from the Government to identify the Welsh language skills of its workforce and commit to using and developing those skills.
- Link the objectives of economic development strategies to those of Cymraeg 2050 by creating opportunities to support new businesses to establish in areas with a high density of Welsh speakers.
- Create quality public sector jobs in areas with a high density of Welsh speakers by supporting flexible working conditions and / or locations for those areas

With regards to the Committee's rural affairs remit in March this year the Commissioner responded to the Government's Agriculture (Wales) white paper. Our comments included the need to consider:

- the impact of the proposals on the family farms that support Welsh-speaking rural communities, as a result of the emphasis on environmental benefits at the expense of socio-economic benefits;
- the lack of recognition of the value of the Welsh language in showing premium products, and the lack of opportunity to capitalize on this unique aim;
- the need to increase and develop the use of the Welsh language within the sector through advice services and skills development plans;
- the need to introduce a financial stream that rewards businesses for linguistic as well as environmental benefits;
- the need to collect data on the Welsh language within the sector in order to set an evidence base that would inform future policy developments;
- the need to develop a thorough impact assessment that addresses the challenges and opportunities for the Welsh language of each proposal, and to identify mitigation measures for any negative impacts.

¹ [Manifesto \(positif.wales\)](https://positif.wales)



Comisiynydd y
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The challenge for the new Government will be to act radically to ensure that we are on the right track to meet the 2050 targets and I believe that the committee has a vital role to play in the effort to ensure that it does so.

I hope that you will bear these comments in mind as you consider the committee's future work. I wish you every success in that work and look forward to contributing to it.

Yours sincerely,

Gwenith Price
Deputy Welsh Language Commissioner