



John Griffiths MS
Chair
Local Government and Housing Committee

SeneddTai@senedd.cymru

19 July 2021

Dear Mr Griffiths

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 second home crisis in a number of communities across Wales which is affecting the cohesion of communities and revealing inequalities is a matter that is of great concern to me.

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. With regards to the Committee's remit the document underlines the need when planning formal collaboration between public organisations to ensure that the Welsh language is protected and promoted. It also refers to the lack of consistency in planning authorities' policies with respect to the Welsh language. This leads to a lack of certainty that appropriate steps are taken to mitigate any adverse effects or to identify opportunities to promote the Welsh language. The document recommends that:

- Ensure that the strongest commitments in terms of Welsh language administration are adopted when developing statutory duties on public bodies to collaborate.
- Provide a clear and detailed guidance to the Planning Authority and local authorities on how to assess the impact on the Welsh language and how planning policies should promote the use of the Welsh language.
- Provide guidance to local authorities on how they can control how many houses are registered as second homes or businesses.

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

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