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Chwaraeon, a Chysylltiadau Rhyngwladol**

—
**Culture, Communications, Welsh Language,
Sport, and International Relations Committee**

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Aled Roberts

Welsh Language Commissioner

Dyddiad | Date: 8 October 2021

Pwnc | Subject: **Support for the Welsh language and annual scrutiny**

Dear Aled,

Thank you for coming to the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee on the 29 September 2021, to discuss, amongst other things, your Annual Report and Assurance Report.

During the meeting you agreed to provide further details on issues which were discussed.

Changes to funding for agriculture

You mentioned that you had written to the Welsh Government about proposals for financial support for the farming sector to replace the funding from the common agricultural policy following the UK's exit from the European Union. You said that there are areas of west and north Wales where over 90 per cent of the agricultural workforce is Welsh speaking. In addition, you mentioned that the proportion of small family farms is higher in Wales than the rest of the UK, meaning changes to funding policies need to be managed carefully to avoid any disproportionate effect on Welsh speaking rural communities.

Please can you set out your concerns with the current funding proposals and any potential impact they may have on the viability of the Welsh language? The Committee understands you have arranged to meet the Welsh Government's Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd. The Committee would be grateful for an update of your discussion, if you are content to share this with Members, in order to inform the work on the support for the Welsh language.

International work

Please can you provide more detail on the work you are doing internationally? The Committee would like to know more about the ways in which your organisation is spreading best practice in the support and promotion of minority languages, and any cross fertilisation of ideas from other countries which Wales can learn from. In particular, the Committee would like to congratulate you on your presentation to the Dail in Ireland on the Iaith Gwaith – Working Welsh scheme and its success in increasing the use of Welsh in public bodies. Please can you provide more detail on your discussions with Members and officials in Ireland?

Widening access reports

The National Museum Wales and the Arts Council for Wales published their '**Widening Engagement Research**' in August. This was based on a series of in-depth conversations with stakeholders led by Re: cognition, Richie Turner Associates and the Welsh Arts Anti-Racist Union (WAARU). Those who took part in the work of WAARU reported feelings of being excluded from the sector which were linked to 'the concept of 'Welshness', which they said:

"often disregards Black and Non-Black People of Colour as the 'other' — there is a notion that if you are not white, you cannot be Welsh".

There was concern that the need for public bodies to adhere to Welsh Language Standards in recruitment exercises may have the unintended consequence of putting off people from applying for jobs in the arts and heritage sectors.

In response to a question in the meeting, you advised that you were in the process of adjudicating this matter and would be able to share your comments with the Committee only once your ruling was decided. The Committee acknowledges that you may not be in a position to comment on this matter at present, but it would greatly appreciate hearing your views once you have made an adjudication on this case.

Stepping Forward: Assurance Report 2020-21

Unfortunately, due to time limitations, Committee Members were unable to discuss the Assurance Report you recently published. Please could you provide the Committee with a brief note informing us of:

- what you consider to be the main impact of the pandemic on the ability of organisations to meet their statutory duties to provide Welsh language services and
- any impact on complaint-handling and statutory investigations as a result?

It would also be of interest to the Committee to hear your views on how organisations have adapted to the need to deliver bilingual services digitally at short notice.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed significantly how many people work, with many staff working in public bodies now working from home. Could you provide the Committee with a broad narrative on how organisations can increase the use of Welsh in the workplace in this changed working environment, and whether organisations are using the resources available to them to develop the workforce's Welsh language skills?

In order to inform the work of the Committee, I would be grateful for a reply to these questions by 5 November 2021.

Yours sincerely,



Delyth Jewell MS

Chair

Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee

