

## Consultation on Welsh Government Funding 2012-2013

### Response of Mentrau Iaith Cymru

#### About us

The first language initiative was founded in the Gwendraeth Valley in 1991. In the ensuing years, other areas have set up their own local language initiative. By 2011, there are 21 in Wales. Mentrau Iaith are managed by a Management Board, comprising of individuals from the local community. They work in partnership with many other organisations. Each initiative operates in its own unique way, depending on local needs, and all have their own strategies, operating methods, targets, number of staff and turnover. Mentrau Iaith are swift and flexible, and are able to transform, evolve and develop quickly if the desire is there in the community. This variety, along with different approaches to suit each community is a strength that is to be welcomed. Mentrau Iaith are the ways in which communities in Wales work for the benefit of the Welsh language. It has proved to be a successful model over the years and is widely recognised as an effective way of developing communities that are able to make a difference locally.

Mentrau Iaith Cymru was founded in 1999, when local initiatives saw the need to work closer and to share ideas and good practice. Members of the Management Board were drawn from local Management Boards. This arrangement has been operational since then. Therefore, Mentrau Iaith Cymru represent the views of communities across the length and breadth of Wales. Mentrau Iaith Cymru exists to support the work of Mentrau Iaith and for the benefit of the Welsh language. Mentrau Iaith Cymru feels strongly that Mentrau Iaith have an essential role to play in realising the aims of increasing the use of the language in our communities. The Welsh language needs Mentrau Iaith; they operate on behalf of our communities, by the communities. Without them, the experience, ideas and vision of people at a grassroots level will not be utilised to promote the language.

#### Our response

1. Looking at the indicative budget allocations for 2012-13, do you have any concerns from a strategic, overarching perspective?

The first thing that came to our attention was that no financial information whatsoever was included regarding the new Language Commissioner, who will be in post before 2012 and operational in the financial years covered by the fiscal document. The matter is mentioned in the [Supplementary Budget Motion 2011-12](#).

The only time that funding for the Welsh language is mentioned is in relation to the Welsh Language Board, under the heading 'Business Improvement and Resource Investment' on page 10.

The Welsh Language Board will not exist from the 2012-13 financial year onward; it is, therefore, a matter of concern that it has been included as a heading until 2014.

2. Looking at the indicative budget allocations for 2012-13, do you have any concerns about any specific areas?

Yes. There has been an underspend in implementing and completing the Iaith Pawb strategy in the past. We are concerned that there will be insufficient resources to fulfil the latest language strategy, Iaith Fyw: Iaith Byw. The document is ambitious, which is to be applauded, but we feel that more resources will be needed to fulfil it than are currently allocated in the budget.

Added to this are the costs of establishing the office of the Language Commissioner, integrating the Welsh Language Board into the Government and so on. We do not know where the funding to meet these costs will be coming from, and are concerned that if they are to be met from the budget for the Welsh language, fewer resources will be available to promote the language.

The Welsh Government wishes to make Wales a bilingual country, and we welcome this. However, we question whether this is possible with only 0.0009% of the Government's budget specifically earmarked for the Welsh language. **Os yw'r awydd i brif ffrydio'r – If the desire to mainstream the**

3. What expectations do you have of the 2012-13 draft budget proposals? What spending commitments and priorities would you like to see in the 2012-13 draft budget proposals?

The Welsh language being given the financial support that it needs to have a real effect throughout the whole of Wales.

4. The new Welsh Government has not yet published a programme of government. However, the Welsh Government has emphasised that it is seeking to deliver an outcomes-based approach, with the First Minister declaring that "delivery will be the watchword of the next Welsh Labour government." What- if any- outcomes do you believe the Welsh Government should be trying to achieve with its 2012-13 draft budget?

Ensuring that effects and success can be measured, and being able to put a cost on success in order to repeat it according to demand. Also, being able to curtail any activity that is unsuccessful. We need to ensure that resources are available to maintain the work to research and measure outcomes, which is needed to facilitate decisions regarding what is working and what is not.

5. Can you suggest any elements that should be in the 2012-13 draft budget proposals to support more effective collaborative working?

A fund to allow small and medium-sized organisations to make changes to their operating methods that will yield long-term savings for the Government. We are aware of the Invest to Save fund, but feel that a similar fund is needed for smaller organisations that are not necessarily funded directly by the Government.