



Eich cyf/Your ref: P-04-541
Ein cyf/Our ref:FM -/05174/14

William Powell AM
Chair, Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
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17 November 2014

Dear William,

Petition: P-04-541 Support for the Mentrau Iaith (Language Initiatives)

I am writing in response to your letter concerning the petition submitted to the Petitions Committee by Dyfodol i'r Iaith in relation to their request to hold an "independent assessment of the resources required by the Mentrau Iaith to operate to their full potential."

In March 2013 the Welsh Government appointed Cardiff University to undertake a "Review of the Work of Mentrau Iaith, Language Action Plans and the Aman Tawe Language Promotion Scheme" The main aim of the review was to prepare a report for the Welsh Government on a number of matters including:-

- the methods used by the organisations to promote and facilitate the use of Welsh
- identifying the whole range of activities conducted by the organisations - and assessing to what extent they reflect local needs, and to what extent the organisations collect data effectively in order to assess the impact of activities;
- do the organisations' structures ensure effective working, partnership working and sharing of good practice
- the potential to further develop the role of the Mentrau
- are the Mentrau doing work that should be done by others (such as local authorities)
- is the level of funding provided by the Welsh Government appropriate.

The report included numerous recommendations for the Welsh Government to consider in relation to the above matters. Regarding the future funding of the Mentrau Iaith, the recommendation of the review was as follows:-

'end the current funding system, review all funding allocated to the organisations, placing ambitious expectations and asking for plans from the organisations and other parties

interested in implementing the above sub-action plan in the form of a new grant application. Ensure appropriate funding to do this'.

The Moving Forward policy statement on the Welsh language recognises that the Mentrau Iaith are an integral part of the communities they serve. I announced in August that we will be investing £1.2m over the next 2 years to promote the use of Welsh in the community, of which £750,000 will be to develop the Mentrau Iaith across Wales, with £250,000 allocated within the 2014-15 financial year and £500,000 allocated in 2015-16.

As part of the funding package discussed for 2014-15, Welsh Government officials recommended that an independent review of the structures of the Mentrau Iaith be commissioned in order to advise on the future staffing, management and financial resources required by the Mentrau Iaith to operate effectively. This option was declined by the network of Mentrau Iaith and the Mentrau Iaith Cymru operational Committee.

Welsh Government funding to individual Mentrau Iaith ranges from £25,550 to £107,768 annually. I agree that there is a need to increase the baselines of those Mentrau Iaith that receives the smallest grant allocation, and officials are currently investigating this matter and will be advising me on this in the near future.

The role of the Mentrau Iaith is key for the future in respect of the implementation of the Welsh Language Standards, the Future Generations Bill, and the recommendations of the Williams Report in respect of the reorganisation of Local Authorities. It is important that the role and influence of the Mentrau Iaith is strengthened in light of the future challenges of language planning.

As requested in the correspondence received by the Petitions Committee from the Operational Committee of Mentrau Iaith Cymru, Welsh Government officials will work closely with Mentrau Iaith Cymru officials to discuss and plan the structures and capacity needed in the future. This will ensure that they are able to adapt effectively in order to develop a strong partnership to work strategically with organisations such as Local Authorities to promote the use of the Welsh language. I am also content to meet Dyfodol yr Iaith representatives to discuss the matter further.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carwyn Jones', written in a cursive style.

CARWYN JONES