



Christine Chapman AM
Chair: Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee
National Assembly for Wales
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Dear Christine

I am writing in response to your correspondence dated 8 October, as Chair of the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee, requesting further information about our work on the Welsh language.

Your correspondence raises a number of points, and I have provided information under the headings suggested in your letter.

Bwrw Mlaen

One of the grant conditions for the funding of the Centres are that each Centre will present a report to the Welsh Government no later than 18 months after receiving the funds. This report will include the following:

- aims and objectives of the project;
- how the goals and objectives will contribute to the goals and strategic areas of our Welsh language strategy, 'A living language: a language for living' and the policy 'Bwrw Mlaen';
- evidence of achievements (including evidence gathered from stakeholders and beneficiaries, where applicable);
- self assessment of the effectiveness and impact of the project;
- lessons learned in undertaking the project.

We expect to receive the first reports in August 2016. Following receipt of the reports, Welsh Government officials will then work with each centre to identify best practice, areas of development and to update the business plan accordingly.

Welsh Government officials are also in regular contact with the centres and meet regularly with their representatives. A bi-annual meeting of all the centres funded through the scheme is also in place, and this arrangement will continue for the foreseeable future.

These centres form an important part of the delivery of our policy *Bwrw Mlaen* and the development of the Welsh language in the community. All of our revenue funded partners such as the Mentrau Iaith, Urdd and others will be expected to work closely with the centres and will inform us on developments in their quarterly reports.

In the case of the Welsh Language Centres and the Mentrau Iaith, the intention is for them to be an integral part of the communities they serve – this means that their activities vary from area to area as a result of the demographic profile of Welsh speakers and the profile of the local economy.

In the case of education, local authorities have a duty to plan how they will provide for Welsh in the education system, tailoring that provision according to local needs, and Welsh Ministers have a key role in relation to local authorities' Welsh in Education Strategic Plans.

Furthermore, in order to improve our awareness of local circumstances, we commissioned a research study concerning *Welsh language use in the community*, which was published on 7 October. This supports the work of the Welsh Government as it refines and develops its approaches to meet the objectives set out in *A living language, a language for living and Moving Forward*.

The vision is for Welsh to be an integral part of people's experiences from birth, with opportunities to use the language through Early Years provision, the school system, in the community and leisure activities, further and higher education and adult learning. We endeavour to ensure that this vision feeds into all aspects of our work and the work of our partners.

We have developed our methods of informing and co-ordinating our partners' work. The Y Llais brand, for instance, creates a strong, unified voice and is an opportunity to ensure that people can see continuity in the work of the Welsh Government and all the partners it funds to promote the Welsh language. It also shows that we share the same vision and that we are working together to encourage more use of the language.

The *Cymraeg – Byw Dysgu Mwynhau* website is a portal signposting the public to a wide range of information about the Welsh language and includes contributions from our partners from every part of Wales. In connection with the website, we have created a CRM system to support the relationship with customers, allowing individuals to register to receive tailored information about Welsh language events and services.

Welsh Language Standards

Concerning why the regulations for the third round will not be made before May 2016, according to the Welsh Language Measure Welsh Ministers must give due regard to the Welsh Language Commissioner's conclusions following her standards investigations. This process takes time, as it is necessary to consider the Commissioner's conclusions alongside evidence provided by the organisations themselves, as well as the Government's policy intent. It is important that we prepare appropriate regulations.

Regulations would have to be prepared by February in order to complete the process of creating legislation before the 2016 elections. Given that over 60 organisations from different sectors are included in the Commissioner's third standards investigation, that does

not allow sufficient time to give due regard to the Commissioner's conclusions and prepare appropriate regulations.

Regarding the bodies in the Commissioner's third investigation, and the timetable for imposing standards on organisations such as gas and electricity suppliers, telecommunications services providers, and rail service providers – in order for us to be able to draft standards, the Commissioner needs to have first conducted an investigation into the organisations in question, and to have provided a report to Welsh Ministers. This is a matter of process and of doing things the right way. I am confident that we will impose further standards on these sectors as the process moves forward, and I look forward to seeing that happen.

As to the Assembly's competence to legislate in relation to private sector organisations, I recognise that Schedules 7 and 8 of the Welsh Language Measure permits some private sector bodies to come under the standards regime. Among others, these include companies which supply energy and water, as well as postal, telecommunications, and transport services. These are companies which provide important services to the public, and I look forward to them being subject to standards in order to improve the services that Welsh speakers can receive in their everyday lives.

The private sector in its entirety does not come under the standards regime as the Measure currently stands. For instance, supermarkets and financial services do not come under the Measure at present.

Planning

Both The First Minister and the Minister for Natural Resources have accepted the fact that Planning Policy Wales and TAN 20 will need updating as a consequence of the Planning (Wales) Act receiving Royal Assent. The provisions contained in section 31 of the Act do not come into force until early 2016 and work to update the planning policy framework will follow soon after.

TAN 20 is primarily intended to assist Local Planning Authorities (LPA) in the preparation of their Local Development Plans (LDP) and it is up to each LPA to determine the significance of the Welsh Language for their own LDP based on their evidence. The impact of the TAN will therefore depend on what stage the LPA is at and the significance of the Welsh Language locally. We are aware, for example, that the issue of the Welsh language has been considered recently by Cardiff Council, which is currently preparing its LDP.

There is an expectation that LPAs undertake an annual monitoring of their LDP. They are expected to publish an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) on how their LDP is performing. Where an LDP has identified policies to support the Welsh Language they should be reflected in the AMR. The changes contained in section 31 of the Act reinforce the requirements previously contained in planning policy that Welsh language considerations can be part of the decision making process. LPAs should already be familiar with these provisions and we will continue to support them through the development and review of LDPs.

Education

Professor Davies's Review

A written statement on Welsh second language in the new curriculum was published on 15 October.

A Languages, Literacy and Communications Area of Learning and Experience will be introduced which will contain clear and distinct progression reference points and achievement outcomes for developing Welsh language skills over time. The work on developing a new curriculum will be taken forward by our Pioneer schools network, supported by Welsh and international experts.

A curriculum for Wales – A curriculum for Life, the high level plan on how we will take all the recommendations in Successful Futures forward, was published on 22 October and includes the key milestones. Our ambition is to design, develop and realise our new curriculum within six years so that it can be available for first teaching by September 2021.

Flying Start

Welsh language provision is an integral part of Flying Start and we have always placed a requirement on local authorities to respond to parental choice, and to deliver Welsh-medium provision where required. The Welsh Government has not set any specific targets for the provision of Welsh-medium Flying Start childcare. However, the Flying Start strategic guidance continues to make it clear that local authorities must put in place arrangements to meet the preference of parents for Welsh-medium and / or bilingual provision.

In 2014-15, which is the latest period for which we have data, 9,393 children were newly eligible for childcare of which 998 requests were made for childcare through the medium of Welsh in Flying Start settings. 965 of these requests were met. This equates to 96% of requests.

The figures indicate that approximately 10% of Flying Start children eligible for childcare received it in Welsh.

Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol

The Welsh Government budget for 2016-17 has not been finalised. The outcome of the spending review will be made public on the 25 November and it is expected that the Welsh Government draft budget will be made available on the 8 December. We will be unable to provide any clarity on budgets until then.

As always I'm grateful to you as a Committee for your comments, and appreciate your constructive feedback.

Yours sincerely



CARWYN JONES