

Cofnod y Trafodion The Record of Proceedings

[Y Pwyllgor Cymunedau, Cydraddoldeb a
Llywodraeth Leol](#)

[The Communities, Equality and Local
Government Committee](#)

13/01/2016

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Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales

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from the Meeting

Cofnodir y trafodion yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynnddi yn y pwyllgor. Yn
ogystal, cynhwysir trawsgrifiad o'r cyfieithu ar y pryd.

The proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in
the committee. In addition, a transcription of the simultaneous interpretation
is included.

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol
Committee members in attendance

Peter Black	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Christine Chapman	Llafur (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Labour (Committee Chair)
Alun Davies	Llafur Labour
Janet Finch–Saunders	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Mike Hedges	Llafur Labour
Mark Isherwood	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Bethan Jenkins	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Gwyn R. Price	Llafur Labour
John Griffiths	Llafur (yn dirprwyo ar ran Gwenda Thomas) Labour (substituting for Gwenda Thomas)
Lindsay Whittle	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Leighton Andrews	Aelod Cynulliad (Llafur), Y Gweinidog Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus) Assembly Member (Labour), Minister for Public Services
Debra Carter	Dirprwy Gyfarwyddwr, Is–adran Polisi Cyllid Llywodraeth Leol Deputy Director, Local Government Finance Policy Division
Iwan Evans	Uwch–swyddog Polisi, Cynllunio Strategol Senior Policy Officer, Strategic Planning
Carwyn Jones	Aelod Cynulliad, Llafur, Prif Weinidog Cymru Assembly Member, Labour, First Minister of Wales

Reg Kilpatrick Cyfarwyddwr, Llywodraeth Leol
Director, Local Government

Bethan Webb Dirprwy Gyfarwyddwr, Iaith Gymraeg
Deputy Director, Welsh Language

Swyddogion Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru yn bresennol
National Assembly for Wales officials in attendance

Sarah Beasley Clerc
Clerk

Rhys Iorwerth Y Gwasanaeth Ymchwil
Research Service

Elizabeth Wilkinson Ail Clerc
Second Clerk

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 09:02.
The meeting began at 09:02.*

**Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon
Introductions, Apologies and Substitutions**

[1] **Christine Chapman:** Good morning, everyone, and welcome to the first committee of 2016 for the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee. We have had apologies from Gwenda Thomas, and I know that John Griffiths will be attending in her place.

**Craffu ar Gyllideb Ddrafft Llywodraeth Cymru ar gyfer 2016–17: y
Gweinidog Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus
Scrutiny of Welsh Government Draft Budget 2016–17: the Minister for
Public Services**

[2] **Christine Chapman:** The first item today is the scrutiny of the Welsh Government draft budget, and we have the Minister for Public Services. Just for you to be aware, we will be holding four ministerial scrutiny sessions over two meetings to inform our work on the draft budget, and, obviously, the deliberations from this committee will be shared with the Finance Committee to inform its wider scrutiny of the draft budget. So, can I welcome the Minister, Leighton Andrews—the Minister for Public Services? Can I also welcome your officials, Reg Kilpatrick, director for local government, and Debra Carter, deputy director, local government finance policy? So, welcome to you all.

[3] Minister, obviously, Members will have had sight of your paper, so, if you're happy, we'll go straight into questions. I just want to ask you—and this is to do with preventative spend—. Now, in your paper you say that cuts to the local government revenue budgets are unavoidable. Could you just explain on what basis you say that, given that the overall revenue funding for Welsh Government departments has increased?

[4] **The Minister for Public Services (Leighton Andrews):** Yes, if you take the period since 2010, of course, we've had successive real-terms reductions to the Welsh budget as a result of successive UK Governments' austerity measures, and those reductions do mean tough choices. If you look at the budget that's come out, the Welsh revenue budget will, of course, be 4.5 per cent lower in real terms in 2019–20 than in 2015–16. So, there will have

been a real-terms reduction in our total budget of 3.6 per cent. We've had to focus our priorities on areas, obviously, of greatest need—priorities that are in line with the Government's programme for government. Just to illustrate what we've been able to do, however, in cash terms since 2010–11, spending per head in Wales in respect of local government has increased by 1.2 per cent, whereas spending per head in England on local government has decreased by 12.6 per cent, and spending per head in Scotland has decreased by 10 per cent. So, I think that we've provided a good settlement for local government in the context of a very difficult financial settlement overall.

[5] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Thank you, Minister. I know that Lindsay has got some questions.

[6] **Lindsay Whittle:** Thank you, Chair, and good morning, Minister. I wasn't on this committee last year, but I understand that there was some criticism of the Welsh Government for not demonstrating how you'd prioritised certain areas—I think that health and local government were two of those areas. I can particularly empathise with local government. I'm a passionate believer, as you know, in local government. Within the local government budget, you've allocated additional funding for schools and social services. I wonder if you could tell us what specific outcomes this additional funding is supposed to lead to. What would you, as the Minister, expect to happen?

[7] **Leighton Andrews:** Let's be clear about the money that has been allocated. We've allocated an additional £34.8 million in the revenue support grant and, added to moneys from the education budget, there will be, overall, £39 million to ensure that local government is able to implement this Government's manifesto commitment to ensure that budgets to schools are protected by 1 per cent above the money that we receive from central Government. On top of that of course, we've allocated £21 million to social services in the context of the RSG. That's separate from and in addition to, of course, the money that's being put in to support the intermediate care fund. We have got clear goals, but these are goals that will be taken through by my colleagues the Minister for Education and Skills and the Minister for Health and Social Services, to ensure that their priorities are delivered by local government. But, essentially, in education it is about continuing to raise standards and in the field of social services it is obviously ensuring that we provide the best care to people of all ages.

[8] **Lindsay Whittle:** Thank you for that, Minister. I'm sure the appropriate committees will monitor those Ministers that you referred to and I would ask a question: how will you monitor those Ministers within your Government as well? How will you monitor that local government is actually spending the money that you're allocating to them in the direction that you want? Respectfully, that is your responsibility as well.

[9] **Leighton Andrews:** It's certainly not my responsibility to monitor other Ministers, but I will obviously have conversations with my colleagues in other departments about the way in which this money is being allocated. We've been accounting for the additional money that's been put in for education and social services now for some years. The education money, obviously, is identified in the annual returns provided to us by local government and I'm pleased that local government has met that target over time, of ensuring that the 1 per cent is passed through to schools. In respect of social services, that money is monitored through the annual returns in respect of social services as well.

[10] **Lindsay Whittle:** Thank you, Minister—

[11] **Christine Chapman:** Sorry, but before you come in, Lindsay. I mean, obviously I know you don't, as you said, monitor those, but are you content that there is enough scrutiny among the Cabinet in terms of some of these very important issues?

[12] **Leighton Andrews:** Well, we talk about these issues on a bilateral basis.

[13] **Christine Chapman:** Right, okay. Because, obviously, other committees will have to scrutinise some of the specifics. Okay; thank you. Lindsay.

[14] **Lindsay Whittle:** Thank you, Minister, for your reply. I know that Welsh local government, just prior to Christmas, have welcomed what money has been made available to them under these particularly difficult circumstances from the London Government, and I appreciate the problems that you have as a Minister as well—I'm not unsympathetic. Much of the investment is in preventative spend. How are you going to ensure that, in fact, you can monitor that preventative spend and that it will be effective? It's no good just throwing money at a subject if we're not actually coming back with results.

[15] **Leighton Andrews:** I think it is important, particularly in difficult times,

that local government and other public services are looking to ensure that the money that is put into the system prevents unnecessary spend subsequently in other areas, or prevents cost shifting between different public services, for example. There would be no point in money not being used wisely, for example, in social services if that just led to further burdens within our hospitals. So, I think there has been quite a dialogue and quite a debate with local government about the way in which we can shift more resources into prevention. We take a leadership role in a number of areas on that. For example, we have a group chaired for us by the chief constable of Gwent, Chief Constable Jeff Farrar, on effective services for vulnerable groups, which has identified best practice in a number of areas, for example dealing with issues such as missing persons, and has brought together public service practitioners to consider some of those most challenging issues where collaboration is needed. Indeed, to illustrate how we've learnt from and absorbed and led on that, their work on domestic violence is now reflected in the national framework put into statute by the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015. But they've also done work in the area, for example, of multi-agency safeguarding hubs, which enable earlier intervention on safeguarding matters. These bring together people from different public services, working together on a long-term basis to identify need and ensure earlier intervention. We've got a number of very good examples there in Gwent, in Rhondda Cynon Taf and in Cardiff and Vale, for example.

[16] **Lindsay Whittle:** Okay. Thank you very much.

[17] **Christine Chapman:** Peter.

[18] **Peter Black:** Thank you, Chair. Can I start by declaring an interest as a member of City and County of Swansea? Minister, despite the reductions for local government, you warn that there are short-term decisions, for example to close leisure centres or libraries, which will store up problems for the future, and the WLGA are also concerned about that. What mechanisms and what support are you putting in place to enable councils to try to mitigate the impact of those short-term decisions?

[19] **Leighton Andrews:** Well, these are decisions that local government will have to take. What I seek to do is to encourage local government to try and plan on a longer term basis. That's not easy to do when our own settlements, clearly, are not on the long-term basis that we would like to see. But I think people have been well aware of the scale of challenges facing them. In fact,

as Lindsay Whittle acknowledged earlier, local government has broadly welcomed this settlement—it's certainly better than they were expecting. Most local authorities were planning, I think, for cuts of around 4 per cent, and the overall cut, of course, is 1.4 per cent. So, it is important that they develop medium-term financial strategies that take account of all the different ranges of income available to them—Welsh Government funding, council tax, fees and charges and, of course, their reserves. And we look to see local authorities collaborating with others in the community to ensure that there is robust and sustainable provision, including in discretionary areas of expenditure, for the future.

[20] **Peter Black:** There are concerns about some statutory services. Libraries are a good example of that, where there are some statutory obligations on local authorities in terms of libraries, although not specifically in relation to individual libraries. Are you working with your ministerial colleagues to ensure that local government do actually maintain that statutory obligation as part of this?

[21] **Leighton Andrews:** Yes, I mean, I think local authorities are aware of their statutory obligations. As you say, statutory obligations are not fulfilled by having specific individual libraries in specific individual places. It is about a general level of provision, but, certainly, I have had those discussions with my colleague the Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism.

[22] **Peter Black:** Okay.

[23] **Christine Chapman:** Before you come back, Peter, I've got Mike, but I just want to pursue that question on leisure centres and libraries. How much work is being done by you as a Minister in terms of ensuring that there's consistency across all local authorities in terms of supporting initiatives for communities to take over leisure centres and libraries? What is your assessment of that?

[24] **Leighton Andrews:** I'm not sure it's for us to ensure consistency between local authorities. Local authorities need to develop whatever is appropriate for their own circumstances. But, of course, my colleague the Deputy Minister for culture has produced guidance in respect of library provision. I, along with other colleagues—my colleagues the Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty and the Minister for Finance and Government Business—have met to discuss issues such as asset transfers and the provision around those. As you will be aware, I commissioned work—

. Sorry, the Minister for Economy, Science and Transport and I jointly commissioned work that was delivered by Keith Edwards in respect of alternative models of delivery, and we've published an action plan around that. So, I think there's been a considerable amount of work that's been done to support local government in this area, and these subjects have been discussed, for example, at the finance seminar we held jointly with the Welsh Local Government Association on 19 November.

[25] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Thank you. Peter, I'll just bring Mike in on a supplementary and then come back to your question. Mike.

09:15

[26] **Mike Hedges:** As you'll remember—I'm sure most members of the committee do—we did an investigation into libraries and I will raise again something that I raised then. In Julie James's constituency, you have a library in Sketty, run by the council, and half a mile away from that, or less than half a mile away, you've got a library run by the further education college. Less than half a mile away, you've got a library run by the University of Wales Trinity St David, and just over a mile away—perhaps a mile and a half away—you've got one run by Swansea University. What discussions have you had with other Ministers about some form of collaboration so that you could actually put the general library and Swansea further education college's library together? There would be savings, but also you'd probably have a better library.

[27] **Leighton Andrews:** Indeed, I think I was a member of the committee when the library discussion took place, so I remember it. Let me say that I don't think it's for me to initiate those conversations in respect of Swansea University, Trinity St David, Swansea Met and Swansea council. These are precisely the kinds of conversation I would expect the local leadership to initiate.

[28] **Christine Chapman:** Thank you. Peter.

[29] **Peter Black:** Thank you, Chair. Minister, you've transferred £31.1 million from the local government improvement action line into the RSG. That previously supported local authorities to build corporate capacity and improve delivery through outcome agreement grants. Does this indicate that you will now abandon this outcome agreement grant process for local government?

[30] **Leighton Andrews:** Well, I came to the view that, you know, it was right for us to reduce the number of specific grants and to enable local authorities to make decisions of their own. I'm very keen that local government drives up overall service delivery and has a consistent focus on performance improvement. I'm not convinced, myself, that the outcome agreement focus necessarily, for the long term, is the way to do that. I think, in the short term, it was a good model and it provided some changes in focus and delivery. Clearly, there was an incentive on local government to ensure that it got the outcome agreement money, but I think that was a short-term measure. I'm more interested in opening up transparency, in having good comparative data on performance by local government across Wales, which I think will enable local people to identify where local authorities are delivering and where they are not—where they are not reaching the best in class. With that information available, it seems to me that that is the way to drive performance change within local authorities. You will be aware also that there has been a continual demand from local government that we should reduce the number of hypothecated grants, and with this decision I think that we move to situation where, during the lifetime of this Assembly, we will have moved £190 million into the RSG, away from hypothecated grants.

[31] **Peter Black:** I certainly support that as well. I'm interested in the explanation on the outcome agreements. I think that you're right. That was a lot of work for local authorities, although it was a specifically different sort of grant to a hypothecated grant because there was a partnership involved in that. Does that mean that you are becoming much more light touch than your predecessors in that regard?

[32] **Leighton Andrews:** I'm not normally accused of being light touch. *[Laughter.]*

[33] **Peter Black:** I know; that's why I'm so confused.

[34] **Leighton Andrews:** Look, I want to focus on performance improvement, but I think that, in the age of big data, it is perhaps easier to draw a transparent—to shine light on the way that authorities are performing. I think that will be the direction of travel for the future.

[35] **Peter Black:** Thank you. My other question is about the reduction of £495,000 to the supporting collaboration and reform action, which of course relates to local service boards, which have just been made statutory by the

wellbeing of local communities Act. Why did the Welsh Government decide to reduce funding in that particular area given that you've just passed a law to put those service boards on a statutory basis?

[36] **Leighton Andrews:** Can I be clear? The creation of the public service boards under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, which kicks in from 1 April, is going to be supported by £730,000, which I have allocated for next year. We've developed guidance on public service boards as to how that funding should be directed to support the wellbeing assessment and the subsequent development of the wellbeing plan. The money that I have transferred—the money that you refer to—I have, in fact, transferred some of that to the legislation and transformation budget to support joint working and collaboration activity.

[37] **Christine Chapman:** Mark.

[38] **Mark Isherwood:** In relation to preventative spend, a local authority, it has been reported today, is making a decision on whether to close all their public toilets. How are you engaging, for example, in that area with local authorities to encourage them to work differently? You mentioned some options—asset transfer or transferring to town and community councils—but are you looking at procurement schemes or community toilet schemes, for example, as an alternative, rather than taking the easy option, which would actually add costs in other areas?

[39] **Leighton Andrews:** There are alternative delivery models. As I said earlier, we commissioned work on that from Keith Edwards. Local authorities are well aware of that work. It was the subject of the discussions in the 19 November joint seminar with the WLGA on financing of local government. I think that they are aware of their responsibilities and I look to them to work with local community organisations, third sector partners and others to deliver where they need to.

[40] **Christine Chapman:** Thank you. Janet.

[41] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Thank you. Good morning, Minister. How does the Minister respond to the WLGA's call for a fundamental review of the local government funding formula? I know it's something that's been raised across the Chamber here. Many feel that the funding formula is very outdated and that it really doesn't help or support our more rural councils.

[42] **Leighton Andrews:** There are a number of issues in relation to the funding formula. We said in our White Paper last February that we were not going to look at a longer term review of the overall local government finance system while we were moving forward on the process of local government reorganisation, but that we were open to exploring the future financing questions. Indeed, I have established a finance futures panel to inform our thinking as a Government on this. And, of course, the WLGA has created an independent commission chaired by Professor Tony Travers, which is also looking at these questions. The two groups are working very closely together and, indeed, I expect to have a presentation from Professor Tony Travers—I've already met him—on the work that he is doing very soon.

[43] In respect of the formula specifically at the present time, the formula is not my formula, of course. The formula is a formula that is agreed with local government through what is known as the distribution sub-group. Authorities from all over Wales are represented on that group. The formula is looked at annually and it's reviewed by independent members to see whether it is still reflecting the needs facing local government. I've not received a collective call from local government for a fundamental review, and, when I talk to local government leaders, I still have yet to find a single local government leader who really thinks the formula works to the advantage of his or her authority. I think there is a recognition that there are going to be winners and losers on different aspects of the formula. The formula takes into account various drivers of need, including population growth, deprivation and sparsity issues. So, it's certainly not the case that rural authorities are disproportionately affected by the formula.

[44] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Can I just ask then, Minister: do you believe it to be outdated or not?

[45] **Leighton Andrews:** Do I believe the formula is outdated as currently constituted? I think the formula is reviewed annually, so I don't think it's technically outdated. I think the issue is whether we need to look more fundamentally at local government finance, and we will do that in due course.

[46] **Christine Chapman:** Janet, before you come back, I've got Mike and Peter on a supplementary and then I'll come back to you. So Mike first, and then Peter.

[47] **Mike Hedges:** Well, I think that most rural authorities get substantially more than Swansea and Cardiff. Would the Minister provide a note on how much per head of population each local authority gets? I think this idea that there's little money going to rural authorities and huge sums going to the large, urban authorities is misguided and wrong in fact. I think if that note could be provided and it could be put in with our evidence, at least then we would actually have the truth of the matter, rather than prejudice.

[48] **Leighton Andrews:** Can I say I'm very happy to provide such a note? Just to illustrate the point that my colleague, the Member for Swansea East—have I got that right this time—has made, authorities such as Cardiff and Flintshire receive less funding per head through the settlement than does Powys.

[49] **Christine Chapman:** Thank you. Peter, and then back to Janet.

[50] **Peter Black:** I absolutely accept that, in terms of funding per head, Powys does receive more than some of the urban authorities. I think the issue though, Minister, is that when it comes to the annual increase or decrease in funding, the rural authorities are consistently at the bottom of the pile and are getting bigger cuts in their funding than the urban authorities. Now, of course, it is based on need and there is a formula in place. But also, even though, say, in terms of Powys, they may have a declining population and may have issues, if there is a certain base at which you have to provide services irrespective of the way in which the population is moving, I was just wondering whether you've considered a mechanism that would try to even out the disparity in funding for various councils as part of the local government settlement this year and maybe for future years as well.

[51] **Leighton Andrews:** The Member will recall that, last year and, indeed, in some previous years, we've had a funding floor in the settlement, if you like, to make allowances for the overall reductions. Indeed, in 2015–16, Powys received an additional £2.2 million as part of the funding arrangements. One of the perversities of this, however, of course, is that if you move from a year when there is a funding floor to a year when there isn't a funding floor, which we have done this year, because the overall settlement was generous, as local government has accepted, those authorities that previously had a funding floor may in fact receive a more difficult settlement because the formula requires us to catch up with two years of adjustments. So, it's not always—you know, the funding floor should only be a transitional mechanism and the danger is, I'm afraid, that when it comes to a halt, the

cuts can actually be deeper.

[52] **Peter Black:** I think that's why I was arguing for a more permanent evening-out—

[53] **Leighton Andrews:** What you're essentially arguing for, then, is a movement of money from urban and Valley authorities to rural authorities, and I think we should have that clearly on the record.

[54] **Peter Black:** Or an additional amount of money being put in specifically to assist—

[55] **Leighton Andrews:** Welsh Government provides around 75 per cent of local government spend at the moment, so you're also then arguing for central Government to assume a greater percentage of local spend. I don't know whether that, in the context of a discussion around the future financing of local government, is right. I think, you know, there clearly have got to be redistributive mechanisms within the financing of local government, but I'm not sure—when does local government stop being local government? Central Government is already providing 75 per cent of its funding.

[56] **Peter Black:** I think we recognise that that is the problem, and until you actually—

[57] **Leighton Andrews:** But you're arguing for more money from central Government.

[58] **Peter Black:** What I'm arguing is that until you actually adjust that problem and sort out local government financing, to go away from that, you need to put those mechanisms in place.

[59] **Leighton Andrews:** I think there's a utopian element to your argument, Peter.

[60] **Peter Black:** A very good book.

[61] **Christine Chapman:** Before I come back to Janet, I've got a very brief supplementary from Mark—and then back to Janet.

[62] **Mark Isherwood:** You mentioned Flintshire as a low-per-head recipient of funding. How do you address a situation, such as in Flintshire, where there

actually is a large rural component? My wife, for example, represents a rural ward with six rural communities in Flintshire. In addressing this, is it not the case that although you do have an annual review, nonetheless it's the Welsh Government that sets the terms of reference that determine how the formula should prioritise?

[63] **Leighton Andrews:** No, the terms of reference are collectively set between us and local government. Just to say, on this, if you take a local authority like Flintshire, clearly, those parts of Flintshire that have areas of sparsity will be reflected within the overall setting of the formula.

[64] **Christine Chapman:** Okay, thank you. Janet.

[65] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** We've touched on hypothecation, but in the recently published 'Localism 2016-21' manifesto, the WLGA again calls for local councils to be offered increased financial flexibility and a move away from the overly complex and costly system of grant-funded dependency that hampers local councils. How are you going to adjust to those calls?

09:30

[66] **Leighton Andrews:** Well, I'm already taking action. We've moved, prior to this settlement, £160 million from hypothecated grants into the RSG. With this settlement, it goes up to £190 million moved into the RSG simply during the lifetime of this Assembly. I think that's been significant work that needs to be appreciated. We intend to continue the scope to do more around de-hypothecation. I'm working with ministerial colleagues to do that. We've had discussions with local government also about how we can simplify some of the grant mechanisms that exist, and we will continue to explore the opportunities for funding flexibilities in the future.

[67] **Christine Chapman:** I want to move on now, then, to Gwyn.

[68] **Gwyn R. Price:** Good morning. On local government reform, what is your response to the warning from the WLGA that any predicted savings from the local government merger process may be a decade away, and that the process will not

[69] 'remedy the enormous financial challenges local government faces over the next five years'?

[70] **Leighton Andrews:** Well, local government reorganisation isn't intended to remedy the financial challenges that local government faces. Local government needs to work through its own ways of handling the financial challenges that we face. I repeat what I said earlier: we have done far more in Wales to protect local government against the austerity agenda of central Government than have the Governments in either England or Scotland. So, can I say that the important thing here, I think, is to have an appreciation of that? And, you know, colleagues around this committee have been part of the discussions on the draft local government Bill and the regulatory impact assessment that we've published. It's not true to say that savings will not kick in for a decade. Savings would kick in probably after a period of two or three years and we would be starting to see the returns on that investment, I think, quite quickly. Added to that, of course, last June I published the review of the cost of administration in local government, which was carried out for us by KPMG, which demonstrated that, if local authorities in Wales were operating to the best practice available across the UK, then there was scope for administrative savings of some £151 million per annum. So, I think it is important that local government look at that, that they look at the opportunities, where they can, to use their reserves as well to structure services for the future, and I think that it's very important that we don't confuse these two issues. There are immediate tasks that local government has to take on, and then there are the issues around the future of local government, its structure, and the savings that will arise from mergers.

[71] **Gwyn R. Price:** Thank you.

[72] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Thank you. Bethan.

[73] **Bethan Jenkins:** Rwy jest eisiau gofyn cwestiwn ynglŷn â sut mae'r gyllideb yn adlewyrchu amcanion y Llywodraeth er mwyn deall y cyswllt rhwng sut mae'r llywodraeth leol yn perfformio ac wedyn yr arian yr ydych chi'n rhoi fel Llywodraeth. Sut ydych chi'n cyfiawnhau gwerth am arian yn hynny o beth? Cawsom ni'r ombwdsmon i mewn cwpl o wythnosau yn ôl ac roeddwn i wedi dweud wrth yr ombwdsmon bryd hynny fy mod i wedi edrych ar sut **Bethan Jenkins:** I just want to ask a question on how the budget reflects the Government's objectives to better understand the links between local government performance and then the funding that you as a Government provide to them. How do you ensure value for money in that regard? We had the ombudsman in just a few weeks ago and I told him at that point that I had looked at how local government self-evaluates, and, clearly, they are going to do that in a

mae llywodraeth leol yn gwerthuso ei hun, ac, yn amlwg, mae'n mynd i werthuso ei hun mewn ffordd decach nag efallai y byddai'r ombwdsmon yn ei hasesu. Felly, sut ydych chi'n defnyddio'r gyllideb i sicrhau bod yr arian yn mynd i'r awdurdodau lleol hynny sydd yn perfformio ac sydd yn gwneud yn well nag, efallai, cynghorau eraill agos?

[74] **Leighton Andrews:** We don't have a competitive bidding process for local government funding overall. There is a danger in competitive bidding processes, which is that people get skilled in the preparation of bids, and that experience in becoming more and more skilled in the preparation of bids means that you become the recipient of more and more money, and I'm not sure—. I think we've got to be careful about how we address these kinds of issues. In terms of performance improvement, I do want local authorities to undergo a process of self-assessment, and the White Paper that we published in February had a lot to say about performance improvement, about assessment by local authorities themselves, about audit, and so on, and the relationship between self-assessment and performance improvement and, indeed, audit. So, we've published, I think, our expectations of local authorities.

[75] I have also looked at some of the best practice in the UK, where local authorities have been able to track in real time their performance in particular service areas. You could see children's services, for example, against other authorities and indeed against their own performance over time. There are very interesting models that I've seen in Haringey, for example, which have been based on the work done by the—. They've established a delivery unit very similar to that which used to operate in No. 10—the former Prime Minister's delivery unit. I think those kinds of models are useful. I've mentioned these to local government colleagues and I hope that they will study and learn from them. But what we have done is that we have published our local authority performance website last September, and this website includes analysis of aspects of local government spending alongside performance. So, it allows more in-detail benchmarking of performance against other authorities. Authorities should themselves, of course, have the data on their own performance over time and how they can redirect resources to improve services. So, I think this is about transparency.

I think it's about the use of data. It's about the better command of data locally and that is what we would expect local government to be doing.

[76] **Bethan Jenkins:** Diolch am hynny. Ond jest fel sylw ar hynny: os oes yna fodelau eraill ar draws Prydain, byddwn i'n gobeithio bod yna siawns i fod yn *proactive* ac nid jest i obeithio eu bod nhw'n mynd i edrych ar hynny, ond i danlinellu sut y bydden nhw yn gallu gwella wrth edrych ar yr hyn sydd yn digwydd mewn llefydd fel Haringey, os yw e mor dda â'r hyn rydych yn ei ddisgrifio. Ond sylwad yw hwnnw yn fwy na dim.

Bethan Jenkins: Thank you for that. But just as a comment on that: if there are other models across Britain, then I would hope that there would be an opportunity to be proactive and not just to hope that they would look at that, but to actually highlight how they could improve by looking at what is happening in places such as Haringey, if it's as good as you suggest. But that was a comment more than anything.

[77] **Leighton Andrews:** I agree with you. I have made many speeches to local government leaders and local government chief executives in which I have highlighted examples from other parts of the UK, including Haringey, including Plymouth, including Lambeth, including Cheshire West and Chester, and many others where there are some good examples of best practice. Indeed, the leader of Plymouth council, of course, spoke at the finance seminar that we ran with the Welsh Local Government Association in November, to illustrate how, even where authorities are under more stress in terms of their budgets than we are in Wales, local government still survives and still develops services in an innovative way.

[78] **Bethan Jenkins:** Mae jest gen i gwestiwn arall ynglŷn â'ch gweledigaeth i greu un gwasanaeth cyhoeddus sydd yn ffocysu ar asiantaethau yn gweithio gyda'i gilydd gyda dinasyddion i wella eu bywydau. A allwch chi esbonio sut y mae'r gyllideb ddrafft yn gallu mynd tuag at yr amcan hwnnw? Oherwydd yn sicr ar lefel llawr gwlad, mewn nifer o faterion lleol rwy'n eu cael, mae dinasyddion efallai'n teimlo mai nhw yw'r bobl olaf i ddarganfod

Bethan Jenkins: I have a further question on your vision for one public service focused on agencies working together and with citizens to improve their lives. Can you explain how this draft budget can contribute towards that aim? Because certainly at a grass-roots level, in a number of local issues that I deal with, citizens feel that perhaps they are the last people to find out about a certain situation or about a public meeting on the future of some service or

gwybodaeth am sefyllfa neu am other. How is this going to reflect the
gyfarfod cyhoeddus ynglŷn â dyfodol reality at grass-roots level, that
rhyw wasanaeth neu'i gilydd. Sut ydy which you say in your document?
hwn yn mynd i adlewyrchu realiti ar
lawr gwlad, yr hyn rydych chi'n ei
ddweud yn eich dogfen chi?

[79] **Leighton Andrews:** Yes, it is very important, I think, that local authorities develop better mechanisms for communication with their local public. That's why we've put in in the past, for example, money to ensure that local authorities can improve websites, broadcast meetings over the internet, and so on and so forth.

[80] **Bethan Jenkins:** There are still many not doing that.

[81] **Leighton Andrews:** Well, I agree with you on that and we emphasise that again in the White Paper and we've taken a number of steps to try and drive people in that direction. But, at the end of the day, these are matters for local leaderships; they are not matters for me. All I can do is say what I think best practice should be. You asked specifically about how we'd allocated funding. We've allocated money obviously, as I said, to the transformation and legislation fund, which is intended to support collaborative projects across the public services. I've created the public service digital innovation fund as well, which I hope will drive work in this area. The work of our public service leadership academy, Academi Wales, is, I think, significant and best in class in many respects. We have people coming from other parts of the UK to learn from what they've been doing. We had an excellent public service leadership summit—the first real public service leadership summit—in November, which attracted 200 public service leaders across Wales, which included, let me say, not just devolved public services, but also non-devolved public services. Indeed, most if not all of the chief constables were at that event, to illustrate. Obviously, on top of that, we've allocated money to the public service boards, and this will enable those boards to be strong and to develop a clear and coherent agenda for the local areas, and, clearly, devolved and non-devolved services will be represented within those.

[82] **Bethan Jenkins:** Mae'r **Bethan Jenkins:** My final brief cwestiwn byr olaf sydd gyda fi ynglŷn question relates to the evaluations of
â'r asesiadau ynglŷn â'r byrddau those local service boards and the
hynny a'r gyllideb ranbarthol regional collaboration fund. You say

gydweithredol. Rydych chi'n dweud that output from the evaluations will
bod allbwn o'r asesiadau hynny yn be published this year. Do you have
mynd i gael ei gyhoeddi eleni. A oes any new information that you can
gennyh chi unrhyw wybodaeth provide on those two issues?
newydd am y ddau beth hynny?

[83] **Leighton Andrews:** Well, there is a variety of projects carried forward under the regional collaboration fund, and there have been some good successes. I think the evaluation work has said that people need to be clear about the objectives at the start of the programme and need to be more focused on ensuring buy-in from all partners, but we've seen good work, for example, in Ceredigion where partners have been working with other organisations to support the humanitarian assistance with the Syrian refugee crisis, ensuring co-ordination across health, housing, education and social care. The Cardiff partnership board has been working with a variety of organisations, ranging from schools and youth services to Communities First and Families First, to introduce the first city-wide time banking scheme in the UK, for example, and we've got some good examples of LSB projects that have now come to an end, funded by European moneys—Connecting Families in Bridgend, for example, which has developed and implemented a new model of service to address the needs and behaviours of families who place the most demand on public services. We've got similar examples in Carmarthenshire, Conwy and Denbighshire.

[84] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Mike.

[85] **Mike Hedges:** Minister, you've said every authority should take account of all the available funding streams. Is that shorthand for increased fees and charges and extending fees and charges?

[86] **Leighton Andrews:** Well, local government currently spends around £8 billion of general revenue a year in providing local services, and that money, of course, doesn't just come from central Government. Around £3.2 billion comes from the RSG, a further just under £1 billion comes from the redistribution of non-domestic rates, £1 billion is raised from council tax, but on top of that there are some specific grants—some of those from central Government, some of them from Welsh Government—and then there is the income that local government receives from fees and charges, and that is roughly just under £1.3 billion at the moment across Wales. I think it is inevitable that local authorities are going to look at the charging and fees that they attribute to local services currently. That will clearly be one of the

issues that they will be discussing with their local communities when they consult on their plans for the future.

[87] **Mike Hedges:** Okay. Can I move on to reserves? I think that this is perhaps one of the least understood areas of local government. General reserves are themselves relatively low in most authorities, but the total reserves are relatively high, with most of them being earmarked. Do you think it would be helpful if you suggested, instructed, or whatever method you have, local authorities to identify what those reserves are being used for? I know, for example, the local authority in the area you represent keep a substantial reserve because they do not insure their schools—they use their reserves to self-insure. Thus it saves them several million pounds in insurance a year, but if a school burns down they become responsible for replacing it. Now, I think that's a prudent way of doing it, because insurance is an exceptionally expensive commodity, but would it not be helpful if that was done? Would it also be helpful to distinguish between cash reserves and non-cash reserves, because, again—sorry, I'll finish on this—some local authorities, for example, are self-borrowing; they're still holding in reserve certain sums of money but they've actually borrowed that money into their capital programme to avoid paying capital charges? Again, I think it's a very prudent use of resources, but it does mean that the amount shown in the reserve column is not necessarily how much is available in cash.

09:45

[88] **Leighton Andrews:** I think I'd make a number of observations on that. First of all, I think it is evident that some authorities are more efficient in their use of reserves than others. I often discuss with the leader of my local authority how they are approaching the whole issue of reserves. He's carried out a line-by-line review of their reserves to identify what is absolutely needed in reserves and what could be used in terms of service transition and transformation, for example. The reality is that, at the end of the day, reserves are intended for a rainy day. It's pretty wet out there in terms of local government finance at the present time, and I think it's important that local authorities keep their reserves under constant review. So, what I've done is I've published the material, and the Welsh Government websites contain the latest details of the size and nature of each individual local authority's holding of reserves. I've also provided to every councillor in Wales, and, indeed, provided on our website, guidance for members on scrutinising decisions on reserves—on the use of reserves and on the holdings that local authorities have.

[89] **Mike Hedges:** Can I move on to the KPMG administrative savings review? There are a couple of points I'd like to ask you on this. Is there not a benefit of collaboration between local authorities? If one local authority deals with payroll, for example, exceptionally efficiently, for them, instead of the other authority to try and catch up, to actually take over the payroll function of both authorities, thus for the saving to be made without any big changes inside the authority.

[90] The second one is that KPMG—. It's very interesting. The difficulty is that local authorities don't always account in exactly the same way and sometimes there are difficulties in working out exactly how much a service costs. It's one of the things that the pro-privatisers have used in the past, in that they've been allocating a percentage of the chief executive's salary against a service, or a proportion of costs relating to personnel against a service, to prove it would be cheaper to privatise. Even taking that into account, there are some authorities that do deal with things better. Rather than everybody trying to catch up, wouldn't the advantage be to let those who do things well do them for more than one authority?

[91] **Leighton Andrews:** I completely agree with you. I think they should, and I would like to see more doing that. Sadly, I've got examples—I won't name them—of local authorities who I think are actively discouraging that happening. So, I'm very grateful if my colleague wants to make that point as loudly as he can around Wales.

[92] On the second point that he makes from the KPMG study, he's absolutely right about the variable accounting systems in terms of how people assess costs and so on, and management costs are often redistributed outwards, if you like, to specific services in that way. It is important; I think local authorities do aim to get a grip on what are the true costs of particular services, and I think the KPMG study has helped in that, because it's made this whole process much more transparent.

[93] **Mike Hedges:** I'm sure it has. I think that actual costs and marginal costs are incredibly important, but they vary dramatically between the two. I think it is important that we do identify the difference between the two.

[94] The last question I've got is on council tax. Again, you've said:

[95] 'to think seriously about the funding challenges they face and to

balance this with a consideration of the financial burden on households’.

[96] Is that, again, shorthand for, ‘If you go above 5 per cent, you’re going to be capped’?

[97] **Leighton Andrews:** The Welsh Government has not needed to cap local authorities, as it happens, in recent years. I would expect most local authorities to behave prudently. However, I’m also not in the game of subsidising local authorities to make inappropriately low council tax judgments either, because it seems to me that that simply leads to a situation, ultimately, where central Government absorbs more and more of the costs of running local government.

[98] **Christine Chapman:** Okay, thank you. We’ve got a number of other specific areas as well. John, I think you had some questions.

[99] **John Griffiths:** Yes. Moving on to community safety, Minister, and the £400,000 that’s been allocated for the next financial year to help implement the Act, are you confident that that money is sufficient for that implementation, and could you give the committee some idea of the outcomes that you will be looking for in terms of that allocation?

[100] **Leighton Andrews:** Do you mean specifically in respect of violence against women?

[101] **John Griffiths:** Yes.

[102] **Leighton Andrews:** Yes. I think it’s important that local authorities, and indeed all public services, shoulder their responsibilities in this area. We talked about prevention and preventative work earlier, and there has been some good work, as I illustrated, through the effective services for vulnerable groups programme, which has developed best practice in this area, which fed into the framework we developed under the Act. But I don’t want the provision of central funds to be used as an excuse by local authorities to give up on support they are giving, say, to refuges or to other support for women and children at risk of domestic abuse or sexual violence. The funding that we’ve allocated has been for specific services through the introduction of the national training framework, for the appointment of the national adviser, and for raising awareness through our advertising campaigns, which have been very successful—indeed, award-winning in some cases. So, our goal, obviously, is to contribute to the work introduced by the Violence Against

Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 and the goals there and the duties, indeed, which fall very specifically on public authorities.

[103] **John Griffiths:** Okay. Is there also—. Lindsay touched very briefly, I think, in terms of domestic violence, on the preventative nature of spend in that area, and, indeed, your paper states that the annual cost of domestic abuse in Wales is £826 million, but that every £1 spent in this area of activity saves the public purse £2.90. So, in that context, did you consider an increased allocation over and above what's been provided because of the preventative nature of that spend?

[104] **Leighton Andrews:** Yes. I've looked to increase that budget. My predecessor had increased it. This will be the first year of implementation of the Act and I think it's right that we keep the moneys allocated against the objectives of that Act under review for the future.

[105] **John Griffiths:** Okay, that's fine. If we could move on, Chair, to the area of youth justice, I think this is probably a very good example of preventative spend, because money that's allocated that does reduce youth offending I think saves a tremendous amount of money for the public purse because of the cost of taking young people through the criminal justice system and, indeed, the cost of incarceration if there's resulting imprisonment. Some of that saving is a saving to the UK Government, Minister, of course, isn't it, in terms of the criminal justice system and prisons and custody generally? Is that aspect of preventative spend ever discussed between Governments, because, obviously, one Government might not be as keen to spend money that's going to save another Government money compared to saving itself money, as it were? I think that's a very tricky area, isn't it, but does that ever get factored into discussions?

[106] **Leighton Andrews:** It's a good and important question, I think. We are in a position now where we're clear that the UK Government does not intend to devolve justice, or, indeed, even youth justice, to Wales, and I've not yet met the new Secretary of State for Justice, Michael Gove, in his current capacity, though I hope to meet him in the not-too-distant future. I did, however, make representations to him in respect of the budget for the youth justice board, and I met Lord McNally just before Christmas—the chair of the youth justice board—to discuss the outcome of that, because they sustained quite significant cuts in their budget, and I also made representations in respect of the budget that was to come to Wales. So, those discussions do go on, though largely, at present, I would say, in the context of the overall

spending review that's taken place. I do think that this is an area that has been one of great success in Wales, where we've seen reoffending rates held, but the number of offences has been reducing over the last few years and there are fewer young people in the youth justice system. We've had to make some savings in this budget. I do think there is a need for a dialogue with the UK Government as to how appropriate it is, if they're not prepared to devolve youth justice to Wales, that we should carry on making the level of contribution that we are in this area. But, I think that's not a decision that I would want to rush into because, clearly, there are projects out there being supported, but that is a discussion that we will have to reflect on in the context of our own budgets, given that they are being cut by central Government.

[107] **John Griffiths:** Could I just follow up briefly, Chair? I've mentioned the nature of spend in this area—preventative spending in financial terms. But, of course, it's also a matter of the impact on communities of offending, and the impact on the offenders themselves and their families. Obviously, every young person who can be diverted to a more productive life for themselves and their communities, and for Wales as a country, is of great value in terms of quality of life, as well as preventing spend by different levels of government. So, it's great to reflect on the progress that you've mentioned, Minister, but the programme for government progress report does nonetheless acknowledge that reoffending rates among young people are still of concern. So, on that basis, the decision to reduce funding for the youth justice action from £5.2 million to £4.4 million, which is something like a 15 per cent reduction, is of concern to this committee, notwithstanding the progress that's been made. What would you say to the concern that this reduction in funding might not see us maintain the progress that we've made to this day?

[108] **Leighton Andrews:** Well, we've had to make tough decisions across our budgets, and one of the questions that I've been debating myself over these last few days is whether this money that we provide under this budget head should be transferred into the RSG, for example. Because we've got an overall question and, in earlier questions, colleagues have raised whether we should be reducing the number of hypothecated grants. Now, I could have done that. I've chosen not to do it this year, but I might well want to begin a consultation as to whether that happens in subsequent years. That is an area of discussion. One of the reasons that we do have dedicated grants is perhaps because we take a view that if we didn't have those dedicated grants, the work that goes on in those areas might not otherwise happen. So,

it is a difficult balance to strike in fact, particularly in some areas around criminal justice or preventative work in respect of criminal justice and areas such as Gypsy/Travellers and so on, where there is sometimes more of a reluctance among local authorities to take on work in what are perceived to be publicly unpopular areas. So, this is a discussion for the future. We think that the reduction in funding can be accommodated by there being greater collaboration across local authority areas, and with a focus specifically on supporting those young people with challenging behaviours or who are on the cusp of entering the youth justice system. I don't pretend it's a happy decision, but I think it's a difficult decision that we've had to take.

[109] **John Griffiths:** In terms of that collaboration that you mentioned then, Minister, and perhaps a new way of working, will Welsh Government and your ministerial colleagues be taking a hands-on role in making sure that that new way of working is in place?

[110] **Leighton Andrews:** Well, yes, I think it's mainly in my portfolio. It's a question for us in discussion with the youth justice board as well.

[111] **Christine Chapman:** Peter's got a supplementary, before I bring Mark in.

[112] **Peter Black:** I'm just interested in the scenario that you painted about whether it's right for the Welsh Government to continue funding a non-devolved area in the face of that area having a declining budget. How does that apply in terms of the police and the funding that you put in for the PCSOs? Obviously you have a manifesto commitment up until May, but is that up for review under the same principle after May do you think?

10:00

[113] **Leighton Andrews:** We have a manifesto commitment and we delivered it. We've continued that funding into the next financial year. Clearly, it will be for future Governments to make decisions in these areas.

[114] **Christine Chapman:** Mark.

[115] **Mark Isherwood:** Thank you. If I could start with a related question on the points John Griffiths made. John Griffiths raised some very important points around preventative spend across administrations, and, of course, there are many parts of the world that have 'federal Governments' or central

Governments and then state/national regional Governments, where the spending decisions of one will impact on the budgets of another and which, therefore, have developed mechanisms for dealing with that. What consideration has the Welsh Government given to the mechanisms and the practice established elsewhere globally, which might be adopted to reflect those shared impacts of individual decisions?

[116] **Leighton Andrews:** Well, we have our mechanisms. I explained, you know, much earlier we have the effective services for vulnerable groups programme, which is chaired by Chief Constable Jeff Farrar—he's somebody from a non-devolved service who leads on that for us, and Chief Constable Farrar is also a member of my public service leadership panel. So, I think we've absorbed some of that learning and we've implemented it in our own way here in Wales. I think that the interesting questions, maybe for the next Government, are going to be around that tension between the responsibilities of the UK Government and the responsibilities for us in Wales. Clearly, you want to avoid a simple cost-shunting exercise where, you know, a reduction in devolved services spending in one area simply leads to more spending—more spending need, shall I say, by a non-devolved service such as the police, and the framework we have with our public service boards should allow us to do that. But then there is a specific area around responsibility for where portfolios are not devolved, and I think we will—if our budgets are going to continue to be squeezed by central Government—have to look very carefully at where we are essentially funding things that really are the responsibility of the UK Government, given that we now have, in the context of the present UK Government, some very emphatic decisions about things they are not going to devolve to Wales.

[117] **Mark Isherwood:** Are there, or are you aware of, internationally, any examples of compensation flows, where Governments will agree that there's been a saving or a cost incurred by the other administration?

[118] **Leighton Andrews:** Yes, there are, and to a degree, I think, sometimes those things operate in Wales as well. But the problem I think we have is that our experience over the last six years has been that, where central Government has wanted to devolve services to us, they've usually come at a discount. So, we tend to be looking at these issues not necessarily on the basis of partnership.

[119] **Mark Isherwood:** So it's something to explore and develop for the future. Moving on to the fire and rescue service, your paper states that

planning for major incidents is

[120] 'of the utmost importance in the current security climate'.

[121] What assessment, therefore, have you undertaken of the likely impact of the reduction—I think from £5.8 million to £5.1 million—in budget provision for that?

[122] **Leighton Andrews:** I think we've protected spend around major incidents and, of course, the bulk of funding in respect of major incidents comes from other areas—the resources raised by the fire and rescue authorities themselves. The reductions that we've put in place have largely been in the area of community fire safety. I'm pleased that there's been great success in Wales in reducing, for example, the number of fires over recent years and I think that the budget reduction, in fact, is actually—. Sorry, I need to clarify your figures. You're right that the top line looks like it's £5.8 million to £5.1 million, but there has actually been a merger of budgets here and the overall reduction in the resilience budget is under £200,000. If you want me to give you a note just to explain that—

[123] **Christine Chapman:** Yes, if you could provide a note on that, Minister.

[124] **Leighton Andrews:** Yes, that's fine.

[125] **Mark Isherwood:** And similarly, in relation to—

[126] **Christine Chapman:** Mark, sorry, before we move on, I want to take up a supplementary on this from Bethan, and then I'll bring you in. Bethan.

[127] **Bethan Jenkins:** I just wanted to ask a question, sorry—. Speaking to some firefighters and people who work in the sector—. It's in relation to the flooding recently. I acknowledge the fact that fire incidence has gone down, but what they're saying to me is that, in relation to incidents such as flooding, that money, then, is being—. While they may be reducing budgets to attend fires, the money then is going into having to attend flooding incidents, and, if they were the main body responsible for flooding, they would be able to, potentially, see an increase in their budget. Could you explain whether you've had discussions with either the trade unions or the sector to see or to expand on their role in taking responsibility for this area? Although I acknowledge, obviously, Natural Resources Wales would have one of the key roles here as well.

[128] **Leighton Andrews:** The responsibility for flooding does lie with Natural Resources Wales for management. However, there are groups within—. These issues are discussed within the Wales resilience forum; there are regular meetings between Natural Resources Wales and the fire and rescue authorities about these issues. Clearly, it would not be our intention at this present time to effect such a transfer of responsibilities. These issues, are, however, discussed sometimes when we meet with the trade unions.

[129] **Christine Chapman:** I wonder if you are able to provide us any information on those discussions, just for clarification, Minister. Because, obviously, there is a concern—we just need to confirm how it's working.

[130] **Bethan Jenkins:** I think it's because of—. Obviously, because they acknowledge—. I think a lot of the discussion there is about the fact there may be a reduction in funding because of the lessening of incidents in that field, but then, of course, they're not potentially being acknowledged for the overcapacity that they're finding themselves in at the moment for the flooding. So, whether there's something that could be discussed in terms of budgeting in that regard—. So, that was, really, what it was.

[131] **Leighton Andrews:** I'm happy to provide a note in respect of fire service engagement in flood prevention and flood management.

[132] **Christine Chapman:** That would be useful, I think, yes. Okay, thank you. Mark.

[133] **Mark Isherwood:** In hindsight, does there need to be some form of contingency provision, given the increased incidents happening and forecast, for this, and should that be a central fund or should that be a form of reserves held by the authorities themselves?

[134] **Leighton Andrews:** Sorry, in respect of what, now? We're talking about flooding.

[135] **Mark Isherwood:** Flooding.

[136] **Leighton Andrews:** That's not my portfolio responsibility. That's a matter for the Minister for Natural Resources.

[137] **Mark Isherwood:** The services that you fund have a key role in

responding to these incidents.

[138] **Leighton Andrews:** These are matters that fall within the duties of the fire and rescue authorities and it's for them to decide how to manage their own resources in that way.

[139] **Mark Isherwood:** But should there not be a Welsh Government cross-cutting provision for exceptional circumstances or events such as these?

[140] **Leighton Andrews:** There is provision within the budget of the Minister for Natural Resources, and the Minister for Natural Resources announced—the First Minister, in fact, announced additional money for the flooding situation just in the last couple of weeks. In respect of my own budgets, I am content that the responsibility lies with the fire and rescue authorities—the bulk of their funding does not come from me—and that they should manage their resources appropriately.

[141] **Mark Isherwood:** You're not saying that Natural Resources Wales could give money to fire and rescue authorities.

[142] **Leighton Andrews:** Sorry, I'm not going to answer questions that are not on my portfolio. If the Member wants to direct those questions to the Minister for Natural Resources, then, of course, he's able to do so.

[143] **Mark Isherwood:** If somebody's house has been flooded, or business has been flooded, they're not really concerned which Minister, they want to know how it's going to be dealt with.

[144] **Leighton Andrews:** Sorry, you're scrutinising my budget, I think.

[145] **Christine Chapman:** Yes, I think, from this point of view, Mark, it's not the relevant Minister, but, obviously, you can have the opportunity to question Carl Sargeant on this in Plenary. Any other questions?

[146] **Mark Isherwood:** Well, yes. Sorry. A similar theme: your paper states that both Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales and Estyn have been allocated additional funding to keep their cuts down to manageable levels. Again, what assessment, therefore, have you made of the reductions in the budgets for these two bodies?

[147] **Leighton Andrews:** The assessments are, actually, for the Ministers for

education and skills and health and social services to make. They have to make the judgments as to what is appropriate for the inspectorates that operate in their area. The budgets are held within my MEG in order to ensure effective independence between the policy directorates and the inspection organisations. But the reality is that, if there is going to be less activity in a particular area, then, you know, the inspectorates will need to address their overall inspection plans in that regard as well.

[148] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Mike, you had a supplementary, I think.

[149] **Mike Hedges:** Just on fire and rescue services, it's my understanding—perhaps the Minister can correct me if I'm wrong—that fire and rescue get the vast bulk of their money, if not all their money, from local authorities by a charge, and, if they need additional money, they can put a supplementary charge on to the local authorities.

[150] **Leighton Andrews:** That was the point I was making earlier. I agree with my colleague.

[151] **Christine Chapman:** Okay, thank you. If we can move on now, we've got about 20 minutes maximum left. So, Alun, you had some questions.

[152] **Alun Davies:** Diolch yn fawr. Rydych chi wedi dweud, Weinidog, sawl gwaith, ei fod yn fater i lywodraeth leol ac i gynghorau gwahanol ddeall *impact* ac asesu *impact* y penderfyniadau maen nhw'n eu gwneud pan fo'n dod i gyllidebu a phenderfyniadau cyllidebol. Mi oedd yna drafodaeth llynedd, rwy'n meddwl, pan oedd yna sôn aboutu pa mor gadarn a pha mor briodol ydy'r asesiadau sy'n cael eu gwneud gan lywodraeth leol. A ydych chi'n dal i feddwl ei fod yn fater i lywodraeth leol yn unig wneud asesiadau ar gydraddoldeb, er enghraifft? A ydych chi'n hapus bod yr asesiadau sy'n cael eu gwneud i gyd yn gadarn ac yn briodol?

Alun Davies: Thank you very much. You have said several times, Minister, that it is for local government and for various councils to understand and to assess the impact of the decisions that they make when it comes to funding and to funding decisions. There was a discussion last year, I believe, when there was reference to how robust and how appropriate the assessments that are undertaken by local government are. Do you still believe that it is a matter for local government alone to carry out equality impact assessments, for instance? Are you content that the assessments that are undertaken are all robust and appropriate?

[153] **Leighton Andrews:** Well, there are public sector equality duties that fall on us, of course, as a Government, as well as on public service bodies, including local authorities. At the end of the day, there are specific duties on local government to carry out assessments in respect of the equality impact of proposals that they're making. When I issued the provisional settlement, of course, I reminded local government of their duties in that regard. I've also shared information on best practice on how to engage local populations in the budget-setting process, and, clearly, that includes such things as equality impact assessments and community impact assessments. So, you know, I don't think any local authority is unaware of their duty to consider the impact of their decisions on equality and, indeed, of course, this has been a matter where certain decisions have been challenged in the courts when local authorities have gone through a consultation process that's been felt by local groups to be inadequate. There have been occasions where local authorities have had to go back and look again at decisions they've made in that regard. So, I think there is a clear framework, local authorities know what their responsibilities are, and, increasingly, it seems to me, community groups know what the local authorities' responsibilities are as well.

[154] **Christine Chapman:** Can I just, before I bring Alan back in—? I mean, I think all of us may be aware of individual cases where there's a concern that maybe local authorities are not adhering to this and, as you said, they can access the courts, but it seems a very radical step to do that. Is there more the Welsh Government can do to help this along? Because not all groups may be aware of the duty.

[155] **Leighton Andrews:** I think the important thing here is that local authorities carry out their equality duties. Equality law is not devolved, but there are specific public sector equality duties that fall on us as well. I think we have taken the steps that are necessary to ensure that people are aware of their responsibilities.

[156] **Christine Chapman:** So, that would be down to scrutiny by local members, then, you're saying.

[157] **Leighton Andrews:** Well, scrutiny by local members, scrutiny by civic society, but, equally, there are specific duties.

[158] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Sorry, Alun.

[159] **Alun Davies:** Na, rwy'n falch bod y Gweinidog wedi ateb yn y ffordd mae e wedi. Mae'r ffaith eich bod chi wedi ysgrifennu at y cynghorau lleol gyda'r enghraifft o *best practice* yn awgrymu imi roedd yna bryder yn eich meddwl chi aboutu sut oedd hyn yn digwydd. Rwy'n falch eich bod chi wedi ymateb i hynny ac wedi ysgrifennu at awdurdodau lleol. Rwy'n credu mai dyna yn union yw'r peth iawn i'w wneud. Ond a ydych chi fel Llywodraeth yn casglu gwybodaeth ar draws y wlad er mwyn inni fan hyn gael y darlun cyfan o benderfyniadau awdurdodau lleol? Achos beth sydd yn dod ataf i yw—rydych chi'n hollol iawn, petai yna grŵp lleol, grŵp cymunedol, yn meddwl bod un cyngor wedi gwneud cam mewn unrhyw ffordd, mae'n bosibl mynd drwy broses y llysoedd, er fy mod i'n cytuno â'r Cadeirydd o ran pa mor effeithiol mae hynny'n gallu bod—. Ond, i ni fan hyn, mae bob awdurdod yn gwneud penderfyniadau gwahanol ac yn gwneud asesiadau. A ydych chi yn casglu'r wybodaeth i ni gael darlun cenedlaethol o'r penderfyniadau yma, a beth sy'n digwydd ar lefel genedlaethol?

10:15

[160] **Leighton Andrews:** No.

[161] **Alun Davies:** A ydych chi'n meddwl felly nad oes gennym ni ddarlun clir o'r *impact*—y *cumulative impact*, os ydych chi'n licio—o'r

Alun Davies: No, I'm glad that the Minister responded in the way that he did. The fact that you have written to local councils with the example of best practice suggests to me that you did have a concern in your mind about how this was being undertaken. I am glad that you have responded to that, and that you have written to the local authorities. I think that that is exactly the right thing to do. But, as a Government, do you collect information from across the country so that we here can have the full picture of the decisions that local authorities make? Because what comes to me is—you are completely right to say that if a local group, a community group, thinks that a council has made a mistake in some way, it is possible to go to the courts, although I do agree with the Chair about the question of how effective that can be—. But, for us here, every authority is making a different decision and making different assessments. Are you collecting the information so that we can have a national picture of those decisions, and of what happens on a national level?

Alun Davies: Do you therefore think that we don't have a clear picture of the impact—the cumulative impact, if you will—of the individual decisions?

penderfyniadau unigol?

[162] **Leighton Andrews:** Every local authority takes hundreds of spending decisions and other decisions that require equality impact assessments in the course of the year. I'm not sure that it's helpful for us to accumulate that information; I think that's a matter for local authorities and it's a matter for local scrutiny.

[163] **Alun Davies:** Rwy'n cytuno, ond mi ydych chi wedi dweud hefyd fod gan Llywodraeth Cymru ddyletswydd a chyfrifoldebau i sicrhau bod yr asesiadau yma'n digwydd, a'n bod ni yn deall beth ydy *impact* y penderfyniadau unigol. Ac felly, os nad ydych chi'n casglu'r wybodaeth ac yn dod i gasgliad cenedlaethol, mae'n awgrymu i mi ei bod hi'n anodd iawn i chi fel Gweinidog allu bod yn sicr nad oes *impact* yn digwydd nad ydych chi'n ei wybod amdano.

Alun Davies: I agree, but you've also stated that the Welsh Government has a duty and responsibilities to ensure that these assessments are undertaken, and that we understand what the impact is of the individual decisions. Therefore, if you don't come to a national conclusion and don't collect information nationally, that suggests to me that it's very difficult for you as a Minister to be sure that there is no impact going on that you don't know about.

[164] **Leighton Andrews:** I think we've got to be clear about what is the responsibility of the Government; I think our responsibility is to ensure that local government implements its duties, or that they have the best information available to them on the implementation of duties. I don't think it's for us to second-guess every decision that's been taken by a local authority. That's for the local authority, its members and its local public and its local civic societies to do.

[165] The logic of what you're suggesting would be that we would have to collect evidence on virtually every decision taken by a local authority, analyse it and then determine—which is not our job anyway—whether or not it's complied with an equality impact assessment. Now, that would require a huge expansion and bureaucracy within Welsh Government. It would probably duplicate the work of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, and duplicate the work of individual local authorities themselves.

[166] **Alun Davies:** Ond, os nad ydych chi'n deall beth yw *cumulative*

Alun Davies: But, if you don't understand what the cumulative

impact o'r penderfyniadau, mae'n anodd iawn i chi fod yn sicr bod hyn yn digwydd. Ond, i symud ymlaen, beth am asesiadau ynglŷn â'r Gymraeg? Mae gan lywodraeth leol gyfrifoldeb i sicrhau ei bod yn ystyried yr *impact* ar yr iaith o benderfyniadau unigol a'r penderfyniadau cyllidebol. A ydych chi yr un mor gadarn bod asesiadau sy'n digwydd ynglŷn â'r iaith yn briodol ac yn sicrhau ein bod ni yn deall yr *impact* ar yr iaith o benderfyniadau llywodraeth leol?

impact of decisions is, it is very difficult for you to be certain that this taking place. But, to move on, what about the impact assessments in relation to the Welsh language? Local government has a responsibility to ensure that it does consider the impact on the Welsh language of individual decisions and of budgetary decisions. Are you equally certain that the impact assessments in relation to the Welsh language are appropriate and that they do ensure that we do understand the impact on the Welsh language of the decisions of local authorities?

[167] **Leighton Andrews:** Am I confident? No. Am I clear that local authorities need to do this properly? Yes. We have been clear, I think, in advising local government on their responsibilities on impact assessments, and, indeed, on the implementation of Welsh language standards, and I think they will face a more challenging environment in respect of those standards and their obligations under them. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, of course, puts an obligation on local authorities to consider the goal of a thriving Welsh language within their communities. I'm pleased to say that, in general, authorities are opting to take the Act forward and are keen to do that. I would like local authorities to learn from best practice and for the Welsh Local Government Association to support them in this.

[168] On top of that, of course, I have established a Welsh language task and finish group, chaired by a former member of this committee, Rhodri Glyn Thomas, to ensure that these matters are considered and built upon in the process of transition from our existing local authorities to new local authorities in the future.

[169] **Alun Davies:** Diolch.

Alun Davies: Thank you.

[170] **Christine Chapman:** Bethan, you had a supplementary.

[171] **Bethan Jenkins:** Roeddwn i jest eisiau gofyn, fel rhan o'r grŵp hwnnw

Bethan Jenkins: I just wanted to ask, as part of that group that Rhodri Glyn

mae Rhodri Glyn Thomas yn mynd i'w arwain—. Rydych yn gwybod ein bod ni wedi cael gweithdai ynglŷn ag agweddau tuag at hiliaeth ac agweddau tuag at bobl sydd yn hoyw. Rwy'n credu bod angen gweithdai yn lleol ynglŷn ag ymatebion swyddogion a phobl leol tuag at yr iaith Gymraeg.

Thomas is to lead—. You will know that we've had some workshops on people's attitudes towards racism or towards homosexuality. I do think that we need some workshops locally in terms of the response of officers and local people to the Welsh language.

[172] Rwy'n dweud hynny mewn ffordd difrifol iawn oherwydd roeddwn i mewn cyfarfod cyhoeddus—ni fyddaf i'n dweud lle—lle roedd swyddogion y cyngor yn dweud bod gwariant ar yr iaith Gymraeg o ran dogfennau yn fwrn arnyn nhw o ran y gyllideb, ac o ran sut roedd hynny yn cael ei gymryd oddi ar wasanaethau eraill. Nid wyf yn disgwyl bod swyddogion nad ydynt yn cael eu hethol i ddweud hynny mewn cyfarfodydd cyhoeddus, ac felly byddwn i'n eich annog chi i gynnal gweithdai o'r fath gyda'r WLGA er mwyn sicrhau bod agwedd pobl tuag at yr iaith Gymraeg yn gwella o fewn y sector honno.

I say that in all seriousness because I was at a public meeting—I won't say where—where council officials were saying that expenditure on the Welsh language in terms of documents and so on was a burden on their budgets, and that it was taking away from other services. I wouldn't expect unelected officers to be saying that in public meetings. So, I would encourage you to hold workshops of that kind with the WLGA to ensure that the attitude of people towards the Welsh language is improved within that particular sector.

[173] **Leighton Andrews:** Wel, mae'n siom i glywed hynny, wrth gwrs. Rwy'n hapus i rannu *terms of reference* grŵp Rhodri Glyn gyda'r pwyllgor yma, ac rwy'n hapus i drafod gyda'r WLGA y pwnc sydd wedi ei godi gan yr Aelod.

Leighton Andrews: Well, it's disappointing to hear that, of course. I'm happy to share the terms of reference of Rhodri Glyn's group with the committee, and I'm also happy to discuss with the WLGA the issue that was raised by the Member.

[174] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Thank you. Mark, you had a supplementary.

[175] **Mark Isherwood:** Yes. Again, it's the equality impact assessment. In my experience, when constituents or disability fora or disability access groups

raise particular issues with us over local authorities, it's not the local authority's lack of knowledge over the Equality Act 2010, or the public sector equality duty, because they will cite that immediately: it's their awareness of what that actually means from the perspective of the service user. We know who to go to. We know that, if we speak to the expert local groups, or to providers of good practice in some local authorities in Wales—and there are some excellent models of good practice—we can get the answers, but some local authorities become entrenched in defending poor decisions rather than seeking better awareness to avoid spending lots of money getting it wrong in the future. Again, is there a role, as you see it, for Welsh Government? I hope you agree there is, and not just in robustly encouraging local authorities to access that expert awareness training and knowledge before they make major spending decisions.

[176] **Leighton Andrews:** I think that there is no shortage of advice on which local authorities can draw. There is no shortage of guidance published by this Government. There is no shortage of encouragement from me and previous Ministers that they should do this. At the end of the day, it is down to local leadership.

[177] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Well, can I thank you, Minister, and your officials, for attending today? I think it's been a very comprehensive scrutiny session. We will send you a record of the meeting so that you can check it for factual accuracy. So, thank you for attending, Minister.

10:22

**Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y Cyhoedd
o'r Cyfarfod**

**Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public
from the Meeting**

Cynnig:

Motion:

*bod y pwyllgor yn penderfynu that the committee resolves to
gwahardd y cyhoedd o'r eitem nesaf yn unol â Rheol Sefydlog 17.42(vi).*

*exclude the public from the next
item in accordance with Standing
Order 17.42(vi).*

Cynigiwyd y cynnig.

Motion moved.

[178] **Christine Chapman:** Could I now invite the committee to agree to move into private session to discuss the evidence? Yes. Okay, thank you.

Derbyniwyd y cynnig.

Motion agreed.

Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 10:23.

The public part of the meeting ended at 10:23.

Ailymgynullodd y pwyllgor yn gyhoeddus am 11:00.

The committee reconvened in public at 11:00.

**Craffu ar Gyllideb Ddrafft Llywodraeth Cymru ar gyfer 2016–17—Prif
Weinidog Cymru
Scrutiny of Welsh Government Draft Budget 2016–17—The First
Minister of Wales**

[179] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. If we can make a start then. Now, this is the second of our scrutiny sessions on the Welsh Government's draft budget for 2016–17. Can I give a very warm welcome to our panel? First of all, the Rt Hon Carwyn Jones AM, First Minister of Wales; also, your officials, Bethan Webb, deputy director, Welsh language, and Iwan Evans, senior policy officer, strategic planning. So, welcome to you all. First Minister, Members will have had sight of the paper and will have read the evidence very carefully. So, we will go straight into questions. As you know, this is a scrutiny session. I just want to start off. We know that there has been an overall increase in revenue funding allocated to the Welsh Government departments, but in your area, you have decided to cut the funding for the Welsh language by 5.9 per cent. I just wonder whether you could clarify and account as to how you made that decision.

[180] **The First Minister (Carwyn Jones):** First of all, we must look at the context. There have been cuts in real terms to our budget, added to cuts that have occurred since 2010–11. So, it's not the case that the Welsh language is the only area where there have been cuts. It's been very difficult. We are looking at a cash-terms cut of some 5.9 per cent. It would have been more difficult if I hadn't allocated an extra £1.2 million after the autumn statement to support the language, but nevertheless, it's been a difficult time in terms of looking at what we should do with the budget. That said, we have tried to

put in an element of protection for the language: the £1.2 million is one area. Just to emphasise, that's not £1.2 million extra; it's £1.2 million that wouldn't have been there otherwise, if I could put it that way, so the cut would have been deeper than would otherwise have been the case. So, difficult decisions, but what we've tried to do in a financial climate that's less than helpful is to prioritise those areas that would have the most effect in terms of encouraging the language.

[181] **Christine Chapman:** Thank you. I'll move on now then to Bethan.

[182] **Bethan Jenkins:** Diolch. Mae'n siŵr eich bod wedi gweld bod nifer o grwpiau gwahanol wedi dod allan yn beirniadu y penderfyniad yma. Mae Dyfodol i'r Iaith wedi dweud ei fod yn mynd i ddatod llawer o'r sylfaen sy'n cynnal y Gymraeg fel iaith fyw sy'n ffynnu, ac wedyn mae Dathlu'r Gymraeg yn dweud ei fod yn mynd i gael effaith andwyol iawn ar y gwaith sy'n cael ei wneud i hyrwyddo'r iaith Gymraeg. Sut ydych yn ymateb i'r beirniadaethau hynny, sydd yn weddol gryf yn fy marn i?

Bethan Jenkins: Thank you. I'm sure that you've seen that many groups have come out and criticised this decision. Dyfodol i'r Iaith has said that it will unravel much of the fabric that maintains Welsh as a thriving and living language, and then Dathlu'r Gymraeg has claimed that it will have an extremely damaging impact on the work being done to promote the Welsh language. So, how do you respond to those criticisms, which are quite strong in my view?

[183] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Mae'n anodd. Byddwn yn erfyn gweld consŷrn gan gyrff allanol ynglŷn â faint o arian sy'n cael ei hala ar y Gymraeg, ond mae'n rhaid i ni gofio beth yw'r cefndir neu'r cyd-destun ariannol fan hyn. Rydym wedi sicrhau bod twf wedi bod o ran addysg Gymraeg. Mae rhai cytundebau sydd wedi dod i ben, sef cytundebau fel Bwrw Mlaen, a chytundebau eraill ynglŷn â Chymraeg i oedolion. Wrth gwrs, mae'r endid newydd yn dechrau ynglŷn â hynny. Felly, mae peth o'r arian wedi cael ei ailflaenoriaethu hefyd. Ond, wrth ystyried y cyd-

The First Minister: It is difficult. I would expect to see concerns from external organisations about the amount of funding spent on the Welsh language, but we must bear in mind the background, or the financial context here. We have ensured that there's been growth in terms of Welsh in education. There are some schemes that have come to and end, such as Bwrw Mlaen and Welsh for adults. Of course, we have the new entity being established in that area. So, some of that funding has been reprioritised also. But, given the context, we have tried to ensure

destun, rydym wedi ceisio sicrhau bod yr arian yn cael ei hala yn y ffordd fwyaf effeithiol, wrth gofio'r ffaith bod yna lai o arian ar gael. that the funding is spent in the most effective way possible, bearing in mind that there is less funding available.

[184] **Bethan Jenkins:** Jest i fynd yn ôl at eich pwynt chi yn gynharach ynglŷn â'r £1.2 miliwn. A ydy hwn yn ychwanegol i'r £25.6 miliwn, sef y prif gyllideb, er mwyn i mi ddeall a yw'n rhan o'r gyllideb neu'n ychwanegol iddi? **Bethan Jenkins:** Just to go back to your earlier point about that £1.2 million. Is this in addition to the £25.6 million, which is the main budget? I just want to understand whether it is part of the budget or in addition to it.

[185] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Na, 5.9 y cant yw'r toriad, ac mae'r £1.2 miliwn yn rhan o hwnnw. Felly, byddai'r toriad wedi bod yn waeth heb yr £1.2 miliwn. **The First Minister:** No, 5.9 per cent is the cut, and the £1.2 million is part of that. So, the cut would have been worse without that £1.2 million.

[186] **Bethan Jenkins:** Océ. Diolch. **Bethan Jenkins:** Okay. Thank you.

[187] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Thank you. John.

[188] **John Griffiths:** Can I just follow up on that? First Minister, in terms of the prioritisation of funding, as you mentioned, Welsh Government is very much in the position of having to prioritise very strongly given the overall budget situation. But, this criticism that we need to make sure that Welsh remains a thriving and living language is one that sometimes leads people to question the way that money is spent on the Welsh language. Particularly in my area, for example, the local authority and others question the production of documentation bilingually, in circumstances where they believe they have evidence that that documentation, if it's provided in Welsh, isn't read by anybody. They see that as almost a waste of money really. They believe that expenditure would be much better supporting the language in the community—you know, Welsh-medium education, which I know you made additional allocation to, but generally supporting Welsh in the community in an area where there is little Welsh spoken on the streets or in the community. Obviously, there are some legal issues, I know, around all of this. But, do you have any sympathy with that view in terms of prioritisation of spend?

[189] **The First Minister:** Well, I've heard the view, but, of course, the biggest

challenge that we face when it comes to promoting the language is habit and ensuring that people use the language outside of certain contexts. We know, for example, with Welsh-medium schools, not just those in areas where English is the primary language, that there are issues with youngsters, particularly, then using the language outside of the classroom. One of the ways of ensuring that the use of Welsh is seen as natural is to make sure that documentation is bilingual and that people live in a bilingual society. If it were to be the case, for example, that people learnt the language and then found themselves in a situation where Welsh wasn't particularly obvious—it wasn't present in the community—they'd lose the language. So, I think what's more important is that we see the natural development of bilingualism in Wales and people feel quite at ease in using either language. If people feel they have to ask for Welsh, or people feel they have to ask for Welsh documents, usually they won't do it. Then, of course, the habit will be to use English at all times when dealing with officialdom. That's something we're trying to overcome.

[190] **John Griffiths:** Just very quickly, Chair. You wouldn't consider that there's any level of documentation, for example, some voluminous and highly technical documentation that local authorities have to provide with regard to planning, for example, that might allow a little flexibility around these issues.

[191] **The First Minister:** Bear in mind, of course, that there are authorities that work through the Welsh language or that work bilingually. So, the documentation would have to be made available. I think we need to ensure that we have a society that is seen as naturally bilingual, where people don't feel that there is a restriction on the language that they choose to use. If people feel they have to ask for a document in Welsh, then my worry is that they'll just get used to the idea of not using Welsh in that context.

[192] **Christine Chapman:** Okay, thank you, John. Alun.

[193] **Alun Davies:** Rwy'n credu y byddai pob un ohonom yn cytuno mai dwyieithrwydd naturiol yw'r math o gymdeithas y liciwn ei gweld ar draws y wlad. Ond, nid yw hynny'n mynd i ddigwydd heb ein bod yn blaenoriaethu creu'r math yna o gymdeithas. Mae hynny'n meddwl **Alun Davies:** I think that each and every one of us would agree that natural bilingualism is the type of society that we would like to see across the country. But, that isn't going to happen if we don't prioritise creating such a society. That means expenditure on the Welsh language

gwariant ar yr iaith sydd yn gyson â'r weledigaeth y mae'r Llywodraeth wedi disgrifio ar sawl achos. A ydych chi'n gallu cadarnhau bod y toriadau rydym yn gweld yn y cyllidebau sy'n cefnogi'r Gymraeg yn gyson â pholisi'r Llywodraeth a gweledigaeth y Llywodraeth o greu cymdeithas ddwyieithog?

that is consistent with the vision that the Government has described on many occasions. Can you confirm that the cuts that we are seeing in budgets to support the Welsh language are consistent with the Government's policy and vision of creating a bilingual society?

[194] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Cwestiwn teg. Os af i drwy'r gyllideb ei hunan, rydym wedi, wrth gwrs, sicrhau bod mwy o arian ar gael ynglŷn â'r Gymraeg mewn addysg. Rydym yn gwybod bod her fanna ynglŷn â sicrhau ein bod yn creu siaradwyr Cymraeg pan maen nhw'n ifanc. Ynglŷn â'r pethau eraill, ynglŷn â Twf, er enghraifft, mae Twf wedi cael ei ailgcontractio. Rwy'n credu bod arbedion yn gallu cael eu gwneud yno, heb effeithio ar y gwasanaeth.

The First Minister: That's a fair question. If I could just go through the budget itself, we have ensured that there is more funding available for Welsh in education. We know that there is a challenge there in ensuring that we do create Welsh speakers at an early age. In terms of other aspects, Twf, for example, has been re-contracted. I think there are savings that can be made there that won't impact upon the service.

[195] Ynglŷn â Chymraeg i oedolion, fe wnes i sôn yn gynharach ynglŷn â sefydlu'r endid cenedlaethol a fydd yn rhoi modd newydd inni weithio er mwyn sicrhau ein bod yn gallu gweithredu Cymraeg i oedolion. Mae rhai o'r pethau eraill, fel Bwrw Mlaen, er enghraifft, fel y dywedais, yn rhywbeth sydd wedi sicrhau bod canolfannau ar gael i bobl ar draws Cymru. Ond, rhaid inni aildddefnyddio'r arian hwnnw mewn ffyrdd sy'n fwy effeithiol.

In terms of Welsh for adults, I mentioned earlier the establishment of the national entity that will provide us with a new way of working in order to ensure that we can provide Welsh for adults. There are other aspects, such as Bwrw Mlaen, as I said, which is something that has ensured that centres are available across Wales. But, we have to reuse that funding in more effective ways.

[196] Ynglŷn â'r mentrau iaith, mae yna doriad wedi bod yng nghyllidebau'r mentrau iaith. Mae'n

In terms of the *mentrau iaith*, there has been a cut in the *mentrau iaith* budgets. That is going to be a

mynd i fod yn her iddyn nhw. Rydym yn deall hynny. Ond, rydym wedi sicrhau na fydd toriadau swyddi yn y mentrau iaith. Bydd y bobl ar gael i hybu'r iaith yn y gymuned yn yr un modd ag o'r blaen.

[197] **Alun Davies:** Rwy'n falch clywed hynny. Mae Twf yn rhaglen arbennig o dda, rwy'n meddwl. Roeddech yn dweud ei fod yn bosibl gwneud arbedion. Liciwn i ddeall yn union beth roeddech yn meddwl drwy ddweud hynny.

[198] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Mae cytundeb presennol Twf yn dod i ben ddiwedd mis Mawrth. Mae'r cytundeb yn mynd i gael ei ailgcontractio i addasu i ateb anghenion newydd yn y maes. Mae hyn yn rhoi cyfle, wrth gwrs, i ailedrych ar sut y caiff y gwasanaeth ei ddarparu er mwyn gallu gwneud arbedion ynglŷn ag effeithlonrwydd. Er enghraifft, bydd gweithgaredd marchnata cytundeb newydd Twf, 'Cymraeg i Blant' yw ei enw, yn dod yn ganolog i isadran y Gymraeg er mwyn arbed cyllid a sicrhau bod y gwaith yn rhan ganolog o gynlluniau i farchnata'r Gymraeg. Felly, nid yw'n safio arian yn y meysydd sydd yn delio â phobl, ond mae'n safio arian, fel maen nhw'n dweud, yn y '*back office*', er mwyn sicrhau bod arian ar gael, er enghraifft, ar gyfer addysg Gymraeg.

[199] **Alun Davies:** Y llynedd, pan gawsom y sgwrs yma yn ystod

challenge for them. I understand that. But, we have ensured that there won't be any job losses at the *mentrau iaith*. There will be people available to promote the language in the community in the same way as has happened in the past.

Alun Davies: I'm glad to hear that. Twf is an excellent programme. You said that it was possible to make savings. I would like to understand exactly what you meant by saying that.

The First Minister: The current Twf contract will come to an end at the end of March. It will be retendered in order to respond to new needs in the area. That gives us an opportunity, of course, to review how the service is provided in order to make efficiency savings, essentially. For example, marketing activity in the new Twf contract—'Cymraeg i Blant' as the contract is called—will become part of the Welsh language sub-division in order to save funds and ensure that the work becomes a central part of plans to market the Welsh language. So, it's not making savings on the front line as it were, but it is making savings in the back office to ensure that the funding is available, for example, for Welsh-medium education.

Alun Davies: Last year, when we had this conversation during our

trafodaethau cyllidebol y llynedd, roeddech yn methu disgrifio'r cyfanswm o wariant ar draws y Llywodraeth ar y Gymraeg. Rwy'n gweld eich bod yn edrych ar sawl papur o'ch blaen chi nawr, so, rwy'n cymryd bod yna fwy o ddeallusrwydd o wariant ar draws y Llywodraeth ar y Gymraeg. A oes modd i chi ddisgrifio sut rŷch chi wedi mynd ati i sicrhau ein bod yn deall beth ydy'r gwariant ar y Gymraeg ar draws y Llywodraeth? Sut hefyd a ydych chi'n sicrhau bod y gwariant yn cael yr impact rŷm ni i gyd eisiau ei weld?

[200] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Mae'r pwyllgor yn gallu gweld, wrth gwrs, yr arian sydd yn cael ei hala ar y Gymraeg, sef y gyllideb bresennol, sef yr arian a fydd yn cael ei hala o'r flwyddyn gyllidol nesaf, sef £25,645,000. Felly, dyna'r gyllideb ar y Gymraeg. Ond, wrth gwrs, mae yna rannau eraill, sef addysg, er enghraifft, lle mae'r Gymraeg yn cael ei hybu hefyd trwy'r ysgolion Cymraeg ac y mae hwnnw'n dod mas, wrth gwrs, o'r gyllideb addysg.

[201] Ynglŷn â'r impact a sut rydym yn mesur impact unrhyw benderfyniadau ynglŷn â phortffolios eraill a'r effaith ar yr iaith Gymraeg, rŷm ni yn gwneud hynny. Er enghraifft, mae gan bob adran ganllawiau ynglŷn ag asesu'r effaith ar y Gymraeg wrth baratoi eu cyllidebau drafft ac y mae hynny, wrth gwrs, yn effeithio ar y cynllun

budgetary discussions last year, you were unable to quantify the total spend on the Welsh language across the Welsh Government. I see that you're looking at several pieces of paper in front of you now, so, I take it that there is greater understanding of expenditure across the Government on the Welsh language. Can you possibly describe to us how you have gone about ensuring that we are able to understand what the expenditure on the Welsh language is across the Government? Also, how do you ensure that the expenditure has the impact that we all want to see?

The First Minister: The committee can see the money spent on the Welsh language, and that is the current budget, which is the funding that will be spent from the next financial year, which is £25,645,000. So, that is the Welsh language budget. But, there are other areas, education, for example, where the Welsh language is also promoted through Welsh-medium schools, for example, and that comes out of the education budget.

In terms of the impact and how we evaluate the impact of any decisions taken on other portfolios and the impact that they will have on the Welsh language, we do that. For example, every department has guidance in place in terms of assessing the impact on the Welsh language when preparing their draft budgets and, of course, that does

gwario ar gyfer y flwyddyn ariannol nesaf. Mae hefyd yr asesiadau o effeithiau strategol sydd yn adlewyrchu'r pwyslais rŷm ni'n ei roi ar y Gymraeg. Felly, mae yna ganllawiau wedi cael eu rhoi ynglŷn â hynny er mwyn sicrhau bod adrannau'n gwybod ym mha ffordd y dylent asesu pa fath o impact sydd ar yr iaith Gymraeg o ran y penderfyniadau y maen nhw'n eu gwneud.

[202] **Christine Chapman:** Before I bring you back in Alun, can I just ask, First Minister, as far as the cross-portfolio work that you do with the Welsh language is concerned, how sure are you that every portfolio has the same priority on the Welsh language? We've had this discussion, obviously, with other areas as well, but I think the committee has been concerned about this in other areas.

[203] **The First Minister:** Yes, it is the case that all departments are expected to mainstream the Welsh language with the work that they do. The promotion of the Welsh language is not the responsibility of one Minister alone. Although one Minister at the moment, and that's me of course, is responsible for the language, all departments have a responsibility to promote it.

[204] Of course, the standards will have an effect on this. The first tranche of the standards are already in place; the second is being developed; and the third will be after the Assembly elections. But the standards will also mean that we, as a Government, as well as other public bodies, will need to continue to ensure that we provide a service that is naturally bilingual. Many of the duties that the first set of standards will impose are familiar to local authorities, but it is worth, of course, emphasising that they are standards that we would expect them and ourselves to adhere to.

[205] **Christine Chapman:** Okay, thank you. I've got Mike and then I'll come back to Alun.

[206] **Mike Hedges:** Can I talk about Flying Start? In Flying Start, the money is there, so it's not new money, but are you convinced of the adequacy of the

Welsh-language Flying Start provision within Wales? I'm not convinced it's adequate within Swansea, but are you convinced that it's adequate within Wales, because the sum of money is there, so, it's just how it's shared between English medium and Welsh medium? Are you convinced that that is being done fairly and adequately?

11:15

[207] **The First Minister:** Yes, I don't see evidence of that not being done fairly and adequately, as you put it. But, of course, where there are areas where it's felt that there is insufficient funding or attention being given to the Welsh language, we would be keen to understand where that is and then take steps in order to deal with that. But Flying Start, of course, is not primarily a scheme that is there to promote the Welsh language, even though, of course, it's an important part, potentially, of the work that it might do. Where there are areas where it's felt that more could be done within Flying Start to promote the language, we're keen to understand where that might be.

[208] **Mike Hedges:** The point I was trying to make, obviously not very successfully, is: if children start off in a Flying Start through the medium of Welsh then the likelihood is they're going to carry on through the Welsh-medium system. If they start off in Flying Start through the medium of English the likelihood is they're going to go through the English-medium system. And the point I was trying to make is: do you think there is adequate provision within Flying Start in order to feed into the Welsh-medium schools?

[209] **The First Minister:** I've not seen a suggestion that the provision is inadequate in that way. We know, of course, that there are several ways of providing education for very young children through the medium of Welsh, but, as I say, I'm not aware of any evidence that suggests that that provision is inadequate. But, of course, where there's evidence where it's felt that that might be a problem, I'm very keen to see it.

[210] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Thank you. Alun.

[211] **Alun Davies:** Rwy'n falch fod y **Alun Davies:** I'm glad that the Llywodraeth wedi cyhoeddi, o'r hyn Government has announced, as far as rwy'n ddeall, y cyfanswm o wariant ar I understand, what the total y Gymraeg achos mae'n ein galluogi expenditure is going to be on the ni wedyn i gael trafodaeth ehangach Welsh language because that then

yn hytrach na dim ond canolbwyntio ar raglenni penodol. A phan rydym yn gwneud hynny, rydym yn clywed gan fudiadau megis Dyfodol i'r Iaith a Chymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg, sy'n edrych ar draws y Llywodraeth ac yn edrych ar doriadau difrifol, ac rwy'n credu bod Cymdeithas yr Iaith wedi disgrifio cynlluniau'r Llywodraeth fel tanwariant difrifol. Pan rydych yn edrych ar y cyd-destun, rwy'n credu bod yna feirniadaeth deg o Lywodraeth fan hyn, achos mae'r Llywodraeth wedi bod yn gryf yn beirniadu Llywodraeth y Deyrnas Unedig am dorri yn ôl ar S4C. Ond wedyn mae'r Llywodraeth yma yn torri yn ôl ar Gyngor Llyfrau Cymru, ac os ydym eisiau creu'r gymdeithas ddwyieithog yr ydych wedi ei disgrifio, mae'n rhaid cael sianel deledu ond mae hefyd rhaid cael llyfrau ac mae rhaid cael cyngor llyfrau sy'n gallu cyhoeddi drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg. Mae'r ddau yn bwysig. Ydych chi'n cytuno nad yw'n ddigon da i feirniadu Llywodraeth San Steffan am wneud yr union beth mae Llywodraeth Cymru yn ei wneud ar yr un pryd?

[212] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Wel, mae yna wahaniaeth, wrth gwrs, yn y sefyllfa rhyngom ni a Llywodraeth y Deyrnas Unedig, sef mae yna fwy o *flexibility* gan Lywodraeth y Deyrnas Unedig. Mae mwy o gyfle gyda nhw i godi arian. Nid oes cyfle gyda ni o gwbl i wneud hynny. Rydym yn gorfod byw y tu mewn i gyllideb dynn. Beth

enables us to have a broader discussion rather than just concentrating on specific programmes. And when we do that we do hear from organisations such as Dyfodol i'r Iaith and Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg, who are looking across the Government and seeing serious cuts, and I do believe that Cymdeithas yr Iaith has described the Government's plans as a grave underspend. When you look at the context, I think that there is a fair criticism of the Government here, because the Government has been very critical of the United Kingdom Government for cutting back on S4C. But then this Government is cutting back on the Welsh Books Council, and if we want to create the bilingual society that you have described, it's necessary to have a television channel but we also need books and we also need a books council that can publish through the medium of Welsh. The two are important. Do you agree that it is not good enough to criticise the Westminster Government for doing precisely what the Welsh Government is doing at the same time?

The First Minister: Well, there is a difference, of course, in terms of the position between us and the UK Government, namely the UK Government has greater flexibility. They have more opportunity to raise funds. We simply don't. We have to live within a very tight budget. What we've told the UK Government is that

rydym wedi ei ddweud wrth Lywodraeth y Deyrnas Unedig yw ei bod yn bwysig dros ben i sicrhau cyllido S4C yn y pen draw ac yn yr hirdymor. Roedd cyllido S4C, wrth gwrs, yn addewid ym maniffesto Llywodraeth bresennol y Deyrnas Unedig. Byddwn yn erfyn, wrth gwrs, felly, iddyn nhw gadw at yr addewid a wnaethon nhw yn y maniffesto hwnnw. Mae'n rhaid inni, wrth gwrs, weithio y tu mewn i gyllideb sy'n cael ei hadeiladu yn hollol drwy'r grant rydym yn ei gael wrth Lywodraeth y Deyrnas Unedig, a thra bod y grant hwnnw wedi lleihau yn ddifrifol dros y blynyddoedd, mae yna benderfyniadau anodd gyda ni i'w gwneud.

[213] Ynglŷn â'r cyngor llyfrau, wrth gwrs, mae'n wir i ddweud bod yna doriad wedi bod yng nghyllideb y cyngor llyfrau, ond hefyd rwy'n deall bod 65 y cant o'r cyhoeddiadau sydd yn dod o'r cyngor llyfrau yn cael eu cyllido—mae 65 y cant o'r cyhoeddiadau yn cael eu cyhoeddi yn Gymraeg ac mae 65 y cant, felly, o'r cyllid yn mynd tuag at gyhoeddi llyfrau yn Gymraeg. Felly, mae'r rhan fwyaf o'r arian o ran y cyngor llyfrau yn mynd i'r iaith Gymraeg. So, mae yna lot fawr o gefnogaeth yn cael ei rhoi i'r iaith yn y ffordd honno.

[214] **Alun Davies:** Nid wyf yn anghytuno â'r dadansoddiad, ond, wrth gwrs, mae gennych hawl berffaith i wneud pob un o'r penderfyniadau gwariant fan hyn.

it's extremely important to secure the funding for S4C ultimately and in the long term. The funding of S4C, of course, was a manifesto commitment of the current UK Government. We would expect them, therefore, to stick to that manifesto pledge. We, of course, have to work within a budget that is entirely funded through a grant that we receive through the UK Government, and given that that grant has significantly decreased over the past few years, we have some difficult decisions to take.

In terms of the Welsh Books Council, it is true to say that there has been a cut in the books council's budget, but I also understand that 65 per cent of the publications coming from the books council are funded—65 per cent of the publications are published in Welsh and, therefore, 65 per cent of the budget goes towards the publication of Welsh-medium books. Therefore, the majority of the books council's funding goes to the Welsh language. So, a great deal of support is provided to the language in that way.

Alun Davies: I do not disagree with that analysis, but, of course, you have a perfect right to make each and every one of the spending decisions here. Therefore, it doesn't

Felly, nid oes ots faint yw cyfanswm cyllideb Cymru; mae gennych yr hawl i wneud pob un penderfyniad y tu mewn i hynny. Felly, os ydych yn blaenoriaethu'r Gymraeg neu ddim yn blaenoriaethu'r Gymraeg, penderfyniad i'w wneud gan Lywodraeth Cymru yw hynny. Beth bynnag sy'n digwydd gyda'r gyllideb o San Steffan, mae'r penderfyniadau yma yn nwylo Llywodraeth Cymru. Felly, petai Llywodraeth Cymru eisiau gweld y Gymraeg fel blaenoriaeth, mae'n bosibl gwneud hynny.

[215] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Wel, yn gyntaf, wrth gwrs, ni fyddai'n deg i ddweud bod llaw rydd gennym ni, a bod yna arian ar gael heb feddwl am y toriadau yr ydym wedi'u gweld. Mae penderfyniadau anodd wedi gorfod cael eu gwneud. Petai'r arian yno, wrth gwrs, byddem ni am gynyddu faint o'r arian sydd yn cael ei hala ar yr iaith. Yr ydym wedi gweld twf, wrth gwrs, o ran addysg Gymraeg. Bydd hynny'n parhau i'r flwyddyn ariannol nesaf. Ond, wrth gwrs, fel y mae'r Aelod yn ei wybod, mae yna benderfyniadau anodd ynglŷn â ble y mae'r arian yn mynd: iechyd, addysg—pob rhan o Lywodraeth. Yr oeddwn am sicrhau ceisio lleihau unrhyw doriadau a fyddai'n cael eu gwneud ynglŷn â'r iaith Gymraeg. Yr ydym wedi gwneud hynny, wrth gwrs, wrth ychwanegu, er enghraifft, yr £1.2 miliwn sydd wedi lleihau'r toriad a fyddai wedi digwydd heb hynny.

matter what the total Welsh budget is; you have the right to make each individual decision within that. Therefore, if you prioritise the Welsh language or do not prioritise the Welsh language, that decision is one for the Welsh Government. Whatever may happen with the budget that comes from Westminster, the decisions that are made here lie in the hands of the Welsh Government. So, should the Welsh Government wish to see the Welsh language as a priority, it's possible to do so.

The First Minister: Well, first of all, of course, it would not be fair to say that we have a free hand in this area, and that there is funding available without taking into account the cuts that we have experienced. Difficult decisions have had to have been made. If the funding was there, we would want to increase the amount of money spent on the Welsh language. We have seen growth, of course, in terms of Welsh-medium education, which will continue for the next financial year. But, of course, as the Member is well aware, there are difficult decisions to be made in terms of where the money is spent: health, education—all parts of Government. What I wanted to ensure was to try to mitigate the impact of any cuts made in terms of the Welsh language. We have done so, of course, by providing, for example, that £1.2 million, which has alleviated the cut that would have happened if it weren't for that

funding.

[216] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Thank you. I'll move on now to Peter.

[217] **Peter Black:** Yes. Thank you, Chair. First Minister, you told the committee last year that you would look at ways to improve the information provided as part of the draft budget language impact assessments. Can you tell us what's been done to improve the information this year?

[218] **The First Minister:** Yes. Well, I've already mentioned, of course, what we do in terms of departments knowing about what they need to do as part of the language impact assessments. It is the case now that assessments are carried out on a regular basis, and it's something, of course, that we will continue to do. I already mentioned, of course, that all departments will issue guidance on assessing the impact on the Welsh language in preparing their draft budgets, and that expenditure plan for 2016–17 and the statement of strategic impacts reflect the emphasis that we place on the Welsh language. So, we do expect, of course, all departments to recognise, first of all, that they have to assess what the impact might be on the language, and to recognise that in any submissions that they make to Ministers.

[219] **Peter Black:** Okay. None of the budget documents provide details about how the Welsh language impact assessments were carried out across portfolios, what the results of those assessments were, and how they influence different funding decisions. Does that mean that you haven't published everything, or is that it?

[220] **The First Minister:** No. First of all, in terms of what happens with ministerial briefings, we are looking at ways of how we can improve the impact assessments. We do this on a regular basis. For example, briefing templates will be amended to ask more detailed questions about the implications of expenditure on the Welsh language in relation to any policy decision. Officials from all parts of Government will then be asked to consider the language from the outset before reaching the full impact assessment stage. Now, that is on top of what already exists, and those steps will enable us to conduct a much more detailed audit, for example, of the Welsh Government's expenditure on the Welsh language, but also, of course, in terms of being able to improve the way in which impact assessments take place within departments.

[221] **Peter Black:** What you've just described to me is what I would expect

to see in an impact assessment. Given that we raised this 12 months ago, why aren't we getting it now?

[222] **The First Minister:** I don't understand the point that you're trying to make in terms of the impact assessments.

[223] **Peter Black:** Well, the impact assessment, which we've got—well, what we have in front of us—is not what I would expect an impact assessment to tell us: what the impact on the Welsh language is, what the results of the assessments were, how it influences expenditure decisions. That's not in the public domain at the moment, if those documents exist. It was raised 12 months ago. Why haven't we got that in front of us now? You've just said that this is what you want to do to improve things, but none of that is available as public documents.

[224] **The First Minister:** Impact assessments are part of regular ministerial briefings and ministerial submissions. So, they form part of the everyday work of briefing Ministers in any event. When Ministers take decisions, the information they receive is based on different assessments. The Welsh language impact assessment is one of those criteria.

[225] **Peter Black:** You've published a strategic integrated impact assessment, but that doesn't seem to give the sort of information that we would look for on the Welsh language. I mean, do you not think that the public should have more information when we've talked already about the cuts to the Welsh language? We need to know what the impacts of those cuts are going to be and what the impacts of mainstream decisions are going to be on the Welsh language to help people understand how the budget is impacting on the Welsh language, full stop. I mean, that information doesn't appear to be public.

[226] **Ms Webb:** Mi fyddwn ni'n creu *mailbox* ar gyfer y gwaith yma er mwyn dadansoddi ymhellach, ond ers blwyddyn, rydym ni wedi bod yn cael sgyrsiau cynnar yn y broses o greu polisi er mwyn egluro, reit o ddechrau'r broses, yn unol â'r safonau, beth ydy effaith gwariant unrhyw bolisi newydd ar y Gymraeg. Bydd y gwaith yma yn parhau i'r

Ms Webb: We will create a mailbox for that work in order to analyse it further, but, for a year, we have been having discussions early on in the process of formulating policy to explain, right from the beginning of the process, in accordance with the standards, what the impact of the expenditure on any new policy will be on the Welsh language. This work will

flwyddyn nesaf.

continue into the next year.

[227] **Peter Black:** I think the point I'm making is that you have this information within ministerial briefings et cetera. If we are to effectively scrutinise how the Welsh language is being impacted by this budget, we need to have that information in the public domain. I think what we're saying is that we'd like to see that published, or certainly a summary published of that information, so that we can carry out an effective scrutiny of what the impact of the budget is on the Welsh language.

[228] **The First Minister:** I'm not sure it's quite as easy as that, because, whilst we have individual language assessments in terms of individual policies and programmes, it's difficult to provide an overall assessment, given the fact that our view is that, despite the budget cuts that we know have, unfortunately, had to take place, we don't anticipate there being a significant effect on language use and promotion in any event.

[229] **Christine Chapman:** Bethan.

[230] **Bethan Jenkins:** Ond mae hynny'n hollol wahanol i beth mae rhai o'r grwpiau pwyso, fel rwyf i wedi dyfynnu yn gynharach, wedi dweud. Maen nhw'n dweud ei fod e'n mynd i gael effaith andwyol ar yr hyn sydd yn digwydd. Felly, os nad ydyn nhw'n gwybod sut i asesu'r hyn rydych chi'n ei wneud o ran effaith y toriadau, yna sut ydyn nhw'n gwybod—? Efallai, er enghraifft, eu bod nhw'n gallu bod yn fwy hyblyg i newidiadau yn y dyfodol a newid yr hyn sydd yn cael ei ddelifro ar lawr gwlad, felly.

Bethan Jenkins: But that's entirely different to what some of the pressure groups, as I quoted earlier, have said. They say that it's going to have a detrimental impact on what's happening. So, if they don't know how to assess what you're doing in terms of the impact of the cuts, how can they know—? For example, they may be able to respond more flexibly to change in the future and change what's being delivered at grass roots.

[231] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Rwy'n credu bod yn rhaid inni osgoi meddwl taw dim ond yr arian sy'n gwneud gwahaniaeth. Mae arian yn gwneud gwahaniaeth, rwy'n deall hynny, ond nid yw'n bopeth, ontefe? Felly, yr hyn

The First Minister: I think that we must avoid thinking that only the funding makes a difference. Funding does make a difference, I understand that, but it's not everything, is it? So, what we have sought to do is to

rydym ni wedi ceisio ei wneud yw sicrhau, lle mae toriadau wedi cael eu gwneud, eu bod nhw ddim yn effeithio ar yr hyn sy'n cael ei wneud ar y ddaear, er enghraifft, gyda'r mentrau iaith, sicrhau bod dim lleihad yn nifer y bobl sydd yn hybu'r iaith yn y gymuned. Lle mae rhai cynlluniau wedi dod i ben, sef y grant technoleg ac, er enghraifft, Bwrw Mlaen, mae'r rheini wedi dod i ben yn naturiol, ond yr hyn rydym ni wedi ceisio sicrhau yw bod yna lai o impact ar y gwasanaethau mae cyrff yn gweithredu oddi mewn i gymunedau, ac mae mentrau iaith yn rhan o hynny. So, i fi, roedd e'n bwysig dros ben i sicrhau ein bod ni ddim yn gweld lleihad yn nifer y bobl sydd yn gweithredu i hybu'r Gymraeg yn y gymuned.

[232] **Bethan Jenkins:** Ond 'llai o impact' roeddech chi wedi dweud jest nawr, nid 'dim impact o gwbl'. Felly, hyd yn oed os mai llai o impact a fydd, mae e'n mynd i gael rhyw fath o impact ar yr hyn sydd â photensial i ddelifro ar lawr gwlad ac felly dyna pam, rwy'n credu, fod Peter yn mynd ar ôl y pwynt yma o'n gallu i asesu'r hyn sy'n digwydd.

[233] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Wel, mae yna impact ynglŷn â'r ffaith bod yna rai cynlluniau na fydd ar gael rhagor. Mae hynny'n iawn, ond byddwn i'n dadlau na fydd impact ar y gwaith dydd i ddydd sy'n cymryd lle drwy'r mentrau iaith, ynglŷn â Twf, y pethau ynglŷn ag addysg Gymraeg, yn

ensure that where cuts have been made they do not have an impact on what is being done on the ground, for example, with the *mentrau iaith*, ensuring that there is no reduction in the number of people who are promoting the Welsh language within the community. Where some schemes have come to an end, such as the technology grant and, for example, Bwrw Mlaen, those have come to a natural end, but what we have sought to ensure is that there is less of an impact on the services that these organisations deliver within communities, and *mentrau iaith* are part of that. So, for me, it was very important to ensure that we didn't see a reduction in the number of people who work to promote the Welsh language in the community.

Bethan Jenkins: But you said 'less of an impact' just now, rather than no impact at all. So, even if it will be a lesser impact, it will have an impact on what has the potential to deliver at a grass-roots level and that's why I think Peter is pursuing this point—so that we can assess what's happening.

The First Minister: Well, there is an impact in terms of the fact that there'll be some schemes that won't be available any longer. That's true, but I would argue that there will be no impact on that day-to-day work that is carried out in the *mentrau iaith*, around Twf, things in relation

enwedig gyda phobl ifanc, a gwaith to Welsh-medium education, yr endid cenedlaethol ynglŷn â particularly with young people, and Chymraeg i oedolion. Felly, ynglŷn â'r the work of the national entity in gwasanaethau sydd yn cael eu delifro relation to Welsh for adults. So, in yn y cymunedau, mae yna lai o terms of the services that are impact ar y rheini. delivered within communities, there will be less of an impact on them.

[234] **Christine Chapman:** Peter.

[235] **Peter Black:** Taking an example, just looking at the strategic impact assessment that you publish with the budget, I'm just choosing higher education. There are a couple of paragraphs on higher education in which you said you've allocated an extra £10 million for higher education student support to protect the tuition fee policy and you're talking about how you're protecting people with particular characteristics. There's no mention at all there of the Welsh language. So, you're providing a strategic integrated impact assessment that deals with a whole range of issues around protected characteristics, which, you know, is fine.

11:30

[236] You've certainly encouraged that, but the Welsh language is also a cross-cutting Welsh Government priority. Education is a particularly important part of the Welsh language, but there's virtually no reference to the Welsh language at all in that assessment. I think it's important that, if you're going to carry out this assessment, you do include what the impact of your budget is going to be on the Welsh language as well as those other characteristics.

[237] **The First Minister:** That's something, certainly, we can look at, if it's felt that there's insufficient attention given to the impact on the language in that respect. But, as I said earlier on, in terms of individual policies, there is an impact assessment that's carried out and what you've referred to is whether there should be a full impact in terms of higher education particularly.

[238] **Peter Black:** It's not just higher education—it's education, full stop. We'll come to Coleg Cymraeg later on, but it's education, full stop, I think. Sorry, Bethan.

[239] **Christine Chapman:** Bethan.

[240] **Ms Webb:** We can certainly look into collating information because we look out across Government and we work in partnership with all departments, including HE, on Welsh-language matters, so we can certainly look into that and inform the committee in due course.

[241] **Peter Black:** Yes. It's just an example.

[242] **Christine Chapman:** I think the point that Peter's making—and others—is that it just needs to be a bit more visible so that people can assess that, then.

[243] **Peter Black:** Yes.

[244] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Peter, any other questions?

[245] **Peter Black:** No, that's fine.

[246] **Christine Chapman:** Gwyn.

[247] **Gwyn R. Price:** Good morning. You've already touched on some of this, First Minister, but what is your response to the criticisms from Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg that the Welsh Government, in reducing the funding on the Welsh language, has disregarded the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 in relation to the Welsh language well-being goal? They also say that the Act has failed its first test.

[248] **The First Minister:** It comes as no surprise that I disagree with that. Direct Government spending on the language is, of course, important, but it's only part of the answer. We know that policy and legislation are important as well to ensure that responsibility for promoting the language is shared. We set ourselves a challenge in Bwrw Mlaen for the Welsh language to be placed higher up the agenda, within Government and in local authorities and other public bodies, and to see an improvement in strategic planning for the language.

[249] One of the ways, of course, of ensuring the wellbeing of the language is to have places where people can use the language naturally, particularly in areas where the language has been in decline or is not a community language. We've done that through the centres that we've funded and also,

of course, in terms of promoting the language through the standards and through mainstreaming the language, not just in terms of what the Government does, but in terms of life in Wales more generally.

[250] If you look, for example, at the standards themselves, they ensure that, certainly in the first set, with public bodies, bilingualism is seen as the norm. That contributes, I'd argue, to the wellbeing of the language, because we know that one of the biggest challenges is not just to increase the number of speakers, but also to ensure that those who can speak the language use it and use it in a confident manner. So, changing habit in that way, through using the centres and through using the standards, can have a strong effect that goes hand in hand with the money that we already spend on the language.

[251] **Christine Chapman:** Okay, thank you. Lindsay.

[252] **Lindsay Whittle:** Prif Weinidog, can I say, first of all, that I think it is very important that you take personal responsibility, as First Minister, for the Welsh language? You mentioned earlier on that it's all Ministers' responsibility and the responsibility of all of us, but I do commend you for taking that as a portfolio, really, and that's important.

[253] Pob wythnos, rwy'n dysgu Cymraeg yn y Cynulliad yma ar yr ail lawr gyda Siân Jones, fy athro. Mae'n bwysig iawn i fi, achos rwy eisiau deall fy wyres yn canu 'Dacw Mam yn Dwad' ar y ffon i dad-cu. Every week, I learn Welsh in this building on the second floor with Siân Jones, my teacher. It's very important to me because I want to understand my granddaughter singing 'Dacw Mam yn Dwad' on the phone to her grandfather.

[254] It's very important to me, even though I'm not a fluent Welsh speaker. I noticed that, the Bwrw Mlaen programme, which you've cut drastically, one of its main objectives is to ensure that Welsh is heard outside of the schools. You commissioned some work by Bangor University, but that failed to actually tell you whether Bwrw Mlaen delivered value for money or was effective in promoting Welsh throughout various communities. So, you've simply just cut it. So, what's the answer then? Because, if you cut by 25 per cent this year and if you did the same in another three years, it doesn't take a mathematical genius to tell us that it's gone. So, what's the answer?

[255] **The First Minister:** Bwrw Mlaen was there as a specific scheme for a

specific time to provide money to ensure that we could, for example, allocate capital funding to create the 10 Welsh language centres. They're not all there yet, but the money's been allocated to them. That's created a lot of energy in areas across Wales. The idea is to use that money for those centres in those parts of Wales to reinvigorate the language in those parts of Wales as well. The intention is that they're dynamic multi-purpose centres that will make the language more visible in our communities. So, Bwrw Mlaen was a specific scheme that was designed to make sure that there was funding available for those 10 centres placed strategically around Wales.

[256] **Lindsay Whittle:** Right. I'd be interested, First Minister—. I mean, I live in Abertidwr, where 35 per cent of people under 15 actually understand and speak the Welsh language, but it's very rare you hear it on the streets. There is nowhere for those young people to go other than—well, after school. Throughout Wales, there are excellent examples—I'm going to quote some but I'm sure that other places are available—. Saith Seren in Wrexham, cafe Bodlon in Eglwys Newydd in Caerdydd, and Clwb Y Bont in Pontypridd, which has been working like a Trojan for decades to promote the Welsh language. What can you do with organisations like that? I know they're private enterprises, but they're so good at promoting the Welsh language that I think you should be working more closely with people like that as well.

[257] **The First Minister:** I think we do. The intention's not to compete with organisations but to work with them. If we look at Wrexham, for example, the intention there is to work with the groups within the community who've been promoting the Welsh language. The centres themselves are physical centres. They're centres that can be used by people where the language can be promoted—where the language can be used. The first one that I went to was Llanelli. What they were telling me there was that young people particularly went there and used the language naturally. Young people can be reluctant—you've hit the nail on the head yourself—to use the language outside a school setting because it's seen as unusual, but it was seen as quite normal to use the language in the setting of Y Lle in Llanelli. Getting young people used to using the language in that context, for me, is the key to getting them to use the language more confidently in other contexts as well.

[258] So, one of the challenges that we face with the language is that the areas where the language was dominant have declined over the years. When the collieries went, a lot of the—. In many of the collieries, Welsh was the dominant language. Now, people are much more spread out in terms of

where they work. The chapels are not as strong as they once were. The language was very dominant in many areas of Wales through the use of the language through the chapels. I'd argue that Welsh survived because of that, because, if you look at the other Celtic languages—Irish being one example—people didn't hear Irish at all when they went to religious services, at a time when they were particularly important parts of most people's lives.

[259] With those areas of dominance having been lost, it's absolutely crucial for us to create other areas where the language is seen as the natural language of use. One way—it's not the only way, but one way of doing it is through creating centres such as these where it seems perfectly natural and normal to use the language, especially in parts of Wales where the language is not widely used on the streets. That helps to create the habit change that we need in order to make sure that the language doesn't just grow in terms of speakers, but grows in terms of use.

[260] **Lindsay Whittle:** Can I say, First Minister, that the only good news I've heard about the Welsh language is that there is a huge increase in uptake in Patagonia. Whilst I applaud that—I think that's fantastic—throughout this entire paper, all I'm reading is, 'Cuts, cuts, cuts, cuts', and that's not going to help.

[261] **The First Minister:** Well, let me give you another example of something that we've been working on and indeed funding. That's the Gwynedd schools language charter, in terms of extending that to other local authorities in Wales. I saw a very, very good presentation from Gwynedd Council, who looked at use of the language outside the school and were quite surprised by what they'd seen and heard. They wanted to make sure that the schools that they had were not just schools where Welsh was the medium of instruction but that led on then to being something that strengthened the use of the language in the community. It's impressive, and it's worked very well. What we've done is fund projects to see how that will work in parts of Wales where Welsh is a community language and other parts of Wales where it isn't generally a community language.

[262] That can have an enormous effect on use of the language without an enormous amount of expenditure, if I can put it that way. So, what we've tried to do is to be clever in terms of the way we've used what has been a declining budget in order to make sure that we can encourage the language in other ways.

[263] **Lindsay Whittle:** Diolch am **Lindsay Whittle:** Thank you for your eich ateb. response.

[264] **Christine Chapman:** A supplementary from Bethan.

[265] **Bethan Jenkins:** Rwyf eisiau deall yn iawn, gyda'r canolfannau newydd—y 10 canolfan newydd—pryd fyddwch chi'n asesu sut maen nhw'n dechrau cael effaith ar yr hyn sy'n digwydd yn y gymuned. Oherwydd, nid oeddwn ar y pwyllgor ar y pryd, ond syniad yr holl beth oedd tynnu'r arian oddi wrth oedolion yn y gymuned er mwyn creu'r canolfannau yma. Rwyf eisiau deall yn glir bod yna sgrwtini yn mynd i ddigwydd o ran sut maen nhw'n gwneud yn y gymuned leol a sut mae hynny'n mynd i gael effaith real ar dwf yr iaith yn yr ardaloedd. Rwy'n ymwybodol o'r un sy'n digwydd yn fy ardal i ym Mhontardawe, wrth gwrs, ond nid wyf yn sicr am y rhai eraill, er enghraifft.

[266] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Rydym ni'n gweithio gyda'r canolfannau eu hunain er mwyn monitro'r gwaith y maen nhw'n ei wneud, a hefyd i asesu, wrth gwrs, faint o effaith maen nhw'n cael ar dwf a datblygiad yr iaith Gymraeg yn eu hardaloedd nhw. Rydym ni'n eu helpu i weithio gyda grwpiau eraill yn y gymuned a hefyd i ddod â phobl at ei gilydd sydd â'r un nod—sef cryfhau a chadw'r Gymraeg yn y gymuned ei hun. So, rydym ni'n monitro ac yn asesu beth maen nhw'n ei wneud. Mae hi'n gynnar eto. Rhywbeth weddol newydd yw hyn.

The First Minister: We are working with the centres themselves to monitor the work that they do, and also to assess what impact they have in terms of the growth and development of the Welsh language in their areas. We do assist them in working with other groups within the community and also in bringing people together who have the same aim—namely strengthening and retaining the Welsh language in their own communities. We monitor and assess what they do. It's at an early stage now because this is relatively

new.

[267] **Bethan Jenkins:** A fyddwch chi'n gwneud rhywbeth yn flynyddol neu a fyddwch chi'n cael adroddiad ganddyn nhw atoch chi—er mwyn inni allu edrych arno, er mwyn inni ddeall sut fyddwn wedyn yn gallu asesu'r hyn yr ydych chi'n ei wneud fel Llywodraeth?

Bethan Jenkins: Would you be doing something annually or would you get a report from them sent to you—so we could have a look at it, for us to be able to understand how to assess what you're doing as a Government?

[268] **Ms Webb:** Rydym ni'n bwriadu cael adroddiadau cynnydd blynyddol. Hefyd, rydym ni wedi sefydlu gweithgor rhwng y 10 canolfan a fydd yn cwrdd tair gwaith y flwyddyn i rannu arferion da, achos mae'r 10 canolfan yn wahanol iawn eu nawws. Achos, o ran polisi iaith, mae iaith yn annatod yn wahanol yn y gwahanol ranbarthau yng Nghymru ac mae gofynion yr ardaloedd lleol hynny hefyd yn wahanol, ac mae'r canolfannau'n ymateb i hynny yn eu hanfod.

Ms Webb: We intend to have annual progress reports. Also, we have established a working group between the 10 centres, which will meet three times a year to share good practice, because the 10 centres are very different in terms of their ethos. Because, in terms of language policy, language is different in the different regions in Wales and the requirements of the different areas are very different, and the centres do respond to those needs.

[269] **Bethan Jenkins:** Felly, bydd hynny'n rhywbeth y byddwch yn gallu rhannu gyda ni i lawr y lein.

Bethan Jenkins: So, that is something that you could share with us down the line.

[270] **Ms Webb:** O fewn y flwyddyn. Rydym ni wedi rhoi targed iddyn nhw o dair blynedd, fel mae'r Prif Weinidog wedi ei ddweud, er mwyn rhoi amser i'r canolfannau sefydlu. Ond fyddem ni'n disgwyl adroddiad cynnydd ar ddiwedd y flwyddyn gyntaf o weithredu pob canolfan, ac mae ail gyfarfod gweithgor y canolfannau yn digwydd ym mis Chwefror.

Ms Webb: Yes, within the year. We have given them a target of three years, as the First Minister has said, in order to give the centres time to bed in. But we expect a progress report at the end of the first year of operation of each centre, and the second meeting of the working group will happen in February.

[271] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. I was just going to ask about the working group. So, you've had one meeting and there'll be another one shortly—okay. And that is for all the centres, then, the 10, not a working group for each centre, just the whole project—?

[272] **Ms Webb:** Currently, it's all the centres we fund, but we may extend it to other third-party groups, such as other Members have suggested. So, Clwb Y Bont, Saith Seren and Soar in Merthyr could be part of that group once a year as well. It's about creating energy and solutions. Local solutions are very different across Wales. We're heartened by what's happening currently, but it is early days.

[273] **Christine Chapman:** Okay, thank you. Just to remind Members, we've just got about a quarter of an hour left. I know there is a number of areas we need to cover. So, can I ask that you are as concise as possible? John, I think, has the next question.

[274] **John Griffiths:** Yes. I have questions to the First Minister about the Welsh Language Commissioner's budget. When the commissioner gave evidence to this committee at the end of last year, she said that, over the four years of her existence, she'd lost something like 25 per cent of the budget, and any further cuts would make it very difficult for her to operate. Particularly, it would be disastrous in terms of implementing the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. So, I think the committee would be very interested in your response to those grave concerns of the commissioner, even given the allocation of £150,000 in mitigation. Obviously, there will be further cuts to the budget, in terms of the evidence given at the end of last year.

[275] **The First Minister:** That's correct. It is challenging, as we know. The decision was taken to reduce the commissioner's budget by 10 per cent. It's consistent, of course, with the financial settlement that has been provided for other commissioners as well. One of the reasons for reducing—or, the main reason, actually, for reducing—the commissioner's funding was in order to continue to support activities that promote the use of Welsh in the community. Given the tightness of the budget, it was a question of how we can find ways of getting money to support Welsh in the community.

11:45

[276] But, that said, and I did meet with the commissioner on this, I do accept that the next two years will be challenging, not just for ourselves as a Government, but for the commissioner as well from the perspective of implementing the Welsh language standards, particularly on organisations, of course, in the second round and conducting standards investigations in relation to other sets of standards. That's why the extra £150,000 was allocated, in order to help the commissioner through this financial year with that workload to make sure that the commissioner would be able to do the work that we're expecting the commissioner to do.

[277] **John Griffiths:** So, you now believe, then, First Minister, that the allocation of that £150,000 is adequate and will allow for effective implementation of the Welsh language Measure and address those other issues that you've mentioned?

[278] **The First Minister:** Yes, I do because the commissioner made the point to me when I met her that there was a particular pressure in the coming financial year. Despite the financial background, I took the decision to make sure that there was extra money available for the forthcoming financial year to deal with the particular burdens that the commissioner faced in this financial year.

[279] **John Griffiths:** Okay. So, in terms of that £150,000, that's available for the next financial year. There's that flexibility to spend it over that two-year period, then, really.

[280] **The First Minister:** It's designed to assist with the extra work—the standards work that—the commissioner is doing and to recognise the burden that exists at the moment with the production of those standards in terms of the commissioner's work.

[281] **John Griffiths:** So it will be available for the next financial year.

[282] **The First Minister:** Well, we anticipate it to be used in this financial year. That's what the money is there to do—to help with the promotion of those standards.

[283] **John Griffiths:** So there won't be that flexibility, then, to carry it into the next financial year.

[284] **The First Minister:** That's not what we're looking to do, no, because

the point that was made to me by the commissioner was that there was a need to ensure that she was able to deliver in terms of creating the standards. Of course, most of the work will be finished in the course of the coming financial year.

[285] **John Griffiths:** Okay. Just to clarify, Chair, I think the evidence we heard from the commissioner was very much about concern in terms of implementing the Measure, particularly over the two-year period of this financial year and the next financial year. But that allocation isn't to address that pressure, it's more in terms of what you've just told us.

[286] **The First Minister:** We are looking to see what flexibility we might be able to provide for the commissioner in terms of the money that's available this year and the money that will be available next year. That flexibility is set out in the framework agreement that exists between the commissioner and the Welsh Government.

[287] **Christine Chapman:** Mike.

[288] **Mike Hedges:** First of all, can I declare an interest? My daughter attends a Welsh-medium school. The first question: can the First Minister explain the rationale behind the £825,000 transfer from the Welsh language BEL to the Welsh in education BEL?

[289] **The First Minister:** I am sorry. I do beg your pardon.

[290] **Mike Hedges:** Can the First Minister explain the rationale for the transfer of £825,000 from the Welsh Language BEL to the Welsh in education BEL?

[291] **The First Minister:** Well, it is something that is more or less an administrative difference. I mean, the delivery will be the same but we wanted to make sure, as we always do from time to time in the course of the financial year, that money is allocated to areas where the money can be spent more effectively.

[292] **Mike Hedges:** One of the things that I've discovered is how little higher education is available through the medium of Welsh. There's been a cutback in the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, which I don't necessarily disagree with, but do you know how that is likely to impact on the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol?

[293] **The First Minister:** Bethan.

[294] **Ms Webb:** Of course, Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol is funded by the HEFCW budget and Welsh Government will provide strong steers to HEFCW to encourage them to continue the funding of Coleg Cymraeg and maintain the current momentum and contain the current levels. But, as it stands, it is a decision for HEFCW.

[295] **Mike Hedges:** So, what we have to do is follow HEFCW's budget. I mean, one of the things I find interesting in following budgets in the Assembly is you don't just follow the Assembly's budget, you have to follow it one, two and, sometimes, three stages down the line to see how things are happening. It does make it difficult for scrutiny of certain items, and that's one we've had to get to grips with.

[296] **Christine Chapman:** Sorry, that's in the remit letter, then, isn't it?

[297] **Ms Webb:** I think that there is a strong steer from Welsh Government in the remit letter, which should aid HEFCW's decision, but it is ultimately HEFCW's decision.

[298] **Mike Hedges:** Can I just raise the Twf programme? There's been a small reduction of £0.2 million. It's seen as a major programme within the Welsh Government budget, but £0.2 million—£200,000—is not a huge sum of money; what is the rationale behind hitting a budget that is relatively small with a relatively small cut?

[299] **The First Minister:** Well, the project is being re-contracted, when it comes to an end in March. That does give us the opportunity to make efficiency savings at that stage. I mentioned earlier on in terms of marketing activity how we can reprioritise that and save money in doing so, without cutting back on the level of service. It's correct to say, of course, that HEFCW is an arm's-length body; it takes its own decisions. It has had a steer through the remit letter, but HEFCW would have to—. If, for example, the remit letter was not followed, HEFCW would have to explain that; of course they would. A wry smile came to my face when the Member was saying you have to follow money as it goes through the hands of different organisations. I remember the days of the Welsh Development Agency; well, that was something that was always quite obscure. But, certainly, there has been, as Bethan said, a strong steer that's been given.

[300] **Christine Chapman:** Okay?

[301] **Mike Hedges:** Fine; yes.

[302] **Christine Chapman:** Thank you. Janet.

[303] **Janet Finch–Saunders:** Thank you. To what extent were you, as the First Minister, involved in making the decision to cut the Welsh Books Council's funding by 10.6 per cent, and how can you explain the rationale for this decision?

[304] **The First Minister:** Well, that comes out of another Minister's budget, not mine. I'm not directly responsible in terms of my portfolio for the Welsh Books Council, but, again, decisions would have been taken in the context of the spending round that we had. As I mentioned earlier on, some 65 per cent of Welsh Books Council spending does go on Welsh-language publications.

[305] **Janet Finch–Saunders:** And do you take on board the concerns expressed to the Finance Committee about the impact this may have on the Welsh publishing industry, on the rural economy, and on the Welsh language more generally?

[306] **The First Minister:** Well, again, we've had very difficult decisions we've had to take in Government, and it's right to say that there has been that cut to the Welsh Books Council. It compares, of course, with what's happened with the budget for the Welsh language, where the cut has been much smaller, but nevertheless, the Welsh Books Council will still be in a position where it is able to assist Welsh language publication, given the fact that that's where most of the money goes at the moment.

[307] **Christine Chapman:** I've got a supplementary now from Bethan on this.

[308] **Bethan Jenkins:** Rwy'n credu **Bethan Jenkins:** I think that this is taw dyma un o'r enghreifftiau lle'r one of the examples where Peter oedd Peter Black a fi yn gynharach yn Black and I were saying earlier that it dweud y byddai'n effeithiol petaem ni wedi gallu gweld yr impact, oherwydd see the impact, because you are rydych chi'n gyfrifol fel Prif Weinidog responsible as the First Minister for am yr iaith Gymraeg, ond wedyn yn the Welsh language, but then you say dweud nad chi oedd wedi gwneud y that you are not the one who made

penderfyniad ar hyn. Felly, os nad chi oedd wedi gwneud y penderfyniad, pa asesiad oeddech chi fel Prif Weinidog, sy'n gyfrifol am y Gymraeg, wedi ei wneud ar botensial yr impact? Mae gennym restr hir yn fan hyn, o'n blaenau, o'r impact: bydd llai o lyfrau yn gallu cael eu cyhoeddi i blant ifanc; bydd yn cael impact gwael iawn ar ba mor cynaliadwy fydd y sector yn y dyfodol, ac yn y blaen, ac yn y blaen. Felly, a allwch chi roi mwy o wybodaeth inni ynglŷn â'r trafodaethau a gawsoch chi â'r Gweinidog a oedd yn gwneud y penderfyniadau yma?

[309] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Wel, mater i'r Gweinidog yw hynny, ond a gaf i ddweud bod dau beth wedi digwydd ynglŷn â'r cyngor llyfrau sydd yn mynd i fod o les iddyn nhw? Rwy'n gwybod bod trafodaethau yn cymryd lle ar hyn o bryd gyda'r Gweinidog dros addysg i weld pa fath o rôl bydd gan y cyngor llyfrau ynglŷn â chynhyrchu dogfennau, ffurflenni a llyfrau ynglŷn â sicrhau twf yr iaith yn y dosbarth, sef pethau newydd i'r cwricwlwm Cymreig newydd. Felly, mae potensial y bydd rôl yna i'r cyngor llyfrau i greu cyhoeddiadau newydd ar gyfer y cwricwlwm newydd, ac wrth gwrs, byddai hwb ariannol ynglŷn â hynny.

[310] Yn ail, mae'r cyngor ei hunan yn ystyried cronfeydd newydd o gyllido yn y pen draw. Rwy'n deall

the decision on this matter. So, if you weren't the one who made the decision, what assessment did you as the First Minister, with responsibility for the language, make of the potential impact? We have a long list here before us of the impact: fewer books will be able to be published for young children; it will have a very detrimental impact on the sustainability of the sector in the future, and so on, and so forth. So, can you give us more information about the discussions that you had with the Minister who was making these decisions?

The First Minister: Well, that is a matter for the Minister, but can I say that two things have happened in terms of the Welsh Books Council that will be beneficial to them? I know that there are negotiations taking place at the moment with the Minister for education to see what kind of role the Welsh Books Council would have in producing documents, forms and books to ensure that there is development in the use of the language in the classroom; so, material for the new curriculum. So, there is a potential role there for the Welsh Books Council to generate new publications for the new curriculum and, of course, that would then provide them with a financial boost.

Secondly, the council itself is considering new sources of funding for the long term. I understand that a

bod *bid* i'r loteri wedi cael ei wneud, bid has been made to the lottery, er enghraifft, sy'n mynd i helpu which will assist in mitigating the ynglŷn â lleihau'r impact ei hunan. impact. So there are other things that Felly, mae yna bethau eraill y mae'r the books council can consider to cyngor llyfrau yn gallu edrych arnynt ensure that they do bring more funds er mwyn sicrhau eu bod yn cael mwy in. o arian i mewn.

[311] **Bethan Jenkins:** Diolch.

Bethan Jenkins: Thank you.

[312] **Christine Chapman:** Thank you. Mark.

[313] **Mark Isherwood:** Thank you. Evidence from Mentrau Iaith Cymru refers to the view shared by language planners and academics that investment in language requires long-term investment, and therefore long-term strategic planning. How, therefore, do you respond to the concern they've expressed, that the proposed cuts to the Welsh language budget indicate a lack of long-term planning for Welsh language, and the criticism alongside that from Cymdeithas yr Iaith that the cuts raise major questions about the Government's long-term strategy?

[314] **The First Minister:** Well, the answer I give to that is that, whilst it's true to say, of course, that there has been a cut to the budget of the *mentrau iaith*, that will not affect their ability in terms of employing people to deliver on the ground. What we wanted to do was to avoid a scenario where there would be job losses in the *mentrau iaith*. It's bound to have an effect, we understand that, in terms of helping the Welsh language in our communities across Wales; that isn't going to happen. What we wanted to do was to make sure, therefore, that delivery would still continue, and continue in a way that we thought would be effective. We have, of course, as well, got the Welsh language use promotion grant. That is something, of course, that helps the *mentrau iaith*. We know that the *mentrau* have an important role to play; we know that we need to ensure consistency across the *mentrau* as well, to ensure that the structures are right, and also to improve standards. Also, of course, I think it's worth saying that we've invested £750,000 over the past two years in a programme to develop the capacity of the *mentrau* to promote Welsh language use at grass-roots level. Now, I'd argue that that is a sign of our commitment to long-term planning in terms of developing the language in communities—that we've invested to make sure that there is the right structure and consistency across Wales to ensure that that happens.

[315] **Christine Chapman:** Bethan.

[316] **Bethan Jenkins:** A allaf jest ofyn cwestiwn sydd wedi dod i mewn i fy mhen i nawr? A ydych chi wedi gwneud unrhyw asesiad i gymharu'r gwaith y mae Bwrw Mlaen a'r canolfannau yn mynd i'w wneud o gymharu â'r mentrau iaith? Yn hynny o beth, nid ydym am weld unrhyw beth sy'n digwydd gyda'r mentrau efallai yn tynnu oddi wrth yr hyn y bydd y canolfannau newydd yn ei wneud. Rwyf jest eisiau cael ateb gennych chi na fydd cyfiawnhad yn y dyfodol, wedyn, i dorri, er enghraifft, y mentrau, oherwydd bod y canolfannau yma'n gwneud yr un fath o waith yn y gymuned.

[317] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Na, achos nid yr un gwaith maen nhw'n ei wneud, wrth gwrs. Mae'r mentrau yn gallu estyn mas i'r gymuned, a dyna'r gwaith maen nhw'n ei wneud. Mae'r canolfannau, wedyn, yn ychwanegu at y gwaith maen nhw'n ei wneud, er mwyn sicrhau, unwaith eu bod nhw'n creu gweithgareddau yn y Gymraeg yn y gymuned, bod pobl yn gallu mynd i rywle a defnyddio'u Cymraeg hefyd mewn lle lle mae'n hollol naturiol iddyn nhw wneud hynny. Nid cystadleuaeth yw hi rhwng y ddau.

[318] **Bethan Jenkins:** Ocê. Roeddwn i jest eisiau 'clarify-o' hynny er mwyn fy mod yn deall hwn at y dyfodol.

[319] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Os oes unrhyw ofn y byddwn yn symud dros

Bethan Jenkins: Can I just ask a question that has come to mind now? Have you made any assessment to compare the work that Bwrw Mlaen and the centres will be doing, compared with *mentrau iaith*? In that respect, we do not want to see anything taking place with the *mentrau* that might take away from what these new centres will be doing. I just wanted a response from you that this will not be the justification in the future for cutting, for example, the *mentrau* because the centres will be doing the same type of work in the community.

The First Minister: No, because they don't carry out the same work, of course. The *mentrau* can reach out to the community, and that's what they do. The centres, then, add to that in order to ensure that, once Welsh-medium activities are generated within the community, people can actually go somewhere and use the Welsh language in a place where it's entirely natural for them to do that. So, there is no competition between the two.

Bethan Jenkins: Okay. I just wanted to clarify that so that I could understand this for the future.

The First Minister: If there are any concerns that we will move over the

y blynyddoedd i system lle, yn lle cael mentrau iaith sy'n gweithio yn y cymunedau, y byddwn yn erfyn iddyn nhw i ddod i ganolfannau, na, nid dyna yw'r nod.

coming years to a system where, instead of having *mentrau iaith* that work in the communities, we will be expecting them to come to the centres, then no, that's certainly not our intention.

[320] **Bethan Jenkins:** Ocê.

Bethan Jenkins: Okay.

[321] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Can I thank the First Minister and his officials? We have come to the end of this scrutiny session. We will send you a transcript of the meeting so that you can check it for factual accuracy. So, can I thank you for attending?

11:58

Papurau i'w Nodi Papers to Note

[322] **Christine Chapman:** Before we close the public meeting, the committee may wish to note that there are some papers to note, there. And, I just wanted to mention that we will continue the scrutiny of the draft budget at next week's meeting, where we will hear from the Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty, the Minister for Finance and Government Business and the Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism.

11:59

Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y Cyhoedd o'r Cyfarfod

Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public from the Meeting

Cynnig:

Motion:

bod y pwyllgor yn penderfynu that the committee resolves to gwahardd y cyhoedd o weddill y exclude the public from the cyfarfod yn unol â Rheol Sefydlog remainder of the meeting in 17.42(vi).

accordance with Standing Order 17.42(vi).

Cynigiwyd y cynnig.

Motion moved.

[323] **Christine Chapman:** So, can I now invite the committee to go into private session to discuss the evidence? Okay? Thank you.

Derbyniwyd y cynnig.

Motion agreed.

Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 11:59.

The public part of the meeting ended at 11:59.