

Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee

Date: 2 November 2016
Time: 11:00
Venue: Committee Room 3, National Assembly for Wales, Cardiff Bay
Title: Request to give evidence to inform scrutiny of Draft Budget 2017-18 from the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee

Purpose

1. To provide information on the Draft Budget 2017-18 in relation to the Welsh language as requested by the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee.

Timing

2. The draft budget was published on 18 October.

Response

3. The following information is provided in the order requested in the commissioning letter dated 28 July 2016 under the following headings:
 - **Part 1: Individual Budget Expenditure Lines for Welsh language funding**
 - **Part 2: Welsh Government priorities and commitments**
 - **Part 3: Key policies**

Part 1: Individual Budget Expenditure Lines for Welsh language funding

4. The table below provides a summary of the actions relating to Welsh language funding:

Budget Expenditure Line (BEL)		2016-17 First Supplementary Budget £000	2017-18 Draft Budget New Plans £000
<i>Action: Welsh in Education</i>			
BEL 5164	Welsh in Education	18,681	29,231
<i>Action: Welsh Language</i>			
BEL 6020	Welsh Language	3,964	3,964
BEL 6021	Welsh Language Commissioner	3,000	3,000
Total		25,645	36,195

5. **BEL 5164** is for the implementation of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy which includes:
 - the planning of Welsh-medium education;
 - the delivery of practitioner training through the Sabbatical Scheme;
 - the delivery of Welsh-language training through the National Centre for Learning Welsh;
 - commissioning of teaching and learning resources;
 - promoting language transmission in families;

- research, evaluation and marketing in respect of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy;
 - delivery of the Welsh Language Charter programme;
 - funding for the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol.
6. The purpose of **BEL 6020** is to support the aims of the Welsh Government's Welsh Language Strategy prepared under Section 78 of the Government of Wales Act 2006. The lifespan of the current Welsh Language Strategy: *A living language: a language for living* (and the policy statement *A living language: a language for living – Moving Forward*) comes to an end on 31 March 2017. A public consultation on the Welsh Government's new Welsh Language Strategy which outlines the work required to reach our target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050 was held between 1 August – 31 October this year. The draft strategy identifies 6 development areas where action is required to reach our challenging target. The areas are: Planning and language policy, Normalisation, Education, People, Support, Rights.
7. An analysis of the responses received to the consultation is currently underway and our strategic priorities, and consequently our decisions to invest, will be guided by responses to the consultation. A summary of responses will be published in due course.
8. The purpose of **BEL 6021** is to fund the position of the Welsh Language Commissioner. The Commissioner has wide ranging functions and powers which include:
- working towards ensuring that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language;
 - imposing duties on persons who come within the scope of the Measure to comply with standards relating to the Welsh language;
 - conducting inquiries into matters relating to the Commissioner's functions;
 - investigating alleged interference with an individual's freedom to communicate in Welsh with another individual;
 - promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language especially within the 3rd and private sectors.
9. This draft budget has been shaped to deliver our priorities in the context of continued austerity which is imposed on the Welsh Budget by the UK Government. The Welsh Budget was set for 4 years by the UK Government in its Spending Review on 25 November 2015. The Welsh Government was given a challenging settlement which has seen the Welsh Budget cut in real terms in the context of cuts which had already been made.
10. Alongside the challenges posed by austerity, our draft budget aligns resources to our priorities in creating a prosperous and secure, healthy and active, ambitious and learning, united and connected Wales against the backdrop of the uncertainty and challenges posed by the Brexit vote. Every objective analysis of the potential impact of Brexit says we should be prepared for a shrinking economy.

11. We have based our spending decisions on an analysis of demands and needs in key public service areas which are of particular importance to those who need it most. In the challenging financial climate we have sought to focus resources on priorities based on an assessment of greatest positive impact and mitigate the effects of austerity where its impact is unavoidable.
12. Despite clear financial challenges, our commitment to the Welsh language remains as strong as ever. We have set ourselves a challenging target to reach a million Welsh speakers by 2050 and we fully accept the scale of the challenge, which requires a sea change to realise our vision. In increasingly difficult and uncertain financial times, we have maintained the Welsh language budget to ensure steady investment to lay the foundations required as we work to reach a million Welsh speakers by 2050.
13. We accept the importance of ensuring sufficient funding at this important time in the Welsh language's development. Despite the uncertainty surrounding Brexit, continuing financial pressures and our acceptance that funding alone is insufficient to realise our vision for the language, we have managed to maintain funding at 2016-17 levels for 2 of the 3 BELs dedicated to the Welsh language.
14. The Welsh in Education Action increases by £10.6m for 2017-18 which includes recurrent transfers noted in paragraph 15 below and an additional £5m in 2017-18 allocated as a result of the budget agreement with Plaid Cymru. This £5m will support the further development of Welsh for Adults, and in particular the provision of Welsh language courses for the workplace, with the remainder used to support other initiatives to promote the use of Welsh. Further consideration will be given to how the additional £5.0m will be distributed in line with the priorities of the new Welsh Language Strategy currently being consulted upon.
15. There have also been a number of recurrent transfers which impact on this action:
 - £5.4m from the Higher Education Action to fund the activities of Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol from 2017-18;
 - £0.5m from the Education Standards Action (EIG grant) to deliver programmes which support children and young people's informal use of Welsh, which include the extension of the Welsh Language Charter on a national basis; and
 - £0.2m to the Qualifications Action in relation to the continued delivery of the Welsh for Adults examinations via Qualifications Wales.
16. The final change relates to a budget reduction of £0.150m. We will work to mitigate the impact of this reduction on the delivery of our commitments and we intend to manage the savings across the BEL as we plan in detail our commitments for the year. The majority of the savings will be achieved from the remaining Bilingual Champions contracts coming to an end. Projects to support Post-16 activity will be reconsidered and reductions will be made within these activities as contracts are renewed to achieve the savings.
17. The Cabinet Secretary for Education has provided the same information to the Children, Young People and Education Committee on the budget provision to

support the implementation of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy. Further information about how the Welsh in Education budget supports local authorities' Welsh in Education Strategic Plans is supplied at Annex 1 of this evidence paper.

Part 2: Welsh Government priorities and commitments

18. In response to the current uncertainty around exiting the European Union and financial constraints, the draft budget for 2017-18 closely aligns resources to our priorities. These priorities are categorised in four chapters outlined at paragraph 10 above. The Welsh language is included under the Ambitious and Learning, and United and Connected headings and funding has been allocated accordingly.
19. Whilst acknowledging the scale of the challenge to meet a million speakers by 2050, our draft strategy represents a departure from previous Welsh language strategies. The draft strategy identifies the groundwork required to enable the amount of Welsh speakers to increase between the final strategy's publication in 2017 and the year 2050. To this end, the strategy places a strong focus on workforce development within the education sector across all stages, from early years through to higher and further education. A new and wholly strategic approach to the Welsh language will require action at the outset to ensure the delivery of the strategy and its target.
20. Whilst focusing on our long-term vision, the draft strategy confirms that certain priorities will need to be delivered within the first five years after the publication of the final strategy. Consequently, detailed individual policies will be published which will target specific policy areas where action is required as a priority. As part of the consultation process, we have asked the public where we should prioritise within the first five years, and we will give due regard to responses received as part of the analysis of all consultation responses.
21. In measuring the delivery of the final Welsh language strategy, we will, of course, measure our progress against our target of a million Welsh speakers. In addition, progress in delivering the detailed policies to be published as outlined in paragraph 20 will be a measure of the delivery of the final strategy. Furthermore, our draft Welsh language strategy invited views on which (if indeed any) other targets and milestones should be included within the final Welsh language strategy. We will be guided by responses to the consultation in this regard.
22. The Future Generations Act placed the Welsh Government's commitment to develop policy and decision-making in ways which maximise the impact we make on the long-term good of Wales on a legal footing. The Act gives us, and other public bodies, a strong foundation to build on. In maintaining the levels of funding for the Welsh language this draft budget allocation for 2017-18 will contribute to support the cross-cutting nature of the Welsh language and in particular contribute towards the well-being goal of a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language.

Part 3: Key policies

The relation of draft budget allocations to the delivery of *A Living Language: A Language for Living* and *Bwrw Mlaen/Moving Forward*

23. As noted at paragraph 6 of this evidence paper, the lifespans of *A Living Language: A Language for Living* and *Bwrw Mlaen/Moving Forward* come to an end on 31 March 2017. Consequently, the Draft Budget allocations for 2017-18 will support the delivery of the new Welsh Language Strategy which will be published in 2017.

Funding for the Welsh language across all Ministerial portfolios

24. In addition to the budget allocations which are made specifically for the Welsh language, outlined in Part 1 of this evidence paper, spending on the Welsh language is undertaken across all Ministerial portfolios. Furthermore, the Policy-making Standards contained in the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, to which the Welsh Government is legally bound through the Welsh Language Commissioner's Compliance Notice, ensure the Welsh language is mainstreamed into all policy areas. As a result of this mainstreaming, funding for Welsh language aspects within spending on programmes and projects is not separately identifiable.

25. However, there are some instances where designated funding is aimed specifically at supporting the Welsh language and delivering Welsh language services, such as:

- A separate budget allocated for promoting the Welsh language in the Education and Skills Main Expenditure Group (MEG);
- Funding is provided from the Education and Skills MEG to deliver the Welsh-medium Improvement Scheme, which aims to improve the quality and confidence of teaching delivered through the medium of Welsh at secondary level;
- Programme funding is currently made available from the Health and Social Services MEG to promote the importance of Welsh language services across health and social services and to help support the implementation of the Welsh Government's *More than just words.... Follow-on Strategic Framework for Welsh Language Services in Health, Social Services and Social Care*;
- The *Cam Wrth Gam* programme is specifically aimed at raising the capacity of Welsh-medium provision in the Foundation Phase. Funding is provided from the Education and Skills MEG;
- Welsh Government funding from the Economy, Science and Transport MEG to the Welsh Books Council is allocated specifically for Welsh language publications.
- Welsh Government support for the arts is channelled by the Arts Council of Wales who fund Welsh language arts projects. Funding is provided from the Economy, Science and Transport MEG.

Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Commissioner

26. Given the backdrop of financial challenges and uncertainty, we are pleased to have maintained the Welsh Language Commissioner BEL at First Supplementary Budget 2016-17 level in the draft budget allocations for 2017-18. In making this

allocation, we have been mindful of the importance of the work which is currently ongoing by the Welsh Language Commissioner in rolling out Welsh Language Standards, and the unavoidable cuts which have previously been made to the Welsh Language Commissioner's budget.

Draft budget allocations relating to the delivery of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy

27. When published, the Welsh-medium Education Strategy included a five-year Implementation Programme and fixed five-year and indicative 10-year targets based on outcomes. The subsequent Policy Statement, published on the 10 March 2016: *Welsh-medium Education Strategy: next steps* detailed the priorities for 2016-17.

28. As the Welsh language is a cross-cutting theme, in addition to the specific budget allocation in the Welsh in Education BEL, other departments support the development of Welsh within the education system, such as Welsh-medium and bilingual provision within work-based learning. Although not easily quantified, the total monetary support for the Welsh language in education is significantly higher than the Welsh in Education budget allocation.

29. As outlined in previous paragraphs, the Welsh Government is currently analysing responses received as part of its consultation on its draft Welsh language strategy. The education system is the main way for ensuring that children are able to develop their Welsh skills, and for creating new speakers. Given the importance of education to realising the vision of a million Welsh speakers by 2050, the importance of both developing a workforce able to teach and train in Welsh, and of developing Welsh-medium education provision, featured clearly in the draft strategy. The final version of the Welsh language strategy and the resulting policies published for specific policy areas will include actions and targets to measure outcomes and delivery. This strategy will include education and the development of Welsh language skills.

Annex 1

Welsh in Education budget provision to support the local authorities' Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs)

For 2017-18 a budget of £29.231m has been allocated to support the Welsh Government's Welsh-medium Education Strategy.

The Welsh in Education Strategic Plans provide a basis for the planning of Welsh-medium education across Wales. Critically this also includes bilingual and Welsh language education.

Local authorities use funding from a number of sources to implement their Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs) including activities supported and delivered through the 21st Century Schools Capital programme and the Education Improvement Grant (EIG). In the delivery of their EIG, the regional consortia are asked to ensure that the programme of activities funded reflect the priorities set out in the local authorities' WESPs.

The Welsh in Education BEL also supports the WESPs through programmes to support the informal use of the language and the development of the language skills of practitioners through the Sabbatical Scheme. The promotion and marketing activity through Cymraeg i Blant / Cymraeg for Kids, although difficult to quantify, also supports the implementation of the plans.