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Gweinidog y Gymraeg a Dysgu Gydol Oes
Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language
Pwyllgor Diwylliant, y Gymraeg a Chyfathrebu
Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee
CWLC(5)-08-16 PTN3



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Bethan Jenkins AM
Chair
Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee

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24 October 2016

Thank you for your request for further information following my appearance before the Committee on 14 September.

The action points in question were as follows:

1. you provide the Committee with further information on the division of responsibility for the Welsh language between you and the Cabinet Secretary for Education;
2. you provide us with further information on the timetable for the development of the Welsh language strategy; and
3. the Cabinet Secretary for Education provide further information on the remit of the Donaldson Review in relation to the Welsh language education continuum.

The Cabinet Secretary for Education has agreed to respond to the third point separately.

As for the division of responsibility between myself and the Cabinet Secretary for Education, I have responsibility for all aspects of Welsh language policy – this includes oversight and coordination of general Welsh language policy, Ministerial functions emanating from the Welsh Language Act 1993, and the Welsh Language Commissioner and Welsh language in education policy.

In terms of the Welsh language and education, I am responsible for all policy aspects of Welsh-medium and bilingual education, including the assessment and approval of Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs). I also work with the Cabinet Secretary to ensure that the Welsh language is considered at the heart of wider education policy.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

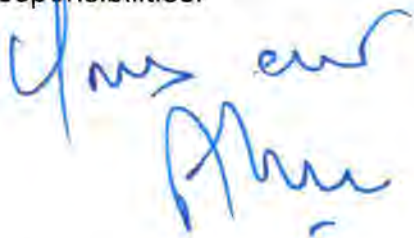
We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Regarding the timetable for the Welsh language strategy, the first thing to note is that the consultation on the draft strategy will close on 31 October. This will influence the content of the final version, due for publication on 1 April. The new strategy will include a roadmap or action plan, as well as a timetable for the short, medium and long term, detailing what we need to do and what we want to see happen during those periods. This should also be set in the context of local authority Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs), due to be submitted in December, the changes to the teaching and learning of Welsh, and work to produce new Welsh language legislation, to begin next year. As a package, this work will give us a strong foundation to move towards a million Welsh speaking people.

You also sought clarity on the Independent Media Forum and if it will consider issues of relevance to both myself and the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure, who has broad responsibility for media matters. The Cabinet Secretary and I are working together to agree in detail the scope and remit of the Media Forum; this will naturally include broadcasting, which falls within my portfolio. Officials are preparing further advice which we will be reviewing shortly. A briefing note will be provided for the Committee's further information in the next few weeks.

I appreciate that the Committee has a legitimate interest in the appointment of the member for Wales on the new BBC Board. As I said during the Welsh Government debate on the BBC Charter on 27 September, I am conscious of the need for the division between the Executive and the Legislature to be respected. Also, as you know, policy responsibility for broadcasting is not devolved. However, I agree with the concept of confirmation hearings for this particular appointment where there is a significant and widespread public interest. Although the consent of Welsh Ministers is required, the recruitment and appointment will be managed via a UK Government process and is not a process that is determined by the Welsh Government. It is not therefore within my powers to provide for this. However I will discuss with the Secretary of State and I would certainly expect any person appointed to make themselves available to the Committee for scrutiny at an appropriate time.

I am copying this letter for information to the Cabinet Secretary for the Economy and Infrastructure in relation to the Media Forum and the Cabinet Secretary for Education with regard to her commitment to respond to the third point and the division of our responsibilities.



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