

WRITTEN EVIDENCE PAPER TO THE CULTURE, WELSH LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Minister for Lifelong Learning & Welsh Language: January 2018

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to set out my priorities for the Lifelong Learning & Welsh Language portfolio. The portfolio is wide ranging. However, with respect to the elements of it which are of interest to the Committee, my priorities which underpin the key themes and priority areas as set out in the *Prosperity for All: The National Strategy*, include:

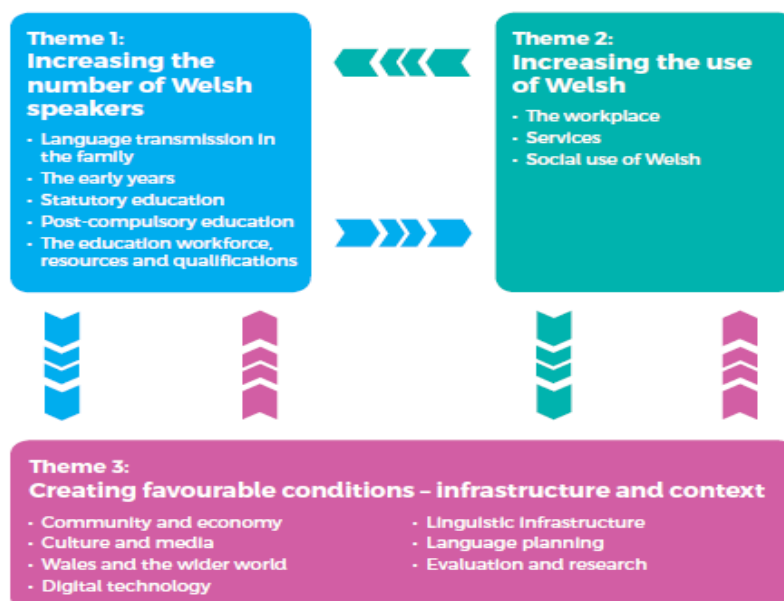
- delivering on the ambitious target of one million Welsh speakers by 2050 with key milestones for the decades leading to this; and
- continuing to support the planned expansion of Welsh medium education in our schools.

These priorities have clear synergies, and will be taken forward in line with my wider portfolio activities and with the work undertaken by colleagues across Government. I look forward to proactively engaging with the Committee in delivering on these priorities.

The Welsh Language: *Cymraeg 2050*

On 11 July this year we launched our *Cymraeg 2050* strategy, setting out our vision to reach a million Welsh speakers by 2050. The new strategy explains how we will work to reach a million Welsh speakers and increase the percentage of the population who use Welsh daily from 10% to 20% by 2050.

Three Themes



The target of a million Welsh speakers is deliberately ambitious. Its aim is to change people's mindsets and work towards a situation where the Welsh language is truly thriving.

The Government is fully committed to the new strategy, with the target of a million speakers by 2050 included in the *Taking Wales Forward* programme for government and *Prosperity for All: the national strategy*. A thriving Welsh language is also included in one of the 7 wellbeing goals in the *Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*.

In setting this ambitious target, it is essential that we take immediate steps to begin realising it. That's why we allocated almost £10m of additional funding in the 2017-2018 budget to help with the vision. This included £3m for Welsh for adults, £2m to promote the Welsh language, and £4.2m of the education budget for professional development to support Welsh in education.

I am pleased that the recent agreement for the 2018-19 and 2019-20 budgets includes additional funding for the Welsh language - £5m recurrent funding as well as funding for Mudiad Meithrin (£1m a year) and for bilingual educational resources (£500k a year).

Work Programme 2017-21

While the strategy provides a trajectory for the journey to a million speakers, the Work Programme for 2017-21, published in tandem with the strategy, sets out what we will do during this Assembly to lay the foundations. The early milestones to show that we are on the right course will be:

- A small increase in language transmission rates in families by the 2021 Census, continuing the trend seen between 2001 and 2011.
- An increase in the percentage of learners in Welsh-medium education, from 22 per cent (based on 7,700 seven-year-old learners in 2015/16) to 24 per cent (about 8,400) by 2021, in order to be on track to reach 30 per cent (about 10,500 in each year group) by 2031 and then 40 per cent (about 14,000 in each year group) by 2050.

Much of our focus will therefore be on advancing these two areas of work between now and 2021 in order to strengthen the foundations for the future.

To facilitate an increase in Welsh-medium education we will:

- aim to support the expansion of Welsh language early years by 40 new groups by 2021.
- support growth in the number of teachers in Wales who can teach Welsh or teach through the medium of Welsh by 2021 as follows:
 - 3,100 primary teachers who can teach through the medium of Welsh (from a baseline of 2,900 in 2015/16)
 - 600 secondary teachers who can teach Welsh (from a baseline of 500 in 2015/16)

- 2,200 secondary teachers who can teach through the medium of Welsh (from a baseline of 1,800 in 2015/16).

We will also keep a close eye on indicators of language use associated with the target of increasing daily use from 10 per cent of the population to 20 per cent in 2050. Increasing the target of 10 per cent to 11 per cent by 2021 will be our first milestone.

Cymraeg 2050 describes a series of transformational changes we will need to see in order to achieve our targets. An update on the progress to date in respect of these changes is attached at Annex A.

Eluned Morgan AM
Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning

Cymraeg 2050

Theme 1 – Increasing the number of Welsh speakers

- 1. Make rapid progress to expand Welsh-medium early years provision by 150 nursery groups over the next decade to facilitate a seamless transition into Welsh-medium education.**

The work of planning where early years provision needs to be expanded is in progress. This includes mapping existing provision with information provided in local authority Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs) and Childcare Sufficiency Assessments. We have been working with Mudiad Meithrin over the last year to collect more comprehensive data about their settings, including the capacity of each Cylch Meithrin, the age profile of the children who attend them, and the number of children going on to Welsh education. The data has been shared with local authorities so that they can use the information when drafting and updating their WESPs.

To support this expansion, a qualified workforce will be needed who can work confidently through the medium of Welsh. We continue to work with a number of partners across the sector, including Mudiad Meithrin, Wales PPA and NDNA Cymru to provide training to improve the Welsh language skills of the workforce, and give those working in Welsh medium settings the specialist skills they need. A pilot project is also being conducted to form a dependable baseline in relation to the skills of the early years workforce. The project, which is being conducted by Cwlwm, a consortium of five childcare organisations, and the National Centre for Learning Welsh, uses a Diagnostic Tool to map the linguistic ability of a sample of workers against Welsh for Adults levels. This data will be used to plan future support and training programmes from April 2018 onwards.

- 2. Increase the proportion of each school year group receiving Welsh-medium education from 22 per cent (based on 7,700 seven-year-old learners in 2015/16) to 30 per cent (about 10,500 in each year group) by 2031, and then 40 per cent (about 14,000 in each year group) by 2050.**
- 3. Transform how we teach Welsh to all learners in order that at least 70 per cent of those learners report by 2050 that they can speak Welsh by the time they leave school.**

Education is one of the key areas which underpin our vision to reach a million Welsh speakers by 2050. Ensuring an increase in the number of children and young people educated in Welsh or bilingually is a priority for us all.

WESPs remain a solid foundation on which to plan Welsh-medium education across Wales. It is important for the Welsh Government and local authorities to build on this good work.

Early in 2017, Aled Roberts was appointed to conduct a rapid review of each local authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP), to review the process of drafting WESPs, and to suggest recommendations on how to improve that process. This was a high level review and a first step towards transforming the way we plan Welsh medium education. Aled Roberts' review was published on 4 August 2017, and contained 18 recommendations, including:

- Establishing a Board to discuss and identify the changes needed in terms of the legislation and regulations
- Reviewing the timetable for WESPs to align with Welsh Government capital funding plans
- Strengthening the strategic relationship between local authorities and Mudiad Meithrin to ensure growth in the early years sector at a local level
- Urgent planning to increase the number of teachers training through the medium of Welsh.

The previous Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning accepted the 18 recommendations, and we will begin taking steps to implement them at once.

Following Aled Roberts' rapid review of the WESPs, we asked the 22 local authorities to submit amended plans. Over half the plans have now been resubmitted, and I will be reviewing them in due course.

We will be establishing a Board to steer the process of developing the recommendations, and to advise on areas such as the categorisation of schools and amending the legislation and regulations for planning education early in the New Year.

In respect of the curriculum, we will move to transform how Welsh is taught in English medium schools in order to ensure that all children and young people in Wales have the best opportunity to become fluent in Welsh and English. Work has begun to develop the Languages, Literacy and Communications Area of Learning and Experience (AoLE) within the new curriculum. The AoLE will include one continuum of teaching and learning languages, including Welsh. The intention is for the curriculum to be available to schools in April 2019 and be introduced from September 2022.

Concerning school reorganisation, planning school places is the responsibility of local authorities, and as a rule the Welsh Government does not directly interfere in the process of planning school places. Any plans contained in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans concerning changing school provision must follow the relevant statutory processes. Local authorities must

continuously review how their provision meets demand for school places, now and in future, as well as the demands of the modern curriculum.

As per the *Cymraeg 2050* Work Programme for 2017-21, our policy and action plan for Welsh in education was published on 18 December.

Concerning Welsh language education resources, the Welsh Government invests about £2.653m a year to commission Welsh-medium education resources for learners to support subjects across the curriculum, from 3-19 years of age. The Government is committed to ensuring that resources are available in Welsh and English for the new curriculum and revised qualifications.

This year we have awarded 25 contracts to produce resources to support subjects such as art and design, music, Welsh, geography, design and technology, history, government and politics, mathematics, and modern foreign languages. This responds to the lack of resources noted by teachers for these subjects and for the revised qualifications. Over 70 new titles have been published, including the 'Botio' app which helps learners in Key Stage 2 with coding, and two novels which form the first part of two trilogies by Y Lolfa, namely *EFA* (part of the 'Melanai' series) and *Yr Ynys* (part of the 'Yma' trilogy). These are the first trilogies to be published in Welsh for young adults.

During the current financial year, a contract was awarded to RNIB Cymru to prepare a total of 32 titles over a period of a year for blind and partially sighted learners. These resources will be available in a variety of formats, including Braille, large print, DAISY and MP3 files.

The grant scheme for WJEC to translate textbooks to support the revised qualifications ensures that 58 new titles will be available. Following the summit conference on resources in April 2017, discussions have taken place with publishers to find ways of ensuring that in future Welsh and English resources are published simultaneously. WJEC have been reviewing their processes to reduce the time between publishing in both languages.

- 4. Increase the number of primary teachers who can teach in Welsh from 2,900 to 3,900 by 2031 and 5,200 by 2050; increase the number of secondary teachers who can teach Welsh from 500 to 900 by 2031 and 1,200 by 2050; and increase the number of secondary teachers who can teach through the medium of Welsh from 1,800 to 3,200 by 2031 and 4,200 by 2050.**

The teaching system is wholly dependent on its workforce. If we are to see one continuum of education for the Welsh language, we must invest in the teachers of the future.

It is imperative that solid foundations are laid during the first 4 years of the *Cymraeg 2050* strategy. We will therefore be paying special attention to strengthening the way we attract, train and support new teachers. As part of that, we need to ensure that teachers have the resources they need, when

they need them, to enable them to teach in the best way possible. This will be one of our priorities during the initial period of implementing the strategy.

To this end, the Cabinet Secretary for Education agreed an additional £4.2m of the education budget for 2017-18 to further develop the teaching workforce to teach Welsh and through the medium of Welsh.

I am pleased that the Cabinet Secretary for Education, Kirsty Williams, has also announced that incentives will be available for eligible students starting Initial Teacher Education courses in academic year 18/19. A new Welsh-medium incentive will target secondary teachers teaching all subject specialisms through the medium of Welsh / bilingually or teaching Welsh in any secondary setting.

5. Reform the post-16 Welsh-medium and bilingual education and skills offer to ensure that young people have the opportunity to continue developing bilingual skills to support a prosperous economy.

Work is in progress to build on the infrastructure already in place for expanding the Welsh-medium and bilingual provision in the post-16 sector, in order to ensure linguistic progression from one phase of education to another. We saw gradual progress in the provision during the last period, and the sector is working hard to improve skills and raise young people's awareness of the advantages of bilingual skills for the workplace.

Following a review of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, the Welsh Government's response was published on 12 December accepting all the recommendations, especially that concerned with expanding the Coleg's duties to include the post-16 sector. As a result, the Coleg is establishing a specialist Planning Board with representation from the further education and work-based learning sectors. The Board's purpose will be to advise on the procedures necessary to develop post-16 provision and produce a formal action plan that will consider how to expand provision in future, the planning and training of the workforce, and increasing opportunities to use the Welsh language in education.

Concerning Welsh in the workplace, this year, for the first time, the National Centre for Learning Welsh is offering a 'Work Welsh' programme to support workplaces to develop their employees' Welsh language skills. A pilot programme is being conducted by Colegau Cymru and the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to develop the ability of practitioners in further education colleges and higher education institutions to teach confidently through the medium of Welsh.

Theme 2 – Increasing the use of Welsh

6. Review the legislation which underpins the Welsh language to ensure it offers a strong foundation for promoting and facilitating the use of Welsh.

On 9 August 2017, my predecessor as Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning published a White Paper, *Striking the right balance: proposals for a Welsh Language Bill*. The paper stimulated vigorous debate at consultation events in Llandudno, Merthyr Tydfil, Swansea, Cardiff and Aberystwyth, as well as targeted engagement events with young people at Glan Llyn, and with people with learning disabilities in Carmarthen.

The consultation ended on 31 October 2017. A total of 504 responses were received (226 responses from individuals and organisations, as well as a number of campaign letters). I hope to make an announcement on the next steps during the coming weeks.

The main purpose of the White Paper is to ensure that legislation helps us achieve the aims of our *Cymraeg 2050* strategy. That means striking the right balance between promotion and regulation, and ensuring the best possible impact with limited resources. In order to achieve that, the White Paper argues that a new body is needed, a Welsh Language Commission, to be a powerhouse with status, credibility and resources. The Commission's role will be to:

- specialise in language planning
- provide practical support and assistance to bodies and businesses
- innovate in relation to promoting the Welsh language and bilingualism
- enforce the Standards.

The White Paper also proposes:

- making the process of imposing the Standards less bureaucratic and more democratic
- ensuring the Welsh Government has the power to impose Standards on any body within the Assembly's competence, including banks, supermarkets and other private sector bodies.

As part of the process, the Public Services Ombudsman submitted an interesting response to the consultation. As the Ombudsman's work involves complaints and investigations into service failures, the response is an entirely reasonable one. It is worth bearing in mind that the Ombudsman is responsible for the language in Catalunya, as well as the Basque Country, the country closest to Wales in its linguistic profile and that has been successful in ensuring its minority language thrives. I am considering whether a further consultation is needed on the Ombudsman's proposal. I will make a statement in the Senedd in due course.

Concerning the rolling programme for the Standards, over 100 bodies now come under the Standards system, and I will make a further announcement on the health standards shortly. I am committed to the standards system, and eager to see bodies moving away from the previous Welsh Language Schemes so that there is a stronger legal framework in place for the Welsh language.

The consultation on the White Paper, *Striking the right balance: proposals for a Welsh Language Bill*, over the summer included proposals for a revised model of standards. I am considering the responses to the White Paper and I will provide an update in due course. It is important that any standards prepared henceforth are consistent with the new legislative policy.

7. Ensure that Welsh Government leads by example by promoting and facilitating increased use of Welsh by our own workforce.

The proactive offer, which is central to the Welsh language standards, means that the Welsh Government now routinely draws the attention of customers and partners to its Welsh language services from the outset, without them having to ask for a service in Welsh. The organisation has responded positively to this, for instance by answering phones bilingually and ascertaining people's language choice. This has entailed significant behaviour change in some areas of the organisation, but good progress is being made to ensure people can communicate with the Government in their language of choice. This has led to an increase in the use of Welsh by staff, and the language can increasingly be seen and heard across our offices.

This has given the Welsh Government an opportunity to develop the use of Welsh within the organisation, and to promote its use by the workforce. Providing bilingual services of a high standard means that over the last two years we have focused on opportunities for staff to develop and improve Welsh language skills, concentrating on improving confidence and skills through training.

Staff can also identify Welsh speakers in the organisation through email, with messages on email profiles stating whether individuals are Welsh speakers or learners, in order to increase Welsh language email traffic. An increase was seen in the services available to staff through the medium of Welsh, such as corporate messages, a bilingual intranet, and an increase in the human resources procedures available in Welsh. Over the next months we will focus on developing the use of Welsh language information technology, in order to ensure that staff take advantage of opportunities to use Welsh on their computers.

In respect of promoting the use of Welsh generally, £400k has already been allocated to help small and medium sized enterprises become more bilingual. The aim of the project is to ensure that practical support is available to SMEs and microbusinesses (under 10 employees) to help them increase their use of the Welsh Language. The Welsh Language Commissioner currently provides

some support to larger businesses, however, there are currently over 90,000 SMEs in Wales that do not have access to support or assistance to guide them on using more Welsh language.

In Spring, I will also be launching a national Cymraeg “helpline” as a first port of call for anyone interested in the Welsh language. It will provide short translations and signposting to the help available, free of charge, for businesses and third sector organisations to assist them to make the Welsh language more visible (e.g. on their social media, menus, advertising, signs).

The remainder of the additional funding for 2017-2018 is being used to enhance the promotion function already undertaken by the Welsh Government. This includes two new posts requiring Welsh language marketing expertise, as well as a third senior policy post to deliver the enhanced work programme. In line with the priorities of the *Cymraeg 2050* strategy, the additional funding will also fund the following projects:

- a new grant scheme (the Cymraeg 2050 grant) in support of Theme 2 of the strategy - Increasing the use of Welsh.
- national marketing campaigns and/or interventions that encourage the use of Welsh to priority target audiences (e.g., young people aged 14-21).

Theme 3 – Creating favourable conditions: infrastructure and context

8. Develop a new regional focus to economic development to help all parts of Wales to benefit from prosperity and support each area to develop its own distinctive identity.

The economy is integral to creating the social conditions where Welsh speakers can stay in Welsh-speaking communities, or return to those communities. While we cannot control every factor which influences economic growth, there are things which we can influence. These include skills, the prestige placed on the Welsh language, the location of many public sector jobs, clusters, ensuring that the Welsh language is seen as a valuable skill in large developments, and opportunities to use those skills.

Prosperity for All, published in September, explains how we, as a Government, will tackle regional inequality and promote fair work. Our economic action plan, published on 12 December, sets out a new regionally-focused model of economic development. This will mean working with each region to identify and exploit regional strengths and opportunities.

We are experiencing a period of great political change, with the discussions to leave the European Union foremost in our minds. It is too early to know what exactly the implications will be for us, but we will be prepared to respond to changes as they arise. It is possible that we will need to adapt our way of working to respond to these changes, but we will not compromise on our ambition of reaching a million Welsh speakers.

9. Transform the Welsh language digital landscape with particular focus on language technologies.

We have funded developments in Welsh language technology so that the movements of a robotic arm can be controlled by speech through a small number of Welsh language commands, and have extended this to the point where it is possible to ask a small set of questions through microphone and hear sensible answers through loudspeaker – all in Welsh. This work has been done by Bangor University.

This was the first step on a journey to build a Welsh voice-to-text machine, and we have also co-funded a PhD researcher at Bangor University to study Welsh language voice-to-text. This is necessary if we are to see the Welsh language on devices such as Siri, Amazon Echo/Dot, Google Home, and so on in future.

One of the ways in which this technology has been developed is through the 'Macsen' programme – a prototype of a Welsh language smart virtual assistant (such as Siri or Amazon Echo) funded by the Welsh Government. Bangor University have released the code for 'Macsen' under open licence so that, for instance, school coding clubs can gain access and use it.

Better machine translation is also a priority in order to protect individuals' data, to be aware of the context when converting from language to language, and to prevent translating the same sentences more than once.

We have plans to support developments in relation to Welsh interactive maps, the semantic interrelation of words and terminology in the language, and to contribute to the development of new games in Welsh.

The Welsh Language Technology Board also advises the Welsh Government on developments in the field of technology. The Board meets three times a year and provides advice which helps us draft the new Welsh Language Technology Action Plan.

10. Develop a national programme to increase understanding of bilingualism.

In order to reach a million Welsh speakers by 2050, it is essential to improve our understanding as a nation of what we mean by being 'bilingual'. The strategy's vision is an ambitious one, and we know that the Welsh Government must drive a change in attitudes in order to ensure its success. The change must be transformational (i.e. a fundamental change in the way individuals and organisations deal with the language). It entails a shift in terms of culture, behaviour and mindset.

We have already recruited to two new posts requiring Welsh language marketing expertise as well as a third senior policy post to deliver the wider work programme. This will help us begin preparations for developing a suite of interventions to drive this element of the strategy forward.