



Helen Mary Jones AM
Chair Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee
Tŷ Hywel
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11 March 2020

Dear Helen,

First of all, I'd like to congratulate you on your appointment as interim Chair of the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee.

Thank you for the letter from your predecessor dated 17 February 2020, asking me to respond to comments made by Aled Roberts, the Welsh Language Commissioner, in his letter to you dated 31 January discussing his budget allocation for 2020-21. He was writing in response to correspondence sent by the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee on 16 January 2020. I will answer your questions below in order.

The steps the Welsh Government can take to improve transparency of spending on the Welsh language

In my letter to you dated 5 February, I explained that every Welsh Minister must consider the *Cymraeg 2050* strategy, which supports the strategic emphasis placed on the Welsh language in:

- The Programme for Government, *Taking Wales Forward*
- Prosperity for All: the national strategy
- The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

I also noted that although I lead on the Welsh language portfolio and manage much of the budget, we are working as a government to mainstream the language into all policy areas. The Cymraeg 2050 Programme Board is an important part of this, and Prosiect 2050 will place specific and visual emphasis on efforts to mainstream the Welsh language, within the organisation and externally.

I went on to mention that various projects give specific consideration to the language as a core part of their work, for example the Arfor project. This project aims to strengthen the economy in the traditional Welsh-speaking heartlands, which in turn should bring benefits to the language and help to deliver *Cymraeg 2050*.

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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.

Many other areas incorporate *Cymraeg 2050* by default as a natural part of their work. Two excellent recent examples are the delivery of the new curriculum for Wales, and the Childcare Offer.

Influencing other important policy areas across the government is a central part of our policy of mainstreaming the language, and an element of this is ensuring that fair funding is available for it. It is difficult to determine the exact amount, however Education, Health, and Local Authorities are already contributing a great deal.

Concerns that the current level of funding for the Welsh language does not correspond with the ambition of Cymraeg 2050 and the risk that a lack of investment could undermine efforts to achieve the strategy

I have previously presented evidence to this Committee which shows that the budget allocated to the Welsh language has increased since the beginning of this government's term in office. You will be aware that we secured an additional allocation of £6.5m for the language at the start of this government. This additional funding is now recurrent, with the Draft Budget for 2020-21 showing that this £6.5m will be maintained as part of the budget during the next financial year. I'm proud of the increase in funding allocated to deliver *Cymraeg 2050* during this government's term in office, and continuing to allocate this additional £6.5m is testament to this government's continued support for the language.

It may be worth taking time to look at the bigger picture that shows that the Welsh Government's budget in 2020-21 remains £300m lower in real terms than it was a decade ago, in 2010-11. Difficult decisions have to be made across government, and I'm confident that we're making the most of the budget that is available for the Welsh language.

The lack of additional funding to implement projects in the following areas: - Increasing the use of Welsh language services

a. Using Welsh within the workplace

b. Support for the health and local government sectors

c. Research for policy work and to support the Commissioner's next 5 year report

d. Further support for businesses and charities

The Welsh Language Commissioner made a bid for additional funding for new projects in his estimate for the 2020-21 financial year. Full consideration was given to whether these projects should be funded before the Commissioner's final budget allocation was set. In light of these considerations, it was decided that they should not be.

In coming to my decision, I factored in my announcement in August to establish Prosiect 2050 within the Welsh Government – a multi-disciplinary team that will lead on language planning. Some of the projects proposed by the Commissioner may duplicate work already being undertaken or that is planned within the Welsh Government. I believe that some of these projects could be implemented more efficiently by using the Welsh Government's existing structures and policy levers. Prosiect 2050 will use all the Welsh Government's economies of scale, and will directly contribute to the First Minister's commitment to mainstream the Welsh language as a policy consideration. For instance, I will shortly be launching a new service within Business Wales called *Helo Blod*, with the aim of increasing the visual and audible use of Welsh by providing a translation and text-checking service, as well as advice on how to increase the use of Welsh for companies and voluntary organisations. Additionally, the pilot programme *Leading in a Bilingual Country* for senior

leaders within organisations in Wales will continue to be trialled with AcademiWales; this programme combines leadership with linguistic considerations, with the aim of embedding the spirit of *Cymraeg 2050* within organisations.

As noted in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government and the Commissioner (which was agreed in August 2019), the Commissioner will have a clear focus on increasing the use of the Welsh language in a way that contributes to delivering *Cymraeg 2050* – increasing the use of Welsh is of course a central part of the Commissioner's work in implementing the Welsh language standards system.

The lack of sufficient funding to fill all the current vacancies in the staffing structure.

Although the additional projects have not been funded, the Commissioner has received an increase of £50,000 in his revenue allocation in order to mitigate the impact of pay rises, as well as capital funding of £385,000 in 2020-21 to enable him to upgrade elements of his information technology system. I am pleased to see that the Commissioner indicates that this will lead to other savings, and will release funding in the mid to long term.

It is my responsibility to consider funding levels across the Welsh language portfolio. The 2020-21 funding allocations will enable the Commissioner to carry out his functions effectively without having to reduce his staff numbers.

I will continue to advocate for the language across the Government. The additional £6.5 million has been a welcome funding boost that will aid us as we begin the *Cymraeg 2050* journey.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. E. Morgan'.

Eluned Morgan AC/AM

Gweinidog y Gymraeg a Chysylltiadau Rhyngwladol
Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language