



David Melding AM
Chair of the Committee for the Scrutiny of the First Minister
National Assembly for Wales
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

29 April 2015

Dear David

Committee for the Scrutiny of the First Minister: Meeting on 13 March 2015

I am writing in response to your letter dated 2 April which details points raised by the Committee for the Scrutiny of the First Minister following the meeting I attended on 13 March 2015 to discuss the Welsh Government's role in protecting and enhancing the Welsh language and the process for, and scrutiny of, major public appointments in Wales.

I will address the points made in the order they appear in your letter.

1. The Welsh Government's Role in Protecting and Enhancing the Welsh Language

Financial Support

At the Committee's request, I provide below a breakdown of how the funding under each budget line for the Welsh language is allocated.

Welsh Language (BEL 6020)

The purpose of **BEL 6020** is to support the aims of the Welsh language Strategy *A living language: a language for living* and the policy statement *A living language: a language for living – Bwrw Mlaen* which are:

- To encourage and support the use of the Welsh language within families
- To increase the provision of Welsh-medium activities for children and young people and to increase their awareness of the value of the language
- To strengthen the position of the Welsh language in the community
- To increase opportunities for people to use Welsh in the workplace
- To increase and improve Welsh-language services to citizens
- To strengthen the infrastructure for the language

Area of support	Committed and indicative spend within 2015-16	Allocation Details								
Grants to Welsh Language Organisations	£4,122,151	<p>Total grant funding to Welsh language organisations, such as the National Eisteddfod, Urdd Gobaith Cymru, and the Mentrau Iaith (Welsh language initiatives), to promote the language. In 2015-16 each Menter Iaith will receive baseline funding based on £3.45 per Welsh speaker (except Gwynedd which is capped) with each Menter receiving a minimum of £60,000.</p> <p>This figure is split as follows :-</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Education and Training</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£35,140</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mentrau Iaith</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£2,289,567</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The Community</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£832,541</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Children and Young People</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£964,903</td> </tr> </table>	Education and Training	£35,140	Mentrau Iaith	£2,289,567	The Community	£832,541	Children and Young People	£964,903
Education and Training	£35,140									
Mentrau Iaith	£2,289,567									
The Community	£832,541									
Children and Young People	£964,903									
Papurau Bro Grants	£87,010	Has been approved for 51 Papurau Bro in 2015-16.								
Bwrw Mlaen Grants	£300,230	Has been awarded to 12 organisations across Wales in 2015-16. This was a one-off funding opportunity made available through the policy statement <i>Bwrw Mlaen</i> .								
Technology and Digital Media Grant Funding	£270,000	This is the final year of a three year commitment to provide funding to encourage and facilitate the use of the Welsh language through technology and digital media. 10 grants have been awarded in 2015-16.								
Research	£55,500*	This includes funding for evaluating the Welsh language strategy <i>Iaith Fyw: Iaith Byw</i> , The National Survey and the Welsh Government's membership of the Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity (NPLD).								
Supporting Community Partners	£48,000*	This includes training and support for the grant funded partners.								
Marketing	£80,000*	Including marketing associated with <i>Iaith Fyw: Iaith Byw</i> and the <i>Pethau Bychain</i> campaign								
Welsh Language Tribunal	£50,000*	Running costs for the first full year of the Tribunal's operation 2015-16.								
Children and Young People Projects	£825,400*	This includes projects delivered by contractors; TWF which supports bilingualism from day 1 and PCAI (Prosiect Cefnogi Arferion Iaith) which supports changing language habits within schools and beyond the school gates.								

*These figures are indicative spend and subject to further consideration. All expenditure will be met from within the available budgets.

The purpose of **BEL 6021** is to fund the office 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 third and private sectors

Welsh Language Commissioner Grant in Aid	£3,390,000	The budget allocated for 2015-16
---	-------------------	----------------------------------

Welsh in Education (BEL 5164)

The purpose of the Welsh in Education budget (BEL 5164) is to support the implementation of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy and supports activity in the following areas:

- the planning of Welsh-medium education;
- the delivery of practitioner training through the Sabbaticals Scheme and the Welsh in Education Grant;
- the delivery of Welsh-language training through Welsh for Adults and Welsh second language;
- the commissioning of teaching and learning resources; and
- research, evaluation and marketing in respect of the Strategy.

The budget breakdown is provided below for 2015-16

Budget line	Budget 2015-16	Allocation details
Planning and mainstreaming	£2.684m	This budget allocation includes grant funding to Mudiad Meithrin, Sgiliaith and the Bilingual Champions within the FE and work based learning sectors. This budget also supports research, evaluation and marketing activity in support of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy.
Welsh for Adults	£9.176m	Welsh for Adults recurrent funding, which funds the delivery of courses across Wales.
Linguistic skills	£2.271m	Includes projects to implement the actions within the Welsh second language action plan and grant

		funding to develop the Welsh for Adults programme.
Diagnostic tool	£0.043m	Funding to maintain and promote an on-line Welsh language skills diagnostic tool.
Practitioner training	£1.795m	Includes the Welsh Language Sabbatical Scheme; Welsh-language and methodology training for school and FE college practitioners; and a training programme for early years practitioners.
Resource commissioning	£2.630m	This budget allocation supports the commissioning of Welsh language and bilingual learner resources to support the teaching and learning of Welsh as a subject as well as other subjects through the medium of Welsh.
BEL total	£18.599m	

The committee also asked for information specifically about the Welsh-medium education funding stream and for a breakdown showing how this has increased or decreased. The table below provides the funding to support the delivery of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy over 5 years, 2011-16

	2011-12 (£m)	2012-13 (£m)	2013-14 (£m)	2014-15 (£m)	2015-16 (£m)
Implementation of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy	12.377	16.212	16.212	21.006	18.599

The budget varies across years due to the transfer of budgets and programmes within the Department for Education and Skills as responsibilities and priorities have changed.

For example £9.867m has been transferred in from the Post-16 Education Action for Welsh for Adults funding in order to streamline the process for the sector; and a transfer out of £5.13m of the remaining Welsh in Education Grant to the Education Standards Action, to create the new Education Improvement Grant for schools.

However, on a like for like basis, the budget has decreased by £600k between 2014-15 and 2015-16.

As the Welsh language is a cross cutting theme; in addition to this budget allocation, other divisions and branches within the Department for Education and Skills support the development of Welsh within the education system. Although not easily quantified the total monetary support for the Welsh language in education is significantly higher.

Similarly, other departments include expenditure on the Welsh language within the context of their own policy areas.

Mainstreaming

With regard to mainstreaming the language, the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 sets statutory duties on Welsh Ministers to consider the effects of their decision making on the Welsh language. Policy Making Standards will require the Welsh Government to consider at inception how policy decisions impact on the language, both positively and negatively, so that decisions promote and support its increased use within portfolio areas. Ministers must be fully aware of this duty when they make their decisions: Welsh Government departments are therefore required to undertake impact assessments in order to demonstrate that the Welsh language considerations have been identified and acted upon.

To this end a new Welsh Language Impact Assessment (WLIA) framework was launched in September 2014, in anticipation of the Standards and to ensure high quality policy decisions that consider effects on the language. The framework includes detailed guidance to staff on ensuring that considerations regarding the Welsh language are mainstreamed in Welsh Government policy decisions, which include legislation, the use of statutory powers, policy developments and statements, grant schemes, strategies, contracts and research. As the framework is still relatively new it will be reviewed over the next months to ensure that it is facilitating our work to develop robust policies that have positive outcomes for the language and its users. Subsequently, more workshop training will be offered to Welsh Government staff on completing WLIA's. We have also recently contributed to the Welsh Language Commissioner's review of WLIA processes across public organisations in Wales, and we look forward to the recommendations included in the final report when published later this year.

Turning to the Welsh Government's annual monitoring report on our Welsh language scheme, as I stated at the meeting, officials provided significant information to the Welsh Language Commissioner as part of the Standards Investigation last year, in addition to the information in the Annual Report. Officials are in dialogue to improve future reporting structures under the new Welsh language standards.

Planning and the Planning Bill

We have made amendments to the Planning Bill at Stage 2 which introduce requirements to ensure the Welsh language is considered at the National, Strategic and Local plan level. The Minister for Natural Resources continues to work with all parties to ensure that any further amendments to the Bill in relation to the Welsh language, tabled at Stage 3, reflect the concerns and comments of stakeholders and the Environment and Sustainability Committee and are in the best interests of communities across Wales. The Assembly will have the opportunity to vote on all the amendments at Stage 3 on 5 May.

Welsh Language Standards

The Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015 were approved by the National Assembly on 24 March 2015 and came into force on 31 March 2015. The Welsh Language Commissioner has published a timetable on her website detailing the process for imposing standards on organisations.

We foresee that standards will begin to be operational during March 2016. The first full year of operating under the standards is therefore 2016-17 with organisations likely to publish their first set of reports in spring 2017. Such data will be routinely collected and submitted to the Commissioner as part of the organisation's compliance with Record Keeping Standards. Such data could be compared and cross-referenced against data collected through other means such as language use surveys and internal management data to assess uptake and use.

The organisations subject to the first set of standards have been subject to Welsh Language Schemes for a number of years. Schemes are currently monitored by the Welsh Language Commissioner and previously by the Welsh Language Board. Through collating data on complaints, the findings of investigations into complaints, and through monitoring data compiled through the Annual Reports, the Commissioner has a strong baseline of data on Welsh language services provided by public bodies. We also have baseline data on the use of Welsh language services through the language use surveys conducted in 2004-06 and in 2013-15, and from the Census.

The Welsh Language Standards Programme Board are aware of the need to put in place a robust evaluation framework for the standards, and are working with the Welsh Government's Knowledge and Analytical Services department on how best to achieve this.

Data on the number of Welsh speakers employed by the Welsh Government is available, and would also be available for the other organisations subject to Standards through their compliance with Record Keeping standards. Currently, the percentage of Welsh speakers working for the Welsh Government (22.5%) closely corresponds to the percentage of Welsh speakers in Wales (19%). As part of compliance with standards, vacant posts will be assessed to decide whether Welsh language skills are required.

We note your recommendation regarding the timetable for the second and third set of standards.

Welsh Ministers will begin the process of introducing Regulations to make Standards applicable to organisations subject to the Commissioner's second Standards Investigation before the end of 2015. We cannot provide a more detailed timetable until we receive Standards Reports from the Commissioner. These will help us to understand the scale of the work.

As far as Standards for bodies in the Commissioner's third investigation are concerned, the Commissioner's proposed timetable allows officials to begin the work of preparing Regulations for those bodies at the beginning of 2016. As was the case with previous sets of Standards, we cannot provide a more detailed timetable until we see the Commissioner's standards reports, and we cannot pre-empt the contents of those Reports.

Welsh in Education

Sioned Davies Report

In undertaking his independent review, Professor Donaldson considered the important reports of a number of independent reviews commissioned by the Welsh Government. This included the Review of Welsh second language at Key Stages 3 and 4, chaired by Professor Sioned Davies. Professor Donaldson's conclusions are reflected in his report Successful Futures which was published on 25 February 2015.

On 4 March 2015, the Minister for Education and Skills launched the Great Debate on education in Wales. The outcome of this phase of the Great Debate will inform the Minister's response to Professor Donaldson's recommendations due for publication in the summer. The Welsh Government will consider the possibility of accelerating some of the recommendations with regard to Welsh second language, assuming that they are accepted by the Minister.

Welsh as a Skill

One of the key recommendations of both Professor Davies' and Professor Donaldson's reports is to have a renewed focus in schools on learning Welsh primarily as a means of communication, particularly in preparation for the workplace.

The Welsh Government decided to await the publication of Professor Donaldson's report before revising GCSE Welsh Second Language. Now that his recommendations are known, the Welsh Government will soon begin working with WJEC and other key stakeholders to take forward the reform of qualifications in this key area, giving due consideration to Professor Donaldson's recommendation to realign Welsh language qualifications at 16 with the proposed focus on speaking and listening and application in the workplace.

Teaching Capacity

Ensuring that there are sufficient numbers of practitioners for all phases of education and training, with high-quality Welsh-language skills and competence in teaching methodologies, is one of the aims of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy, and Welsh-language training is available to practitioners through the Welsh-language Sabbatical Scheme.

Further consideration will be given to how to ensure a sufficient pool of practitioners to deliver a renewed Welsh second language curriculum as part of our response to Professor Donaldson's review, Professor Furlong's review of Initial Teacher Training, and as part of the New Deal for the Education Workforce.

Welsh for Adults

Our policy statement *A Living Language: A Language for Living – Moving Forward* clearly indicates our desire to see more people gaining confidence in the Welsh language so that they may use it in their everyday lives. This includes the need to ensure that learners continue to learn at the higher levels and the need to provide opportunities for Welsh speakers to refresh and improve their skills.

The Welsh for Adults Review Group's report, *Raising Our Sights*, was published in 2013 and included a number of recommendations in this direction. The Welsh Government is in the process of implementing the recommendations of the review group, including the first recommendation to establish a national entity to be responsible for leading the sector strategically. One of the first tasks of the entity will be to reduce the number of providers of Welsh for Adults. It is hoped that this will lead to economies of scale in order to ensure a viable and sustainable provision available to learners at all levels and across Wales.

Online services

The Welsh Language Commissioner is responsible for encouraging the private sector to provide services in Welsh, including online services. The Commissioner recently conducted

a review into the Welsh language services of banks, and we welcome the report which the Commissioner published on 29 April 2015.

'Motivating the major technology companies' is one of the themes of the Welsh Government's Welsh language technology and digital media action plan, and in that context we wish to see greater provision of online services. Meetings have been held with major companies such as Apple, Microsoft and Google and we continue to correspond with international companies.

In some situations, deficiencies in Welsh technology infrastructure could be a barrier to the provision of Welsh services. For example, there is no voice-to-text or 'AI' (artificial intelligence/artificial understanding) capability in Welsh, therefore services such as Siri, Cortana and Google Now are not available in Welsh.

Through our Welsh Language Technology and Digital Media Grant projects we have funded Welsh language technology that will facilitate the development of some elements of this critical infrastructure. The same challenge is true when considering the situation of other European minority languages, so we are in discussions regarding cooperation on solutions through European networks such as the Network for Linguistic Diversity (NPLD) and Meta-Net.

Numbers of Welsh Speakers on Major Public Bodies

In light of the Standards which will soon be imposed on the Welsh Ministers under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, the guidance for officials managing a public appointment recruitment exercise has changed. Officials are now asked to complete a Welsh language impact assessment and confirm in the submission to their Minister (which requests sign off for the job advert, specification and advertising strategy) that they have considered the requirements of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. This should ensure that Welsh language requirements are properly considered and incorporated where necessary into the recruitment process.

2. The Process for, and Scrutiny of, Major Public Appointments in Wales

The independent review of the role and functions of the Children's Commissioner has made a number of recommendations, including one relating to the matter the Committee has asked me to consider. Ministers are currently discussing these issues which are relevant to a number of portfolios and I would not wish to pre-empt the outcome of these discussions.

Yours sincerely



CARWYN JONES