

Introduction

1. Swyddle welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee's Inquiry into the Welsh Government's new Welsh Language Strategy
2. Swyddle was established to provide specialist bilingual recruitment and business services. Swyddle is led by fluent Welsh speakers, who have over 30 years' experience of working bilingually within recruitment and strategic communications. Our principle aim is to enable organisations to gain commercial advantage, social capital and access to the bilingual marketplace by sourcing the best bilingual Welsh speaking staff and providing a wide range of language resources.
 - Permanent and Contract recruitment
 - Temporary staffing solutions across all of Wales and all sectors
 - Targeted job advertising service, extending client's reach
 - A Wales-wide network of professional Welsh speakers

The future Workforce

3. There is an emphasis in the Strategy on the supply of the teaching workforce but there is also a need to cultivate a demand in the wider workforce, incentivising the use of Welsh beyond the classroom. Future generations in Wales will increasingly demand fully bilingual services. The percentage of those who speak Welsh is highest amongst those aged between 3–15 years old (as high as 50%). For momentum to be maintained, they need to get jobs where they use the language or where their language ability gives them an advantage (Welsh essential and

Welsh advantageous). Any language strategy should have a social/cultural approach (opportunities outside of work) but also an economic approach (work, incentivised, business champions and role models). In the context of the education sector, new career pathways for people wishing to utilise their Welsh language skills should be clearly communicated at an early age with purposeful support services to complete these pathways.

4. Welsh has long been the language of the public sector, it also needs to be the language of the private sector. It would be beneficial to build on the research [Welsh language skills needs in eight sectors \(2014\)](#), which demonstrated the perceived benefits and desirability of Welsh language skills in each of these sectors, with at least a cohesive strategic approach to bilingualism in those sectors – particularly those which can add value quickly e.g. childcare/social care and customer services. Further, it would be logical to prioritise the skills for the occupations that would help fulfil the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards, particularly the supply of services to the public (customer services) and in operational terms (human resources). This is also true of professional services such as law and advocacy with organisations such as Cyfreithwyr.com and Citizens Advice Generalist and Consumer services answering an increased demand in legal advice and advocacy services for Welsh speakers.

Procurement

5. In our experience, the procurement framework in Wales in relation to the supply of permanent and particularly temporary staff could be better geared to support organisations subject to the Welsh Language Standards to be able to at least comply. In this respect, procurement should enable and not hinder local companies, particularly those who can meet market demand as well as fulfilling Governmental priorities quickly and efficiently. This is also pertinent if larger suppliers, who

may not necessary have the means of fully engaging the Welsh language employee network, cannot fully answer the demand. This in turn, can be a disincentive for organisations who are subject to compliance to develop and maintain the necessary capacity.

6. The legal framework of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 could be utilised as a vehicle to engender a bilingual approach within the supply chain, where there is a requirement/incentive for demonstrating tangible bilingual capacity within public sector tenders.

A Language of Commerce

7. 7. The Welsh language has a far better chance of evolving and surviving in a globalised world by truly becoming a language of business and commerce. The work of the [Welsh Language and Economic Development Task and Finish Group \(2014\)](#) has provided some basis for a strategic approach. The Welsh Government's response mentioned the language as an "additional tool that provides the cutting edge over competitors" but the marketing strategies would be well served by emphasising the added value of the language.
8. Active marketing support for companies whose brands identify with the language would help deliver this added value and has a clear link with the normalisation agenda but has also a resonance, for example, in the post Brexit era to lure domestic and global audiences to Wales, through the diaspora in North America and new emerging markets. There is also a link between the cultural and commercial, for example, *Y Wladfa* in Patagonia; the Bards of Wales in the Hungarian curriculum and [research by the Welsh Language Commissioner](#) showing that "Llaeth y Llan" brought a greater competitive advantage than "Village Dairy" to that company. Dawnus Construction brings a distinct identity in a field not traditionally associated with a high demand for the language.

9. The use of Welsh in the private sector would hugely benefit from a business or corporate “champion” – a leading business (not necessarily domestic) that’s beginning to, or is already operating bilingually, such as a tech, media, fashion or iconic brand. For example, the Chairman of Legal & General saw the value of centralising in Wales and Budweiser embraced the bilingual identity of Wales in its branding following the success of the Welsh national football team in the recent European championships. The Football Association of Wales have long been pioneers in making the Welsh language an integral part of their communication and mission, from staff through to the players. This could also work for Welsh companies or Wales based companies.
10. The Welsh Government in its’ [response to the Welsh Language and Economic Development Task and Finish Group](#), stated that it would “*Ask the boards overseeing the two City Regions to identify the specific interventions that would positively impact upon the Welsh Language and the economy in their regions.*” This could include the identification of a champion or beacon business as a catalyst for others to follow suit. This commitment could also be taken further by including a statutory footing to bilingual planning within City Region boards, particularly to serve the higher population of Welsh speakers in these areas.
11. There is a need for far greater empirical research and evidence to enable the proper planning and development of bilingual businesses and services. One of the most comprehensive research in this respect has been external to the Welsh Government, commissioned by Citizens Advice in [English by default – Understanding the use and non-use of Welsh language services](#)” (2015). Amongst its key findings were that:
 - 82% of Welsh speakers are more inclined to consume the services or products of a bilingual company

- 83% of Welsh speakers saying they would stay loyal if you provide a bilingual service

These types of research provide a valuable resource in planning for, and sustainability in bilingual services. All sectors need comprehensive and clearly communicated proof of the benefits of operating bilingually to be able to respond positively and sustainably.

Mentrau Iaith

12. The Welsh Government has already committed to examine the potential role of Mentrau Iaith in facilitating the establishment and nurturing of local business networks operating through the medium of Welsh. We view the role of Mentrau Iaith as enablers and not competitors. Otherwise, the sustainability of those businesses, and ultimately the future of the Welsh language as a language of commerce, would be challenged.