

Carwyn Jones AM
First Minister

8 October 2015

Fourth Assembly legacy session: request for further information

Dear First Minister,

Thank you for giving evidence on 24 September 2015, as we looked back on our work on Welsh language policy during the Fourth Assembly. Following the session, the Committee agreed that I should write to you requesting further information on the points below.

Bwrw Mlaen

We heard during the discussion on the first year of *Bwrw Mlaen* that the Welsh Government is spending over £2.25m on new Welsh language centres and learning spaces. You said that the centres would be required to report to the Government after eighteen months of being in receipt of this funding to enable you to evaluate the impact of these centres on the Welsh language.

Could you set out how you intend to measure the success of the centres beyond the eighteen-month reporting requirement, including details of any benchmarks, targets or additional monitoring methods that will be used.

Further, could you set out how the Government's central Welsh language strategy, and especially the actions taken through *Bwrw Mlaen*, take account of the varying linguistic needs of different geographical areas, particularly given the specific challenges facing some of those areas.



Given the many initiatives working to support and promote the Welsh language, could you set out what action you are taking centrally to ensure that the work of these various initiatives is effectively joined-up and coordinated.

Welsh Language Standards

We were pleased to hear that you intend to lay the regulations for the second round of standards under the *Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011* before the end of this year. However, it was disappointing to learn that the regulations for the third round of standards are unlikely to be ready before the May 2016 election. As the Commissioner is expected to send her third standards investigation report to you this month (as set out in your paper), could you set out why the regulations for the third round will be not be made before May 2016.

In relation to the third round of standards, we are particularly concerned about the Welsh Language Commissioner's decision to omit a number of organisations from her third standards investigation, including train operators. Whilst it is a matter for the Commissioner to determine the bodies to be included in her standards investigations, we would like to hear your views on the exclusion of these bodies, particularly train operators and telecommunication and utility companies, from her third investigation. Could you set out how the exclusion of these bodies from the investigations enables the Welsh Government to meet its commitment in action point 34 of the strategy, *A living language: a language for living*.

In addition, could you provide us with details about when you expect regulations to be made that will impose standards on organisations such as gas and electricity suppliers, telecommunications services providers, and rail service providers.

During our evidence session with you, you suggested that the Assembly's legislative competence may make it difficult to legislate in relation to private sector organisations when setting Welsh language standards. Could you expand on this point, particularly in light of the provisions in Schedules 7 and 8 of the *Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011*.

Planning

In her annual report for 2014–15, the Welsh Language Commissioner welcomes the provisions of the *Planning (Wales) Act 2015* concerning the Welsh language. However, she emphasises that, as a result of the Act, TAN 20 needs to be revised in order to ensure that the relevant Welsh language provisions are implemented consistently.



Following the publication of the Practical Guidance to support TAN 20 in June 2014, can you tell us what work has been done to measure the impact of TAN 20 and the extent to which it is being used by local authorities. We would also be interested to hear your response to the Commissioner's call for TAN 20 to be updated.

In addition, we would be grateful to know whether you expect local authorities to review their local development plans as a result of the new requirement in section 11 of the 2015 Act, and if so, how you will ensure that this is done. We would also be grateful for your views on the extent to which local authorities are ready for the changes that will be made by section 31 of the Act, and the work the Welsh Government is undertaking centrally to prepare them for these changes.

Education

Professor Davies's Review

As part of Professor Davies's 2013 report she highlighted the need to address, as a matter of urgency, the failure of Welsh as a second language in schools. You also referred to this issue in your paper.

You also said that you "will be changing the regime for the teaching and learning of Welsh in English-medium schools in consultation with the education sector". We would be very interested to hear further from you about how you intend to do this, and the timescales involved.

Flying Start

When you appeared before the Committee for the Scrutiny of the First Minister in March 2015, you said that there is sufficient Welsh language provision for Flying Start, and no reason to suggest that the current provision is inadequate. What assessment has been made of the demand for Welsh language Flying Start provision, particularly in light of concerns raised by witnesses about this matter as part of the CYPE Committee's inquiry into WESPS, and could you share that data with us. Further, what measures are in place to ensure that the supply of Welsh language Flying Start provision is capable of meeting the demand.

Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol

You told us that there has been an increase in the number of Welsh medium courses across the university sector because of the work being done by Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol.



We note that, last year, £8.6m was allocated in the 2015–16 budget of the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales for the Coleg, as well as £0.330m for Welsh medium scholarships.

Could you provide us with details of the proposed budget for the Coleg for 2016–17.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Chapman'.

Christine Chapman AC / AM

Cadeirydd / Chair

