

# WRITTEN EVIDENCE PAPER TO THE CULTURE, WELSH LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

**Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language: July 2019**

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## **Introduction**

The purpose of this paper is to provide evidence in advance of my appearance before the Committee on 10 July 2019. In the invitation, I was asked to focus on the following areas:

1. the Welsh Government's response to the Committee's report on the Draft Budget 2019-20;
2. the paper setting out options for Welsh language planning which the Minister anticipated she would be able to act on in June;
3. the staffing size and structure of the Minister's department;
4. the proposed process for appointing the Governing Board that is intended to sit above the Welsh Language Commissioner. For instance, who would appoint it and how many individuals will sit on it. Also, any more detail on the Board's 'clear and firm responsibilities' and how they will 'ensure additional expertise and accountability' that the Minister can offer.

The detailed response below focuses on each of these issues in turn.

## **The Welsh Government's response to the Committee's report on the Draft Budget 2019-2020**

The Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee scrutinised the Welsh Government's draft budget 2019-20 and produced a short report summarising the Committee's work.

The Committee's report discussed a number of areas and made several recommendations which covered issues such as the budget allocation for the Welsh language, the Sabbatical scheme, early years provision, the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, the Welsh Language Commissioner, legislation and capital funding. This paper provides an update on progress against the recommendations at Annex A below.

## **The paper setting out options for Welsh language planning which the Minister anticipated she would be able to act on in June**

When I last appeared before the Committee in February, I explained the reasons behind my decision not to proceed with a Welsh Language Bill. Despite the decision not to proceed with the Bill, the underlying analysis contained within the White Paper still applies: there needs to be a rebalancing of effort and focus from activity aimed at providing rights to Welsh speakers towards other aspects of Welsh language policy.

I am clear in my mind that to deliver the *Cymraeg 2050* strategy we need to focus on:

- a. providing practical support and encouragement for regulated bodies to grow an user base for Welsh language services and thus maximising the impact of the rights agenda;
- b. systemic planning to increase the number of people that acquire Welsh;
- c. a programme of work to increase the use of Welsh in family, social and workplace settings; and
- d. cross-Government work to ensure that policies in economic development, housing, planning, education, culture etc support the strategy's vision.

During its recent inquiry into supporting and promoting the Welsh language, the Committee heard evidence of a lack of clarity amongst stakeholders about the division of responsibilities between the Welsh Government and the Welsh Language Commissioner in relation to non-regulatory activities aimed at promoting the use of Welsh. To address this issue, I have had productive discussions with Aled Roberts since the commencement of his term as Commissioner about the division of responsibilities.

The Committee has also heard evidence from stakeholders who feel there are currently insufficient interventions rooted in language planning principles to address the fundamental issue of the use of the language in society. Some stakeholders have argued in favour of establishing a new external body or agency to promote the Welsh language (in addition to the Commissioner as regulator and the Welsh Government as strategy lead) in order to provide a new energy and focus to this work.

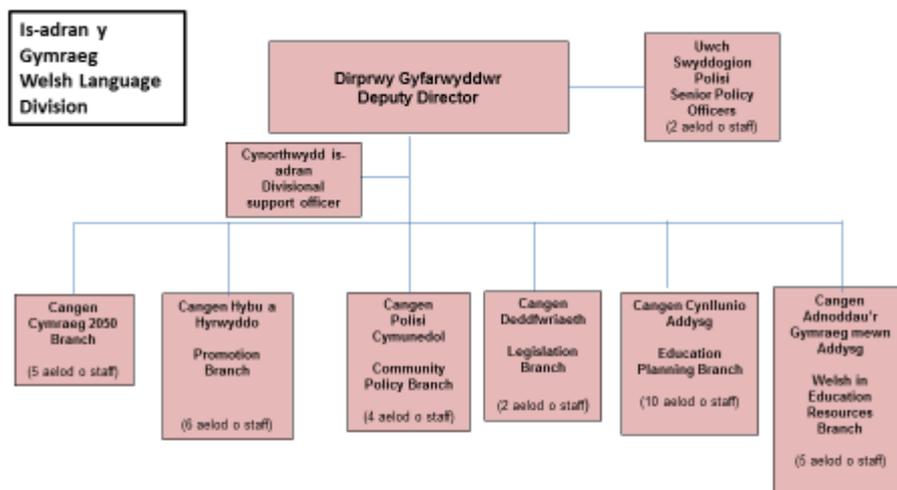
As I explained to the Committee previously, I am not in favour of creating a new external body on the basis of cost and that it would potentially create confusion for the public with a high risk of duplicating functions. I have, however, been considering over recent weeks how can we in the Welsh Government provide a new focus to language planning both within and external to Welsh Government. This involves consideration of what structures need to be in place within the Welsh Government civil service as well as ensuring that we have access to the required external language planning expertise and experience.

An important part of our consideration of structures is to ensure that there is clarity with regard to the intended purpose of different activity. Discourse about Welsh language policy is often framed as activity to 'promote' the use of Welsh. However, there is a risk that such a high-level term leads to inconsistency in meaning, and thus potentially duplication and omission in activities. I am therefore keen to ensure that we move towards a more exact narrative about what we mean when we refer to 'promote'. In particular, we want to move towards a situation where activities are clearly linked with measurable outcomes which, together, lead to contributing to our *Cymraeg 2050* strategy target of increasing the use of Welsh.

## The staffing size and structure of the Minister's department

At the end of May 2019, the Welsh Language Division consisted of 36 posts. There are 6 Branches in the Division:

- Cymraeg 2050 Branch – 5 members of staff
- Promotion Branch – 6 members of staff
- Community Policy Branch – 4 members of staff
- Legislation Branch – 2 members of staff
- Education Planning Branch – 10 members of staff
- Welsh in Education Resources Branch – 5 members of staff
- Others – 4 members of staff



**The proposed process for appointing the Governing Board that is intended to sit above the Welsh Language Commissioner. For instance, who would appoint it and how many individuals will sit on it. Also, any more detail on the Board's 'clear and firm responsibilities' and how they will 'ensure additional expertise and accountability' that the Minister can offer.**

A new "Governing Board" will not be established to sit above the Welsh Language Commissioner. The Commissioner already has a statutory Advisory Panel which was established by the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

Part 3 of the Measure provides that the Welsh Ministers must appoint a panel of advisers to the Welsh Language Commissioner, to be known as the Advisory Panel. The Measure also specifies that the Welsh Ministers must secure, as far as practicable, that there are at least 3, but not more than 5, members of the Advisory Panel at any time.

The Advisory Panel has a clear remit which is driven by the legislation which established it. The Measure makes provisions to allow the Commissioner to consult the Advisory Panel on any matter. However, it also makes provisions which places a duty on the Commissioner to consult with the Panel on some matters.

In appointing persons to the Advisory Panel, the Welsh Ministers must have regard to the fact that it is desirable that the knowledge and experience of the Commissioner and the Advisory Panel's members (taken together) includes the following matters:

- corporate governance;
- exercising functions conferred by or under an enactment;
- promoting and facilitating the use of Welsh or another language;
- public relations;
- regulatory regimes; and
- working in partnership with organisations in the public, private or voluntary sectors.

I believe that the benefits that a new Governing Board could offer can be achieved by strengthening the Commissioner's existing governance structures and by ensuring they are utilised. This would also avoid any confusion and duplication that could exist if there were a Governing Board existing alongside the Advisory Panel.

The Advisory Panel currently has 3 members; their terms come to an end on 31 March 2021. Now that we have a new Commissioner in place, I have worked with the Commissioner to assess the experience and expertise of his Panel, and at the end of June I advertised to recruit 2 new members to the Panel. That application process closes on 3 September.

After considering the expertise and experience of the current Commissioner and the 3 current members of the Panel, I wish to appoint at least one new member with experience of working in partnership with organisations in the

voluntary sector. I have decided to extend the application process for longer than the usual timeframe. This will allow the Government and the Commissioner to publicise the opportunities over the summer months which will include engaging with people in summer events.

I am confident that following this recruitment exercise that the Commissioner will have a strong Advisory Panel which will be able to advise him on all matters which fall within his remit. The Advisory Panel will act as a sounding board to the Commissioner – a safe area where he can test policies and ideas before implementing them. I also intend to meet with Panel members periodically to ensure that this area of the Commissioner's governance structure is working as effectively as possible.

**Eluned Morgan AM**  
**Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language**

## ANNEX A

Below, we refer to the Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language's written response to the Committee's report on the Draft Budget 2019 – 2020. The response was submitted in January 2019. We refer specifically to recommendations 5 – 10, which focus on the Welsh language.

**Recommendation 5 (accepted): The Committee understands the current constraints on funding, however the Committee is concerned that the cash flat budget may not allow sufficient progress toward the Welsh Government's ambitious target of 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050.**

**Update:** Following the First Minister's appointment of his new Cabinet in December 2018, both the Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language and the Minister for Education's responsibilities in relation to the Welsh language were confirmed in April 2019. These include joint-responsibility for the Welsh Government's Welsh Language Strategy: *Cymraeg 2050: a million Welsh speakers*.

To support the work in achieving this target, the 2019-20 Final Budget (approved in January 2019) allocated a flat budget of £38.325m within the Education MEG to support the work of the Welsh Language Division. Through careful planning of this budget and through the Welsh Language Division's work with other policy areas within the Welsh Government, we are confident that we will achieve the aim of a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

In relation to the split of the Welsh Language Division budget during 2019-20, Ministerial responsibility for the Welsh in Education budget (BEL 5164) is divided between the Minister for Education (£14.325m) and the Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language (£15.354m). The Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language has sole responsibility for both the Welsh Language (BEL 6020) and Welsh Language Commissioner (BEL 6021) budgets.

To ensure that the correct budgets were aligned to the appropriate areas of Ministerial responsibility, a transfer totalling £14.325m took place at the 1<sup>st</sup> supplementary budget stage from the Welsh in Education BEL within the International Relations and the Welsh Language MEG, to the Education MEG. This was done to reflect Ministerial responsibilities as published in January 2019.

Of the 2019-20 budget allocation of £38.325m, £4.3m has been allocated to promote the language in communities across Wales through innovation, as well as building upon successful practices and projects that provide opportunities for Welsh speakers to share and enjoy the language. £13.21m has been allocated for 'Welsh for Adults' provision across Wales for approximately 15,000 adult learners, whilst £0.730m has been allocated for 'Cymraeg for Kids' to increase the number of children in Welsh-medium education by supporting parents, prospective parents and other members of the family. In addition, £3.221m has been allocated to develop Welsh-medium

education and bilingual early years' provision along with £3.17m for the commissioning of Welsh-medium and bilingual learner resources. An allocation of £6.143m has been given to support and develop Welsh-medium and bilingual provision in the FE and HE sectors and for the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol along with £1.65m to develop the education workforce's ability to work through the medium of Welsh.

A further £2.556m has been allocated to support the delivery of overarching work activities. These activities relate to two of the strategic themes contained in *Cymraeg 2050*, these being Theme 2 (increasing the use of Welsh) and Theme 3 (Creating favourable conditions – infrastructure and context). Funding of £3.051m has been allocated to the Welsh Language Commissioner and we believe this is sufficient to undertake his functions. Funding has also been given for smaller projects, these include Dydd Miwsig Cymru (£0.050m) and the resources for 'Cymraeg for Kids'.

Looking forward, the additional £6.5 million revenue in 2019-20 (which forms part of the two year Budget agreement with Plaid Cymru) and the capital funding for the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs) and the Childcare Offer has given us the opportunity to lay the foundations in supporting the Work Programme between now and 2021. We have been able to focus on prioritising the work of developing provision in the following areas: child care, post-16 and in the workplace. Specifically:

#### Developing Welsh-medium childcare and education:

On 19 September last year, I announced that £46m had been allocated from the Welsh-medium Capital Grant and Childcare Offer Capital Grant to support growth in Welsh-medium education. The grant will support some 41 projects across 16 local authorities and create an additional 2,818 school and childcare places for Welsh-medium learners. This is in addition to the £5 million for the Pantycelyn development announced earlier last year, making a total of £51 million to support Welsh education (in cooperation with the Minister for Education and the then Minister for Children, Older People and Social Care).

These projects will make a significant contribution to the provision of Welsh-medium education and will contribute greatly to the ambitious targets in *Cymraeg 2050*. This additional funding will mean that even more of our students will be able to benefit from excellent facilities to learn through the medium of Welsh. The 100% grant funding will enable the creation of new primary schools, the expansion of current sites and also the development of Welsh language centres which will make learning Welsh as a second language much more accessible and that's vital if the language is to continue to grow and thrive. By combining funding from both the Welsh-medium Capital and Childcare Offer Capital Grants, the Welsh Government has been able to gain a better return on investment, resulting in better services for young people.

## Post 16 education and the workplace:

To enable the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to undertake additional post-16 activity in response to the publication of the *Further Education and Apprenticeship Welsh-medium Action Plan*, a contribution of £150,000 from the Minister for Education's budget and £60,000 from the Minister for International Relations and Welsh Language's budget was provided in 2018-19 and currently in 2019-20.

In 2019-20, the £60,000 will enable the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to appoint FE ambassadors in each college and in apprenticeship settings, to promote Welsh-medium and bilingual learning. There will be additional emphasis on social activities to promote the informal use of the Welsh language socially.

The £150,000 will be used for post-16 strategic projects in line with the priorities of the action plan and the closing date for applications is 1 July.

In 2018-19, the £60,000 supported activities in colleges allowing learners to use the Welsh language in social situations through collaborating with Dydd Miwsig Cymru; and enhancing learners' knowledge of the benefits of bilingual skills in the workplace especially in key sector areas. A successful conference was held at Cardiff and Vale College in March on the health and social care sector where 100 learners were present in workshops presented by universities, Social Care Wales and health boards.

The £150,000 was utilised to map the capacity of the sector and to develop resources that would enable the sectors to attract more learners to use their Welsh language skills in their learning. This is especially in the apprenticeship sectors where language awareness has been identified as a need to enable all apprentices to converse with basic Welsh language skills in workplace situations.

No budget has been set beyond 2019-20 for activities undertaken by the Welsh Language Division. However, as the Welsh language is a cross Government priority, we will continue to work with other policy areas to deliver *Cymraeg 2050*.

We currently only have a revenue budget for one year (2019-20) and a capital budget for two years (until 2021-22), the period for which we have a funding settlement from the UK Government. Future funding for the Welsh language, (which as previously stated, is now allocated across the International Relations and Welsh Language MEG and the Education MEG) will need to be considered within the context of the Comprehensive Spending Review later this year and investment considered within both MEG once indicative allocations are available. However, this must be balanced with the continuing fiscal uncertainty, ongoing pursuit of austerity by the UK Government and the considerable uncertainty surrounding the shape and nature of the negotiations for the future deal with the EU.

Moving forward, we will continue to review progress against the targets set out in *Cymraeg 2050* and against our budgets and will refine activities accordingly.

**Recommendation 6(i) (accepted): The Welsh Government has agreed to provide further details on the expected outcomes of the Sabbatical Scheme to the Committee including the numbers of participants on the short courses, the “Welsh in a Year” course and the evaluation of the language abilities of participants once they return to their schools.**

**Update:** Welsh language Sabbatical Scheme courses for practitioners continue to be delivered on various levels. Work is continuing to recruit practitioners to courses that will commence during the next academic year.

The evaluation of the Sabbatical Scheme has commenced and will report during 2020.

The Minister for Education is now responsible for all aspects of Welsh-medium education, including practitioner training.

**Recommendation 6(ii) (accepted): The Committee believes that the Welsh Government’s targets for increasing Welsh-medium early years education provision should be sufficiently ambitious to meet the overall strategy for reaching a million Welsh speakers by 2050. The Committee will continue to monitor the delivery of Welsh-medium nursery settings against the interim targets set by the Minister to deliver the total of 150 settings by 2050.**

**Update:** Investing a further £1m in Mudiad Meithrin’s work, as a result of the budget agreement with Plaid Cymru, has enabled it to undertake a programme with the specific aim of establishing new Cylchoedd Meithrin (Welsh-medium nursery groups) in areas where there is evidence that there is a lack of Welsh-medium provision. New Cylchoedd Ti a Fi (Welsh-medium parent and toddler groups) have also been established to support these new Cylchoedd Meithrin where needed. Twelve new Cylchoedd Meithrin and nine new Cylchoedd Ti a Fi have been established during the first year of the programme.

Thirteen new Cylchoedd Meithrin are currently being developed as part of the second year of this programme. Once again, new Cylchoedd Ti a Fi are being established to support these new settings where needed.

As part of Mudiad Meithrin’s data processes, information on the number of children attending these new settings and, in due course, numbers transferring to Welsh-medium education, will be gathered enabling us to measure the impact of this work and refine our targets to expand Welsh-medium early years provision if needed.

The Minister for Education's responsibility for Welsh medium education has now been clarified to include Welsh medium early years provision including Mudiad Meithrin's work.

**Recommendation 7 (accepted): The Committee questioned if this additional funding would be sufficient to deliver the action plan priorities given that the action plan has not yet been published. The Committee has requested further details on the priorities in the action plan, and the funding supporting them, when this information is available.**

**Update:** On 11 December, the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol published its Further Education and Apprenticeship Welsh-medium Action Plan as agreed with Welsh Government, and was launched by the Minister for Education on 25 January 2019.

The plan sets out short, medium and long term actions, under the following main priorities:

- Ensure learners are provided with support and information to progress along the Welsh language continuum in post-16 education and training and onto post-19 where appropriate;
- Create an improved infrastructure to enable learners to increase the level of learning undertaken through the medium of Welsh;
- Build and extend existing staff development opportunities to enable post-16 education and training providers to increase the level of Welsh-medium provision;
- Engage effectively with employers to enable effective skills planning to take place.

In addressing these priorities, a collaborative approach was adopted with stakeholders to influence policy decisions and to engage with both the further education and apprenticeship sectors to provide a strategic direction utilizing the Coleg's own resources.

To enable the Coleg to address specific actions in support of the immediate requirements of both the further education and apprenticeship sectors, two grant provisions have been made available in 2019-20.

A sum of £150,000, from the Minister for Education's budget, will support the further education and apprenticeship sectors in two areas:

- i. Develop Welsh-medium and / or bilingual provision in the three main priority areas identified in the Action Plan i.e. Health and Social Care; Childcare and Public Services with the expectation that institutions also co-invest in to achieve this goals.
- ii. Continue with the development of resources by commissioning Welsh-medium resources for the further education sector. This will build upon the project conducted in 2018-19 to identify and commission resources that was funded by the Welsh Language Division's Commissioning Branch to the sum of £47,000. A further

£47,000 will be made available by the Commissioning Branch in 2019-20 to identify and prioritise resources required by the apprenticeship sector in particular.

A sum of £60,000, from the Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language budget, has been allocated to promote the use of the Welsh language and encourage learning through the medium of Welsh. Activities will include appointing ambassadors amongst further education and apprenticeship learners to promote Welsh-medium learning at events; supporting social activities to normalise the use of the language; and supporting specific events to promote and encourage linguistic continuity targeting level 3 learners where they are able to continue to higher education.

In addition, the Coleg has collaborated with the National Centre for Learning Welsh to offer support for the apprenticeship sector as part its Cymraeg Gwaith / Work Welsh programme. This work will build on the support the Centre has offered to the Further Education sector in 2018-19. This work is funded from the grant awarded to the Centre by the Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language to deliver the Cymraeg Gwaith programme.

The Minister for Education is now responsible for post-16 education.

**Recommendation 8(i) (accepted): The Committee would like a firmer undertaking from the Welsh Government that it is their intention to underwrite any costs from tribunal activities by the Welsh Language Commissioner's office which cannot be met from its funding reserves.**

**Update:** The Minister meets with the Welsh Language Commissioner quarterly, and officials meet on a regular basis. Any financial pressures would be raised at those meetings. If funding legal proceedings associated with implementing the Measure would lead to financial pressures, the Welsh Ministers would have to consider whether additional funding would need to be allocated to the Commissioner.

**Recommendation 8(ii) (accepted): The Committee were keen to understand the process by which the budget proposals were agreed between the Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning and the Welsh Language Commissioner. The Committee will be asking the Welsh Government to set out the communication between the Minister, officials and the Welsh Language Commissioner. In particular, the Committee would like to understand the timing and nature of the Commissioner's revisions to her budget.**

**Update:** The Commissioner's budget has its own Welsh Language Commissioner Budget Expenditure Line (BEL) within the overall Welsh Language Action which makes the annual allocation clear. The Minister meets with the Welsh Language Commissioner quarterly, and officials meet on a regular basis. Budgetary matters are discussed in those meetings.

Paragraph 17 of Schedule 1 to the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 places a duty on the Commissioner to prepare an estimate of the income and expenses of the Commissioner's office and to submit the estimate to the Welsh Ministers at least five months before the beginning of the financial year to which it relates. The Welsh Ministers must examine an estimate submitted to them and must then lay the estimate before the National Assembly for Wales with the modifications (if any) they think appropriate. Usually, the estimate is presented to Ministers in October and Ministers consider the estimate before deciding what the Commissioner's budget allocation should be. As well as that document, Ministers consider the discussions that have been held with the Commissioner during the year. After the Assembly has approved the budget, the Minister writes to the Commissioner to confirm the budget for the following financial year.

**Recommendation 9(i) (rejected): The Committee would like a much firmer commitment from the Welsh Government as to when a Welsh Language Bill will be introduced.**

**Update:** The Minister published a Statement on 1 February confirming that Ministers will not proceed with introducing a Welsh Language Bill.

**Recommendation 9(ii) (accepted): It is also important that commercial organisations, such as public utilities do not use the lack of Welsh language standards, as an excuse to diminish or stall their Welsh language provision. The Welsh Government needs to ensure the private sector continues to invest in Welsh language provision. In this context, consideration should be given to providing greater information on the likely provisions of the new legislation to allow private sector organisations to prepare.**

**Update:** The Welsh Government agrees that the private sector should continue to invest in Welsh language provision. We are working on two specific projects to this end, which are financed through the Welsh Language BEL:

A network of officials to promote the Welsh language in the private sector

A network of officials to increase the use of the Welsh language in business, managed by the Welsh Government through the Mentrau Iaith began in 2017. It currently employs a co-ordinator and 14 business officials. The work includes:

- practical support and advice to enable the private sector to increase the use of the Welsh language, orally, on social media and visually (signs etc);
- projects including training, events and awards;
- holding or co-operating on relevant campaigns by the Welsh Government and others;
- establishing and attending local strategy forums to include key partners;

- co-operating with the Welsh Language Centres to enhance community language effects;
- monitoring through the pilot 'before and after' data base created with the Welsh Government (that could be a pilot to measure the effect of other language interventions if successful).

#### A Welsh language 'Contact Point'

In a Ministerial Statement in April 2017, Alun Davies promised to establish a 'Welsh language contact point' to assist the private and voluntary sectors to increase their use of the Welsh language. The service will offer free translations for up to 500 words, and collaborates with the Welsh Language Commissioner's proofreading service. It will also respond to various enquiries regarding the Welsh language, and refer people to relevant sources of support. The contact point will be a central point between the Welsh Government, the network of business officials, the Welsh Language Commissioner and the private sector. It will use Business Wales' 'call centre' computer system. It will be launched later in 2019.

The Minister has also met with representatives from the Gas and Electricity industry to discuss the Welsh language services they currently offer, and what can be done to improve these services and their uptake in future. It was agreed that this dialogue would continue, including arranging a seminar to discuss the role of language technology in improving the Welsh language services they offer.

#### **Recommendation 10 (accepted):**

**The Committee will wish to return to this investment to seek to establish the outcomes of the spending during the next budget round.** (In their report, the Committee welcomed the one-off sum of £2.75 million for the expansion, restoration and updating of facilities in Glan-Ilyn and Llangrannog. The Committee requested further detail on the nature of the expected outcomes from this funding.)

**Update:** The improvement building projects at Glan-Ilyn and Llangrannog are at the planning, tendering and seeking planning permission stages. The renovation work in Glan-Ilyn will start in September 2019 with a likely end of April 2020. Glan-Ilyn Training Centre refurbishment work will commence in January 2020 with a likely end date of 2021 and the refurbishment work at Llangrannog will start in January 2020 with a likely completion date of 2021.

This investment will provide specialist facilities and accommodation for groups at Glan-Ilyn Isa, improvements in usability and flexibility at Glan-Ilyn Training Centre and transform the "Heart of the Centre" at Llangrannog. These improvements will enhance the current capacity of both camps to meet increasing demand for Welsh-medium experiences in second-language schools; improve buildings in poor condition; meet the demands of visiting school and educational groups; and ensure the camps' educational setting is consistent with the Welsh-medium teaching and learning continuum linked to the emerging Curriculum for Wales.

We will expect to receive post-completion information following delivery of the project.