

**Report of the Welsh Language
and Economic Development
Task and Finish Group to the Minister
for Economy, Science and Transport**

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Cefnogir gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
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Foreword

It has been my privilege to chair the task and finish group to look at ways in which the Welsh language could enhance the economy, and vice versa. I would like to thank the other members of the Group for giving their time freely and for their rigour, energy, and good humour in bringing forward the recommendations. It proved to be a challenging, wide- ranging exercise resulting in lengthy discussions.

The future of the Welsh language is inexorably linked with the economy, jobs, wealth, and the well-being of communities. As we seek to recover from one of the worst global recessions, it was timely that you appointed the Group to advise on this relationship, and how it might be exploited and further developed for mutual benefit. The issue of how the language might itself aid in creating wealth in the economy is fascinating and worthy of deep consideration.

The presentation of this report culminates months of discussion and evidence taking from a range of individuals and organisations. I would like to express my sincere thanks to those who took part in the research, but would like to declare a personal frustration with the apathy of others, whose views would have been valuable but chose not to respond.

The recommendations are wide ranging, build upon good practice, respond to the evidence submitted, and result from tireless and repeated discussions within the Group. We were focused on bringing forward recommendations which are realistic and achievable, sometimes requiring cross-government collaboration, but always seeking positive outcomes in relation both to the language, and fostering economic development.

Given the amount of evidence submitted and the range of comments contained therein, the Group decided that this should be made available in the public domain. Not everyone recognised the need for, nor were supportive, of work in relation to the language and economic development, however the Group decided that these comments should be made available for completeness.

For me, despite the frustrations, the process has been both revealing and rewarding. I would like to thank, in particular, the Welsh Government Officers for their guidance, patience and invaluable practical support.

I hope you find the recommendations practicable and that we see positive steps taken to make the most of a very unique natural resource.

Elin Rhys

Recommendations

- 1 Bilingualism and an appreciation of differing cultures are an important part of marketing strategies of successful businesses across the globe strengthening company brands and also making them more relevant to local customers. The Group recommends that there should be a strategy to encourage and facilitate the use of the Welsh language as a marketing tool and to promote the benefits that bilingualism can bring to business.**
- 2 Building upon the increasing use of the Welsh language for promotional, branding, and marketing reasons and to consolidate Welsh identity within the wider international community, the Group recommends that consideration should be given to incentivise companies through the use of appropriate European and Welsh Government funds to encourage further developments in this direction.**
- 3 The group recommends that businesses are encouraged to use the “.cymru” internet domain suffix when the opportunity arises.**
- 4 Bilingualism has had a positive effect in encouraging the growth of the digital media sector and a professional translation industry, primarily catering for the Welsh/English market. The Group recommends that consideration should be given to how the resultant bilingualism skills base can be used to cater for usage within existing markets and to develop new markets.**
- 5 The evidence received suggests that there is a demand for a bilingual workforce to meet business and customer needs; this can be addressed by developing the linguistic skills and confidence to meet the requirements of businesses. To achieve this, the Group recommends that consideration should be given to extending the use of existing interventions such as the Brocer Iaith (Language Broker) model.**

- 6 The Group recommends that there should be greater resources for promoting innovation, entrepreneurship, and potential careers in business to Welsh speaking students and young people, in particular the geographical extension of Llwyddo'n Lleol should be considered.**
- 7 The Group recommends that businesses should be proactively provided with the opportunity to opt for Welsh language capabilities within existing Government funded training and skills programmes targeting young people. Examples include Go Wales, Jobs Growth Wales, and Entrepreneurship hubs.**
- 8 The Group recommends that encouragement should be given to the formation of clusters and networks of businesses utilising the Welsh language.**
- 9 The Group recommends that resources are provided to establish on-line networks that will maintain contact with Welsh speakers who leave Wales to study or for employment purposes. These networks will serve to encourage experienced Welsh speakers to return to Wales and also raise awareness of opportunities available.**
- 10 The Group recommends that consideration should be given to the relative roles of Menter a Busnes and the Mentrau Iaith (Language Enterprises) in relation to the potential of giving the latter economic development responsibilities.**
- 11 The Group recommends that Wales should learn from experience and good practice in other bilingual communities such as the Basque country, Quebec, and Catalunya.**
- 12 Over recent years the Welsh Language Broadcast Media Industry has experienced a decline. The Group recommends that consideration should be given to assessing the linguistic and economic impact of this**

change, and the consequences for the future of employment in the sector. Further consideration should be given to how Content Producers in Wales might be best supported to maximise opportunities in the wider digital content production market.

13 With a view to providing suitable policy responses, the Group recommends that the Welsh Government should examine the opportunities for, and threats to, the language in the city region(s) and larger urban areas from the point of view of economic development.

14 The Group recommends that there should be a joint approach to economic development and the language, adopting an area based approach which would facilitate the designation of “special economic language zones”.

15 Recognising the success of community development trusts such as Galeri, Caernarfon (formerly Cwmni Tref Caernarfon), in supporting economic regeneration, the Group recommends that pilot projects should be funded in towns in, and near, the Anglesey and the Snowdonia Enterprise Zones, and the Teifi Valley towns.

16 The Group recommends that the model provided by the Coleg Menai Apprenticeship Company is adapted to provide Welsh language apprenticeships in businesses in predominantly Welsh speaking areas.

17 The Group recommends that the Welsh language should be a consideration in rolling out the Superfast Broadband programme in the immediate future so that those businesses in the remaining strongly Welsh speaking areas such as the Teifi Valley may enjoy the benefits currently available in areas in the north west of Wales.

18 The Group recommends that research should be undertaken to examine the effect of improving road and rail communications and public

transport services between the strongly Welsh speaking areas and employment centres on the main transportation corridors.

19 The Group recommends that the role of housing associations in promoting and facilitating community economic development should be further developed.

20 Evidence from the review suggests that there are differences between small enterprises and larger businesses in terms of their use of the Welsh language. Where a small business recognises that there are commercial advantages to increasing use of the Welsh language, the Group recommends that there should be a range of practical support available to it.

21 The definition of community benefits emanating from the current approach to public sector procurement makes no reference to the consideration of the benefits accruing to the Welsh language and Welsh speakers. The Group recommends that the provisions relating to securing equality and diversity should be extended to provide for these interests.

22 The Group recommends that as appropriate, public sector contracts put out to tender should require tenderers to demonstrate an ability to provide a service bilingually, particularly those delivered to the general public.

23 The Group recommends that businesses in receipt of a grant from the Welsh Government should be required to demonstrate an ability to provide a service bilingually. Any signage or other advertising material relating to a grant-aided project should be bilingual.

24 The Group recommends that the Welsh Government provides resources to gather evidence on the impact of, and the links between, the Welsh language and the economy. This evidence is needed to persuade business of the benefits of operating bilingually.

- 25 The Group recommends that an independent panel be established which would provide the Minister with advice on how the Welsh language can benefit from, and contribute to economic development, building upon the recommendations made in this report.**
- 26 The Group recognises that the Welsh Government's role is not to enforce the use of Welsh language on business but rather to support, signpost, and simplify its use.**
- 27 The Group recommends that the current arrangements for monitoring equality issues in the Department for Economy, Science and Transport be reviewed with a view to encompassing a more strategic approach to matters relating to the Welsh language, including from the viewpoint of the manner in which the Department interfaces with business.**

Section 1 Introduction

This report has been prepared by the Welsh Language and Economic Development Task and Finish Group and is presented to the Minister for Economy, Science and Transport for consideration.

Members of the Group

The members of the Group are:

- Elin Rhys, Managing Director, TELESGOP(Chair)
- Elin Pinnell, Partner, Capital Law
- Professor Dylan Jones Evans, University of the West of England
- Dr Rhodri Llwyd Morgan, Aberystwyth University
- Dr Martin Rhisiart, University of South Wales
- Alun Shurmer, Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water

Purpose of the Group

On 6 December 2012, the Minister made a Written Statement announcing that she would be setting up a Task and Finish Group to consider the relationship between the Welsh language and economic development. This emanated from the commitment in the Welsh Government's Welsh Language Strategy 2012-2017, *A living language: a language for living* to developing a clear strategy in relation to how benefit could be gained from the Welsh language as an economic asset.

The terms of reference are:

- a) Review outcomes from Economic Development and the Welsh Language: A Programme of Action, which was published in 2004
- b) Consider and recommend ways in which the use of the Welsh language and bilingualism could support business growth and economic development

- c) Consider and recommend ways in which economic development could support increased use of the Welsh language
- d) Consider and recommend ways how the public sector could support increased use of the Welsh language through its local economic impact, including for example procurement and employment policies
- e) Utilise labour market data to identify employment trends and opportunities for the development of the Welsh language in the Welsh economy
- f) Consider and highlight examples of best practice for Welsh language employment
- g) Recommend a governance structure to develop, implement and monitor a future strategy and work plan for promoting economic development and the Welsh language.

Methodology

With a view to fulfilling its remit, and in addition to discussion within the membership, the Group has adopted an approach whereby it has sought to engage with a wide range of representative bodies, interested parties, and individuals, by inviting evidence either presented orally in face to face settings and/or by submitting written evidence.

The first Term of Reference required that the Group review outcomes from Economic Development and the Welsh Language: A Programme of Action. In addition to this document numerous policy documents, evaluation studies and research reports on the Welsh language have been published. These reports have informed the work of the Group, providing background and context for their work. In particular, the Group have noted the evidence presented and the findings produced within the documents listed in Annex 2.

A call for evidence between 16 May and 21 June 2013 resulted in the receipt of only 32 submissions. A list of contributors is detailed in Annex 1, whilst the evidence submitted can be found in full in the paper accompanying this report.

At its meeting in July 2013, the Group agreed that further evidence was required in order to allow it to make an adequate response to its terms of reference. This evidence was collected from sources identified by members of the Group during August and September 2013. The Group sought more evidence on the use of Welsh by the private sector.

Specific presentations relating to an overview of the Welsh Government's Welsh Language Policy; the Welsh language and the labour market; Enterprise Zones; and City Regions were given by Welsh Government officials and the Group was represented at a meeting of the Teifi Valley Local Growth Zones Task and Finish Group on 4 September 2013.

Concurrently with the work of this Group, a number of other Groups were considering matters relating to the Welsh language and/or economic development. As appropriate, there was contact with these Groups and the Chair attended a meeting with the Chairs of the Groups reviewing the provision of Welsh for Adults and reviewing provision for Welsh as a Second Language together with the Chairs of the Task and Finish Group considering Welsh Language Communities and that considering the National Eisteddfod, all of which were established by the then Minister for Education and Skills.

On 4 July 2013, and in response to the 2011 Census figures, the First Minister led Y Gynhadledd Fawr, with a view to engaging with the public in a national conversation around the future of the Welsh language. The economy was one of the topics discussed.

The recommendations included in this report are based on the group's assessment of the listed literature, the evidence received during the course of its work and the personal experience of Group members.

Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this document is to provide the Minister with advice and recommendations on:

- How the Welsh language and bilingualism could support business growth and economic development
- How economic development could support increased use of the Welsh language
- How the public sector could support increased use of the Welsh language
- The use of labour market data to inform development of the Welsh language in the Welsh economy
- A future governance structure to develop, implement and monitor a future strategy and work plan for promoting economic development and the Welsh language.

In the course of its work many examples of best practice were uncovered; these are presented throughout the report as case studies and serve to satisfy the Group's sixth term of reference (F).

Section 2

How the Welsh language and bilingualism could support business growth and economic development

A marketing tool

- 1 Bilingualism and an appreciation of differing cultures are an important part of marketing strategies of successful businesses across the globe strengthening company brands and also making them more relevant to local customers. The Group recommends that there should be a strategy to encourage and facilitate the use of the Welsh language as a marketing tool and to promote the benefits that bilingualism can bring to business.**

The use of the language as a positive marketing tool has recently emerged in a number of markets, initially in relation to food and tourism and more recently in the production of digital content. There has been growth in the use of the language in relation to personal and professional services and the visibility of Welsh as we shop in the large new department stores, multiple outlets, and superstores.

Whilst this emergence of the language in the commercial world to an extent might be symbolic, in the case of Welsh food, for example, the link between the quality of the produce and the quality of the food served on the table is now firmly established in the public mind. In Wales, this translates into the expectancy amongst many visitors that a quality food offering will include a significant amount of Welsh produce. This message should therefore be reinforced in Visit Wales' marketing activities both through a common brand that recognises quality and through capitalising on opportunities for marketing Welsh produce in Wales' tourism destination marketing campaigns.

This, in itself, may not necessarily mean that there is a direct link with the health of the Welsh language per se, but the very fact that commercial organisations are using

the language to promote their products and services can only benefit the language in a variety of ways.

A number of submissions were made in relation to the use of the language, particularly with regard to the tourist industry and food manufacture and marketing. There was an emphasis on seeking to ensure that visitor accommodation, visitor attractions, and food manufacturers, were encouraged and supported to use Welsh as a visible and commonplace feature of their products and marketing. In addition to raising awareness of the language and culture, the implementation of such a strategy would, in itself, potentially stimulate job creation in the production of marketing materials, signage, packaging and so on.

In the case of those products already well known because of the quality or uniqueness of the product, there is a need to ensure that economic benefits flow to the wider community as happens in wine producing areas throughout the world. The results would be two-fold – an increase in visitors and entrepreneurial opportunities, and also an increased awareness of the language. Caws Cenarth in the Teifi Valley; Halen Môn in Anglesey; and Pant Du vineyard in the Nantlle Valley, and Penderyn Distillery are but four examples where the food and drink product is being used in this way.

Side by side with the encouragement of the use of the language in everyday business, we believe that there is a need for a strategy which will encourage and facilitate the use of the Welsh language as an effective marketing tool, particularly amongst small and medium enterprises, outlining the commercial benefits of doing so.

The Group notes that the Welsh Government is currently seeking views on a proposed action plan to grow the food and drink sector in Wales. Given the comments above it is disappointed not to see reference to the Welsh Language within this document and hopes that the contribution and importance of the language is rightfully acknowledged and included in the final Plan.

2 Building upon the increasing use of the Welsh language for promotional, branding, and marketing reasons and to consolidate Welsh identity within the wider international community, the Group recommends that consideration should be given to incentivise companies through the use of appropriate European and Welsh Government funds to encourage further developments in this direction.

The unique nature of the Welsh language, and the fact that it is one of the oldest in Europe, means that it has its own brand value that can bring potential commercial benefits to businesses. Whilst the use of Welsh is not widespread amongst Welsh firms, there are international companies that have utilised it as part of their competitive offering to customers around the World. For example, global brands such as Ty Nant Water and Penderyn Whisky use Welsh names to reflect the local origins of the products and evoke a sense of place in their offering. Despite these examples, there needs to be a greater effort in encouraging other businesses to utilise the Welsh language as a competitive differentiator with other brands in an increasingly global marketplace, especially compared to those European countries which utilise minority languages as a way of differentiating their business offering and offering key marketing advantages.

For example, Foras na Gaeilge - the body responsible for the promotion of the Irish language throughout the island of Ireland – has noted that there are several ways in which the Irish language has become an added unique selling point for businesses. This has been predominantly through branding and marketing, especially visual communications, corporate materials (headed paper, business cards, invoices, etc.), signage (external and interior), and marketing materials (printed and electronic). This enables businesses to capitalise on the application of the Irish language regardless of the fluency of staff or clients. In addition, some Irish businesses operating on an international scale have used bilingual Irish/English branding to create a synergy between the company's image and the strong reputation for Irish goods abroad, especially in countries where there is a strong Irish diaspora.

There is also evidence from Ireland¹ that there was a positive attitude among consumers to buying food products which included Irish words on the packaging as well as English. This is an important finding given the importance for Welsh firms in ensuring more goods are sold to Welsh consumers through supermarkets and other stores.

In terms of putting policies into place to encourage the greater use of the Welsh language for branding and promotion amongst businesses in Wales, FSB Wales believes there will be scope for EU structural funds to be used in ensuring small businesses have the capacity to deliver services to the standards set out by Welsh Government. In addition, the Welsh Language Commissioner has published a paper dealing with the potential of the Welsh language to contribute towards realising the aims of the European funding programmes 2014-2020 in which she identifies a range of potential interventions in relation to the use of the Welsh language in business.

These measures complement a range of other suggestions relating to the use of European funding to fund activities, many of which are discussed or supported in this document. However, there should also be specific measures developed to encourage greater awareness of bilingual branding in Wales and specific interventions to support implementation. These could include adopting the Irish model of providing matched funding to those businesses to produce bilingual signage and/or bilingual marketing material.

Therefore, the Group encourages the identification of ways in which European funding may be utilised to bring forward the developments and services which it has recommended.

¹Bilingualism on Food Packaging —
DIT (2010) Bilingualism on Food Packaging - Researching the Potential, Dublin.
http://www.gaeilge.ie/dynamic/file/Samh09_Taighde%20ar%20Phacistoacht%20%20Dtheangachas_DIT1.pdf

3 The group recommends that businesses are encouraged to use the “.cymru” internet domain suffix when the opportunity arises.

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) has decided to allow applications for a full range of generic top-level domain names beyond specific internet address suffixes such as “.com” and “.co.uk”.

The UK not-for-profit domain name registrar, Nominet, is to apply to ICANN for top level domain names in .wales and .cymru. Nominet is funding the applications and, if successful, the organisation has committed to opening a new office in Wales to administer the domain names and will invest any profits back into Welsh community projects.

In May 2012, the National Assembly adopted the motion that the application by Nominet to ICANN, for two Top Level Domains, .cymru and .wales for our nation be supported and that it believed that such an internet presence would assist in the promotion of Wales internationally and in the growth of e-commerce.

An additional skill

4 Bilingualism has had a positive effect in encouraging the growth of the digital media sector and a professional translation industry, primarily catering for the Welsh/English market. The Group recommends that consideration should be given to how the resultant bilingualism skills base can be used to cater for usage within existing markets and to develop new markets.

A number of submissions were received in relation to the harnessing of bilingual skills for business advantage.

The need for translation between Welsh and English, and vice versa, has resulted in the establishment and development of a translation industry which has adapted technology as it develops to provide a service which is as good as any in the world. By expanding the market to cater for other languages, the expertise within the

sector, and the technology available, can be exploited to compete in other markets creating further employment opportunities in Wales.

There seems to be a strong case for mergers between small companies to create larger companies with greater critical mass and resources.

The Language Technologies Unit at Bangor University submitted evidence to the effect that

“...the industry is still small and fragmented, and has not fully adopted computer aided translation technologies nor (is it) sufficiently competitive in increasing (its) shares of the global market. Translation agencies from outside Wales are able to compete successfully for Welsh/English translating contracts, with profits therefore flowing out of Wales. The industry hasn't expanded either to other languages, or to situations which need to translate a large number of languages at the same time.

We believe that the Welsh Government should support the Welsh translation industry operating in Wales. We also believe that there is need for the Welsh public sector to procure translation services from companies in Wales so as to help them develop and compete in a wider multilingual market. This way supporting bilingualism in Wales is seen as a commercial opportunity rather than as an economic burden....”.

- 5 The evidence received suggests that there is a demand for a bilingual workforce to meet business and customer needs; this can be addressed by developing the linguistic skills and confidence to meet the requirements of businesses. To achieve this, the Group recommends that consideration should be given to extending the use of existing interventions such as the Brocer Iaith (Language Broker) model.**

Even though individuals may be fully bilingual, often they lack the confidence in Welsh to apply for jobs with a requirement for an ability to speak Welsh. Many of

these jobs will be in the public sector but there are examples of successful private sector employers requiring the ability to speak Welsh.

Case Study: Ceir Cymru, Gwynedd and Conwy

Evidence was submitted by the company which described its business philosophy.

Our policy (though not in writing) is simple. All aspects of the business are administered through the medium of Welsh. We don't employ any non-Welsh speakers – one out of fifteen staff could spoil the ethos and the natural linguistic banter of the workplace. We expect the sales staff and advisors to answer the phone and greet customers in Welsh in the first instance. We ensure that this is done courteously and pleasantly. We have a policy of seeking to help learners to use Welsh – as 80% of the local population understand Welsh, and 70% speak it naturally. We complete our bills in Welsh but when some of the mechanic/technicians prepare bills, it is difficult to get them to produce a bill in Welsh.

Over the years thousands of English/non-Welsh speaking people have bought cars from us and have been intrigued and charmed by our use of Welsh. Some are even jealous of this and reflect on their loss with statements like “I wish I could have learnt Welsh at school” or “I wish I could speak Welsh”.

In August 2008, with a view to addressing the need to raise confidence levels relating to the use of Welsh in the work situation by the community at large, and to meet a range of other requirements, the Welsh Government announced the establishment of the Brocer Iaith (Language Broker) project in the Peblig ward in Caernarfon where an extremely high proportion of the population were bilingual but also suffered from high levels of deprivation.

Case Study: Brocer Iaith Peblig

The intention behind the project was not to introduce any new initiatives but rather to harness existing projects and programmes with a view to improving the employability of the local residents, specifically

in relation to the range of employment opportunities requiring varying degrees of Welsh language ability. Much of the activity related to confidence building and developing skills which would better equip the clients to compete in the workplace. Specific attention was given to improving IT skills as well as offering a taste of enterprise and what it was like to run a business. There were also a series of work placements available.

An evaluation undertaken in 2012, by which time over 400 individuals had been assisted, included recommendations that:

- residents should be the focus of the work
- the broker should have a home in a local organisation active in the fields of community, economic, and linguistic regeneration
- there was a need to define the operational area with the main focus on the relevant residential area but, at the same time, recognising that the natural economic catchment area (the location of the work) was likely to be much larger
- activities should be based on individual contact including one-to-one support, courses and placements.

The report concluded that the project should continue to be funded to gain maximum benefit and to protect the initial investment; that it filled a gap in the development of skills for which there was a demand; that the experience gained should be disseminated as widely as possible in order to encourage the creation of a wider cluster/network of good practice; and that the work should be linked to the wider agenda of linking employers to skills and linguistic development.

Perhaps the major recommendation was that, by persevering with the work in Peblig ward and the relevant wider community, the area should be treated as a laboratory for the rest of Wales. This would ensure that lessons could be learnt over the long-term and more effective techniques developed with the ability to share experiences with other areas.

Examples of successful projects include

- the MENTRO toolkit, a pack to help the residents of Peblig turn their ideas into cash by using the special skill that they already have, namely Welsh. The work was drawn up in collaboration with TJB Cymru Cyf. It contains guidance and information as to the help available, along with examples of residents who have ventured and succeeded.
- Working Welsh Basic Skills Modules developed with Coleg Menai in response to the linguistic situation in Peblig ward and as a way of helping residents seek employment. A pilot offering placements with local Welsh employers and businesses was held. Further development is in hand.

Much of the success of the Peblig example can be attributed to it being hosted by the local housing association. Were the ward to be used as a laboratory and/or extended to the rest of Wales, it is essential that this type of support is readily available.

Advantage should be taken of bilingualism, and the consequent appreciation of multilingualism, by developing the linguistic skills of the workforce to meet the requirements of businesses seeking such skills.

6 The Group recommends that there should be greater resources for promoting innovation, entrepreneurship, and potential careers in business to Welsh speaking students and young people, in particular the geographical extension of Llwyddo'n Lleol should be considered.

Numerous respondents put forward ideas regarding educational provision and the importance of ensuring that the Welsh language is relevant to the application of new technologies and working practices. Other submissions made points of general relevance, and attention was drawn to the importance of ensuring that, whether educated through the medium of Welsh or not, the fact that students speak Welsh should not detract from their exposure to innovation, entrepreneurship and the world of business.

Case Study: Llwyddo'n Lleol

Llwyddo'n Lleol represents an innovative £3.8 million project aimed at helping young people in North West Wales move up the career ladder and succeed within their communities.

A partnership project with Anglesey, Conwy and Denbighshire local authorities, with Gwynedd Council acting as lead body, the project was aimed at 11-19 years olds living in North West Wales with a view to tackling the problem faced by rural areas suffering greatly from the outward migration of young people, and the inward migration of older people looking to retire to the peace and tranquillity of a rural setting. This project aimed to stem this flow through a series of innovative activities designed to develop the skills and confidence of young people in the opportunities available to both work and live within their own communities by:

- Increasing the confidence of young people in their communities and the future they can offer
- Increasing the awareness of the employment and self-employment opportunities within the growth sectors
- Nurturing a can-do attitude mindset amongst young people and encouraging the young generation to see self-employment and venture creation as a viable, exciting career choice
- Developing enterprise skills for employment or self-employment.

The mid term evaluation of Llwyddo'n Lleol concluded that 'the project is progressing well at regional level with good performance against target outputs and outcomes'. There is evidence of effective and efficient delivery with some opportunity for improvement in some elements of the programme (e.g. bursaries) and in some of the joint sponsors. The programme has achieved a good strategic fit and is demonstrating some evidence of impact at this stage although further work is required in order to gather more evidence of impact by the time of the summative evaluation.

Consideration must be given to any recommendation for improvements highlighted in the Project's Final evaluation report if, as recommended, its geographical coverage is extended.

The Group is aware of, and appreciative of, Big Ideas Wales, the communications campaign managed by the Welsh Government that aims to encourage young people to be more entrepreneurial. The Group is also aware of the range of provision which is available which can, potentially, respond to the issues raised in the various submissions.

Appreciating that the Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme and associated provision has recently been the subject of scrutiny by the National Assembly, the Group would recommend that an assessment be made of the availability of the range of provision in the Welsh language. As it would appear from concern expressed in various submissions that the availability of support through the medium of Welsh and the success of participants enjoys scant publicity, consideration should be given to the manner in which this support is available through the medium of Welsh. Academic evidence (Jones-Evans et al 2011) also supports the use of successful Welsh language entrepreneurs as practical examples to encourage young people to start their own businesses.

In addition, consideration should be given to the provision of training in Welsh in traditionally English speaking areas that are experiencing a rise in the demand for Welsh language education (for example Caerphilly and the Rhondda).

As was summed up by one commentator, "... economic development is critical to provide employment opportunities which will encourage people, particularly young people, to stay in their communities and in Wales generally, rather than migrate elsewhere. This issue is particularly acute for those communities which have a large proportion of Welsh speakers...".

- 7 The group recommends that businesses should be proactively provided with the opportunity to opt for Welsh language capabilities within existing Government funded training and skills programmes targeting young people. Examples include Go Wales, Jobs Growth Wales, and Entrepreneurship hubs.**

Increasing the awareness of entrepreneurship among young Welsh speakers and others seeking a new start in business was recognised by the Group as essential. Emphasis should be placed on the importance of Welsh language provision in the delivery of various programmes to those considering business start up as a career choice. Recognising that the delivery of such services on a truly bilingual basis requires a pool of suitably experienced business people, it is recommended that the identification and recruitment of Welsh speaking individuals able to share expertise and good practice, and utilising their experience of business, be made a priority in the delivery of these Programmes.

In order to benefit those undertaking this tuition and mentoring, opportunities should be sought whereby the learning can be put into practice in a business environment calling for bilingual capability or where the use of Welsh is actively encouraged.

Case Study: National Botanical Garden

“...Something really valuable to us (and I’m sure for others) would be, for example, having student placement/ambassadors for the Welsh language funded to work in the Garden for a period of say 10 weeks. Some sort of Go-Wales (or other) type of scheme for e.g. summer/Easter vacations (weeks could be spread through year by agreement with host organisation and student/University). It would be really valuable for us to be able to offer highly diverse work placement/vacation jobs across the organisation. These could have an explicit brief of supporting/promoting/developing the use of day-to-day Welsh in organisations...”

The power of networks

8 The Group recommends that encouragement should be given to the formation of clusters and networks of businesses utilising the Welsh language.

The importance of establishing effective networks of businesses operating through the medium of Welsh and seeking to employ bilingual staff was raised by a number of respondents, with a suggestion that there is an immediate need to monitor the demand for bilingual employees. This may be achieved by virtue of establishing a Welsh language Labour Market Observatory or similar which could co-ordinate the efforts to publicise job opportunities, but also contribute to workforce planning, succession planning, and guide workforce development provision so that it might reflect the demand for bilingual skills.

Case Study: Cwlwm Busnes Caerdydd

Cwlwm Busnes Caerdydd is a Welsh language business group, which gives business people from all sectors, in Cardiff and beyond, the opportunity to meet, network and discuss business matters through the medium of Welsh.

The organisation recognises the growing demand for Welsh speakers to fill vacancies and a demand for a forum like Cwlwm Busnes which gives business people an opportunity to network through the medium of Welsh. Cwlwm Busnes is not intended to be profit making but, rather, to enable members to benefit from new business, facilitate opportunities for new contracts, and encouraging its members to benefit from other skills. It is financed by its members and sponsors. Regular meetings are held, usually involving speakers from the world of business.

It is not intended that public funding be made available for such local networking organisations but that they be self financing.

9 The Group recommends that resources are provided to establish on-line networks that will maintain contact with Welsh speakers who leave Wales to study or for employment purposes. These networks will serve to encourage experienced Welsh speakers to return to Wales and also raise awareness of opportunities available.

In addition to seeking to retain Welsh speakers in their community there is also an aspiration to attract Welsh speakers working elsewhere back to work in Wales. It is recognised that there is no easy answer in this respect, and that there is a need to be realistic in our expectations, particularly as a primary requirement is often the availability of suitable jobs in Wales.

The Census does not seek information about Welsh speakers resident outside Wales, thus truly accurate information regarding the number of Welsh speakers residing in, for example, England, is impossible to obtain. Having said this, Longitudinal Study published by the Office for National Statistics, which uses data from the 2001 Census, was used in research for the Welsh Language Board which calculated that some 110,000 Welsh speakers lived in England, thus representing 17% of the total number of UK based Welsh speakers. This compares with earlier research by S4C which provided an estimate of some 133,000 Welsh speakers, some 50,000 of whom lived in the London area. On the basis that the age distribution of Welsh speakers reflects that of Welsh people in general in the population of England, almost half are in the 25-59 age group, a significantly higher proportion than reflected in the population as a whole.

Whilst the emphasis is slightly different for historical and geographical reasons, there has been a concerted effort by the Irish government to appeal to that nation's diaspora to return to Ireland and it may be useful to examine experience there. There could also be scope for further work with our higher education institutions to build upon Go Wales and we would recommend that this be undertaken.

Even with the best will in the world, we recognise that the ability to pursue business and employment opportunities, and the existence of an attractive market place, are amongst the factors which will influence locational decisions.

During the course of discussion, it has been suggested that the experience with the “Llwybro” project provided a useful model for an approach which would address some of the issues identified in both the written and oral evidence presented to the Group. Consideration should be given to the manner in which the project can be updated to take into account digital developments.

Case Study: Llwybro-Routes

Llwybro-Routes was a publicly funded project set up as a response to the issue of out-migration of young people from rural Wales. It was established as a pilot project in 1998 to address the issue in Mid Wales, and was extended throughout rural Wales in 2004.

The overall mission of Llwybro-Routes was the promotion of staying in rural Wales, or returning to rural Wales as an attractive and viable option.

The principal project activities included the preparation and maintenance of a comprehensive database of people, who have been educated in Wales with a view to:

- Tracking the career and lifestyle development of young people
- Helping people maintain links with their communities
- Facilitating return migration
- Matching young people with the skills needs of employers
- Providing a potential market for goods and services supplied by businesses in Wales

There was also a Llwybro-Routes website and newsletter providing:

- Direct links to job opportunities including Jobs pages
- Practical advice, information and contacts
- A facility for members to register and update their details on-line
- An 'Information for Employers' section
- Case studies of young people who have stayed or moved back and succeeded in their fields
- Events diary
- Contact details for support

Role of language bodies

10 The Group recommends that consideration should be given to the relative roles of Menter a Busnes and the Mentrau Iaith (Language Enterprises) as to the potential of giving the latter economic development responsibilities.

Menter a Busnes describes itself as an independent economic development company, set up in 1989, that helps Welsh speakers and people in Wales to contribute towards developing the economy of Wales. It currently operates in both the public and private sectors designing its own support programmes for businesses, entrepreneurship, skills and innovation development and delivers business support programmes on behalf of other national and regional organisations, including Welsh Government.

Whereas the organisation was established with a remit to promote enterprise amongst Welsh speakers, supported by public funds, as this support diminished, the organisation felt that there was a need to re-define its raison d'être. It was decided that this was best achieved by making a practical contribution to the economy. In other words, Menter a Busnes itself would be enterprising as well as assisting others to be so.

By developing in this way, Menter a Busnes has to be regarded as a commercial entity rather than an agency operating at arms length from the public sector.

Whilst one recognises that Menter a Busnes can play a role in promoting entrepreneurship amongst Welsh speakers, it is necessary to look elsewhere for objective advice delivered on a not-for-profit basis.

The 22 Menter Iaith (Language Enterprises or Ventures) operating across Wales are local community organisations undertaking a range of roles and projects relating to children and families; youth; economic development; community development; heritage and culture. Collectively they have some 300 full time employees across Wales with casual and part-time freelance workers employed as required. The

groups recognise the need to nurture and promote entrepreneurship locally so as to support businesses and provide opportunities for people to work through the medium of Welsh. As such the local groups have a key role in relation to creating Welsh medium job opportunities.

The successes and challenges faced by the 22 groups have produced varied results predominantly due to the issues of their respective localities and, as is often the case, the individuals involved. Given the obvious discrepancies across the groups it is unlikely that the one model approach would be suitable.

Mentrau Iaith have a wish to see economic development occurring concurrently with achieving the aim of creating a bilingual Wales. They feel that it is possible to secure economic development by regarding ability in the language as a skill which facilitates the creation and exploitation of job opportunities. They also feel that there is the potential to create new employment opportunities for Welsh speakers in fields which have yet to be fully developed.

The group is aware of the work that is currently underway at Cardiff University which is reviewing the organisation of the Mentrau Iaith and hopes that its conclusions will help inform their development.

Given the change in circumstances relative to Menter a Busnes, the Task and Finish Group feels that consideration should be given to the means by which grass roots activity to promote entrepreneurship and economic development through the medium of Welsh is delivered. In this context, consideration should be given to the remit and the manner in which Mentrau Iaith are supported.

11 The Group recommends that Wales should learn from experience and good practice in other bilingual communities such as the Basque country, Quebec, and Catalunya.

A number of territories, but particularly the Basque country, Catalunya, and Quebec, were highlighted as areas from which lessons could be learnt in relation to the manner in which the economy functioned and developed in a bilingual environment.

We realise that the situation in each of these regions differs from each other and from Wales on a number of counts and that direct comparisons may be inappropriate. However consideration of the link between bilingualism and the economy would be incomplete were there not to be reference to these examples. Indeed, on the basis of the evidence submitted, we are satisfied that further structured investigation of the situation in one or more of these regions would be beneficial.

Creative Industries

12 Over recent years the Welsh Language Broadcast Media Industry has experienced a decline. The Group recommends that consideration should be given to assessing the linguistic and economic impact of this change, and the consequences for the future of employment in the sector. Further consideration should be given to how content producers in Wales might be best supported to maximise opportunities in the wider digital content production market.

There is no doubt that the use of Welsh language in the workplace flourished in media companies in Wales created following the establishment of S4C. The programming need of the channel was directly responsible for encouraging the creation of small, medium, and by now, large, private production companies. It could be argued that these companies were amongst the very few in Wales where Welsh was the primary language used in the business. In many ways, this positive effect both made Welsh “cool “ and established it as an exemplar of best practice in the use of Welsh commercially.

Those employed in these companies, both in Cardiff and elsewhere, live and work in local communities, thereby strengthening the use of Welsh therein. In many areas of the country it is rare to find workplaces, other than Welsh medium schools and organisations concerned with language development, where business is run mostly through the medium of Welsh. Broadcast media companies are often the exception, but the number and strength of these companies have been adversely affected as a

consequence of cuts in the S4C's budget. This suggests that there may be a consequential, and longer term, detrimental effect on the language.

In its evidence S4C highlighted the difficult decisions it has already made in order to achieve savings. These include:

“.....two cycles of job losses and a reduction of 25% in staff, which has reduced the average cost of its content per hour from £16,374 in 2009 to £11,743 in 2012, and the decision to terminate the high definition service Clirlun in December 2012, saving £1.5m per year. Such decisions have been made with the aim of ensuring the best possible value for money, minimising the effect savings will have on the audience of S4C and content on the screen. That is not likely to be the case with reductions to our funding in future, as any further reductions in funding would reduce our content budget.”

Now that the funding of S4C is linked to the BBC licence fee, consideration needs to be given to the effect that the future funding of the Channel will have on the production sector and the effect that its demise would have on the economy and on the Welsh language.

The recent decision by S4C to examine the feasibility of relocating functions outside Cardiff opens up the possibility of strengthening the language, and possibly stimulating economic development, in the host community. However, on the downside, this might have the effect of reducing the number of job opportunities available in the capital

In June 2013, S4C published the results of independent research which it had commissioned. This suggested that an initial spend of £63.7 million by S4C on programmes and content in 2012, sourced from independent companies in Wales, generated an additional economic impact of £60.5 million, and a total economic impact of £124.3 million on the Welsh creative industries. The report estimated that since it was established in 1982, S4C has invested over £2.2bn pounds into the economy in Wales.

Notwithstanding this significant positive impact on the economy as a result of S4C's activities, and its link to the Welsh language, the past decade has seen significant changes which have affected the broadcast media industry. Given the fundamental changes which have taken place in relation to S4C and its funding, the Group recommends that the BBC, S4C, and the Welsh Government commission further research into the likely linguistic and economic impact of these changes and the consequences for the future of employment in this sector.

There is a history of "back to back" production by Welsh language television producers with the need to facilitate versioning in other languages underpinning the process. At the same time, there have been numerous productions which have been bought for overseas territories, having originally been produced for the Welsh language market. It is important that further consideration be given to how content producers in Wales can be supported to maximise opportunities to sell their existing content and new ideas to international markets. This is particularly important given the current climate in Welsh broadcasting as budgets and opportunities in both languages decline.

The popularity of e-books, "apps", electronic games, and similar digital products has proved that there is a continuous need to innovate otherwise the publishing and production industry will become limited in its outlook and irrelevant in the modern world.

The Welsh Government has recognised this by adopting a digital media and technology action plan which sets out the Welsh Government's commitment to drive developments in the field of Welsh-language technology and digital media. Linked to this is a fund which has an annual budget of £250,000 over three years which will be dedicated to a grants scheme and a procurement programme.

The first grants under this scheme were announced in November 2013, there having been limited interest by Wales-based private sector businesses wishing to develop innovative projects focusing on content and software outside a relatively narrow concentration on educational applications. There is a need to encourage

further interest by the Welsh private sector in accessing this support, and widening its scope, by developing products with an “everyday” application. In addition to more general business support, the Welsh Government can encourage such developments by making a range of visual content in which it has copyright easily available to developers and producers, and by providing more specialist support in relation to intellectual property rights applying to digital content.

Section 3

How economic development could support increased use of the Welsh language

An area based approach

13 With a view to providing suitable policy responses, the Group recommends that the Welsh Government should examine the opportunities for, and threats to, the language in the city region(s) and larger urban areas from the point of view of economic development.

Certain respondents commented in negative terms that Cardiff, in particular, was attracting Welsh speakers from other parts of Wales attracted by an urban lifestyle, enhanced employment opportunities, and, uniquely in our major urban areas, the ability to use the language widely in work and social situations.

The 2011 census showed that Cardiff experienced a small increase in the proportion of the population able to speak Welsh at a time when the city's population was growing substantially. In real terms we are talking about an increase of over 4,200 with the result that Cardiff has more Welsh speakers (36,735), than an area regarded as being predominantly Welsh speaking, Ceredigion, which has 34,964.

This is a not insignificant community of Welsh speakers and its size certainly cannot be attributed to migrants into the city, as is illustrated for the current demand for Welsh language schools in the city. It is recommended that research be undertaken to identify the manner in which economic development and the Welsh language interacts in the major urban areas, particularly the Cardiff city region.

14 The Group recommends that there should be a joint approach to economic development and the language, adopting an area based approach which would facilitate the designation of “special economic language zones”.

There were a number of submissions linking economic development and the Welsh language on a spatial basis. It was suggested that specific areas should be designated priority zones in this respect. In these areas, consideration should be given to recognising developments which place a value of the Welsh language in order to benefit and promote its viability.

Amongst the suggested areas were the Menai Strait; Porthmadog (including the Snowdonia Enterprise Zone); Aberystwyth; Carmarthen; and Amman/Tawe Valleys (including Ystradgynlais) travel to work areas, but to these might be added the Teifi Valley, linking in with the local growth zone, and Cardiff.

The Anglesey and Snowdonia areas have already been designated Enterprise Zones with the Teifi Valley identified as a location for a potential growth zone, possibly based on a number of “nodes”. Linking economic development with the language would see these areas designated, in addition, as “special economic zones”, with priority given to generating quality employment where ability in the Welsh language is regarded positively. With investment in telecommunications and fast broadband, they could be promoted with a view to being suitable locations for the further development of shared service centres, as have been developed in Penrhyndeudraeth and Porthmadog, or other establishments providing services to the public in the Welsh language for both the public and private sectors. Cardiff should be included, both symbolically as the capital city but also, more importantly in this context, as the heart of a city region having a relatively buoyant economy which provides an alternative context to the less densely populated areas.

On a more general basis, such an approach would also embrace an integrated approach to transport infrastructure, public transport, and fast broadband connectivity, with the specific objective of ensuring that Welsh language communities

are not at a relative disadvantage as potential locations for investment and job creation.

15 Recognising the success of community development trusts such as Galeri, Caernarfon (formerly Cwmni Tref Caernarfon), in supporting economic regeneration, the Group recommends that pilot projects should be funded in towns in, and near, the Anglesey and the Snowdonia Enterprise Zones, and the Teifi Valley towns.

Galeri Caernarfon was established over twenty years ago to regenerate the heart of the historic town generally regarded as having the highest proportion of Welsh speakers of any relatively large town in Wales. Initially benefitting from seed funding provided by central government, the company has seen these funds evolve to fund further acquisition of properties and improvement. As a result of its success, the company was asked by Gwynedd Council to act on its behalf in a number of smaller settlements though the overall effect is lesser without the benefits of clustering properties. The work attracted complementary activity by Arianrhod, a group of private investors. Together both organisations have provided accommodation for a range of businesses using Welsh as their everyday language of business.

Case Study: Galeri Caernarfon

Galeri Caernarfon Cyf., formerly known as Cwmni Tref Caernarfon Cyf., is a not for profit community enterprise operating as a Development Trust. Galeri Caernarfon Cyf's vision is that: "anything is possible...through creative thought and sustainable action" To realise the vision the company will: "implement sustainable projects in a creative way to realise the cultural, economic and environmental potential of the local community and its environs".

The company was established in 1992 and worked hard to improve the image of Caernarfon town centre by purchasing derelict buildings (shops, offices and housing) within the walled town. To date, the Trust has refurbished and re-developed 20 previously vacant and run down properties in Caernarfon.

Galeri Creative Enterprise, a £7.5m development was officially opened in April 2005 and has been the largest and most ambitious of the trust's projects so far. The opening of Galeri marked a significant development for the arts and creative industries in North Wales. Galeri includes: a theatre and cinema, 24 business / work units, Art Space, two large rehearsal studios, meeting rooms and a Café Bar (serving locally sourced, fresh produce).

Towns such as Amlwch and Llangefni, as well as the towns in the Teifi Valley could benefit from such an approach which would have the effect of re-vitalising high streets and also provide opportunities for businesses to establish in premises let on favourable terms.

The physical development could be backed up by specific programmes of support provided by the local authorities or bodies such as Antur Teifi and Menter Môn.

16 The Group recommends that the model provided by the Coleg Menai Apprenticeship Company is adapted to provide Welsh language apprenticeships in businesses in predominantly Welsh speaking areas.

Grwp Llandrillo Menai has set up an apprentice employment agency company – Cwmni Prentis Menai Cyf – as a vehicle to increase the number of construction and engineering apprentices in North West Wales. An apprentice employment agency is an arrangement whereby the college employs apprentices under a fixed term contract and then places them with host companies to undertake their workplace experience.

The employment law responsibilities sit with the college thereby providing a simpler and cost-efficient way for businesses to engage with apprentices, when this might otherwise not be financially possible. The host company contributes to the wage cost of the apprenticeship but at a subsidised rate which, it is hoped, encourages more businesses in the region to participate in the scheme.

The strategic plan of the agency is to increase the number of businesses willing to participate in apprenticeship placements and to develop a pool of local, vocationally qualified young people with all the skills required for the future.

The scheme is designed to operate in an area where SMEs find it difficult to meet the costs of normal apprentices and/or where a critical mass of businesses is lacking. It is recognised that the operation of the scheme requires substantial financial resources and it may be appropriate to operate it as a pilot in the first instance in an area such as the Teifi Valley. The possibility of utilising the European Social Fund to fund the scheme should be examined.

Infrastructure

17 The Group recommends that the Welsh language should be a consideration in rolling out the Superfast Broadband programme in the immediate future so that those businesses in the remaining strongly Welsh speaking areas such as the Teifi Valley may enjoy the benefits currently available in areas in the north west of Wales.

The importance of a modern digital infrastructure was the subject of a number of comments, in relation both to its importance to the conduct of business and to the manner in which it can contribute to the attractiveness of areas given the manner in which individuals consume content produced and distributed over a range of platforms.

A range of businesses in those areas where there has been investment in fibre infrastructure have derived benefit from significant improvements in download and upload speeds and can make the difference between a company deciding whether or not to locate in particular areas.

It is recognised that there is a significant gap between the planning of the upgrading of the network and implementation of the changes and that there are a number of pressures relating to prioritisation, however it is recommended that the Welsh language be a consideration when areas are considered for prioritisation.

Case studies: Superfast Cymru and Superfast Cornwall

Mike Carey, Managing Director of Mototec, a South Wales based automotive company, has been running a successful business from Pontllanfraith, Caerphilly for over 20 years. Key to that success has been Mike's willingness to quickly adopt new technologies to help his business thrive, in a tough market. The latest example of this is the company's take up of fibre broadband when this became available locally. Mototec use fibre broadband extensively throughout the business from purchasing online to the applications needed to connect complex diagnostic equipment. With fibre broadband, productivity and efficiency savings have been made as immediate fault diagnosis information can be provided to the technicians. Mike also uses fibre broadband to research major purchases online, ensuring he secures the best deal and gets value for money, savings he can plough back into his business.

Setting up a new business in January 2013 was a challenge in a time of economic uncertainty but one which Ian Drury, Director of Ultranyx in South Wales was willing to take. Ultranyx is a specialist company providing High Performance Computers, computer appliances and custom engineered systems. All systems are designed and built specifically to client requirements which mean excellent communication with customers throughout the UK is of paramount importance. It's not the type of business you would typically expect to be developed from a small rural hamlet in South Wales. But with fibre broadband becoming more widely available location is increasingly less of an issue for business start-ups in Wales.

Headforwards is an outsourced software development company based at Poole Innovation Centre. In only two years, the company has grown from 5 to 38 staff. The company was originally set up to provide outsourced services for the world's largest telecoms company, the Japanese giant NTT, and is now attracting other major international clients. Director Toby Parkins says: "Having superfast connectivity has had a powerful impact on perceptions about our company and means

we are now seen as premier league players. We are totally reliant on our fibre connection. Without a superfast connection, NTT would not have chosen to work with us and our company would simply not exist.”

18 The Group recommends that research should be undertaken to examine the effect of improving road and rail communications and public transport services between the strongly Welsh speaking areas and employment centres on the main transportation corridors.

At Y Gynhadledd Fawr conference in Aberystwyth there was an interesting presentation regarding the changing situation of the language in Gwynedd between 2001 and 2011. This considered the situation in three settlements, Llanrug, Clynnog, and Blaenau Ffestiniog, referring to patterns of employment, the relative strength of the language, quality of life, and highlighting the positive impact resulting from improved road communications between the settlements and the A55 corridor. This phenomenon is worthy of further investigation, not only in relation to the areas mentioned but further afield.

Whilst the evidence presented at the conference related primarily to the ability to drive to job opportunities, it points to the possibilities to be gained from considering public transport services in this context.

19 The Group recommends that the role of housing associations in promoting and facilitating community economic development should be further developed.

Whilst the primary role of housing associations is to develop new homes, rental properties, the repair and improvement of existing homes, and the provision of housing management services, the Welsh Government has recognised that the associations have developed a wide range of initiatives that benefit their tenants and the local community. The ‘Socio-Economic Impact of the Welsh Housing Association and Community Mutual Sector 2013’ report by the Welsh Economy Research Unit commissioned by Community Housing Cymru provides a useful overview of the

impact that Housing Associations have on the economy and local communities in Wales.

The document “Improving Lives and Communities”, published in 2010, identified a need to make best use of investment in housing and other regeneration activity to create more jobs and training opportunities, and to improve the look and feel of communities, and the services and facilities available to local people.

Although there is no specific reference to the Welsh Language in the document, the application of its findings and recommendations to predominantly Welsh speaking areas could well be relevant in this context. The primary activities will be an important contributor to the demand for local services and facilities, thus supporting local businesses, providing jobs, skills and training opportunities, all of which strengthen the local community, and, in turn, the position of the language.

As illustrated by the case study below an innovative approach by the associations in delivering their mainstream activities, working with other partners, realises the potential to maximise the benefits to the local community.

Case Study: Congl Meinciau, Botwnnog

The centre was established as part of a wider strategy to provide affordable homes in a low income area, to provide new employment opportunities by encouraging and supporting new enterprises and to promote the use of Welsh as the medium for business. The project was a response to the support announced by the then Deputy Minister for Regeneration in 2008.

The project, located in Botwnnog on the Llyn Peninsula, provides 12 affordable houses and an enterprise centre which provides business units, community facilities and a space for new small businesses to establish and develop. It was jointly funded by the Welsh Government, European Structural Funds and Cymdeithas Tai Eryri, the local Housing Association.

The centre opened in early 2012 and has been the subject of a two stage economic impact study, completed in March 2013. Although the report makes the point that it is too early to reach concrete conclusions, it concludes that it appears that the Centre is on target to recoup its running costs within 24 months, 60% of the business space is let, the tenants are generally very happy and it is a popular venue for businesses and locals to meet.

Whilst it is accepted that it is too early to pronounce the centre an unqualified success, it provides sufficient evidence to encourage us to recommend that further research should be taken as to the manner in which housing associations can be involved in facilitating such activity linked to the future wellbeing of the language in other suitable areas.

Business Support

20 Evidence from the review suggests that there are differences between small enterprises and larger businesses in terms of their use of the Welsh language. Where a small business recognises that there are commercial advantages to increasing use of the Welsh language, the Group recommends that there should be a range of practical support available to it.

The Group received a range of submissions relating to the assistance available to small businesses wishing to use Welsh in their commercial activities. It was often emphasised that there was a need to nurture a positive attitude by the business to the language rather than to force its use. In order to facilitate this it was suggested that the most valuable support would be the provision of practical assistance to cover a range of business situations such as the cost of translating documentation, signage, and so on. This principle could also be extended to assisting staff in achieving and improving linguistic competence.

Case Study: Carmarthenshire retail business (non-Welsh speaker)

We don't have any formal policy on the Welsh language. When we advertise a post we state that the ability to speak Welsh is an advantage.

I'd like to use the Welsh language in our business because its absence is, I think, part of a wider threat to the language and culture of the nation. I think that is reason enough, however I do think it also demonstrates that the business is rooted in the area and it demonstrates respect to the many Welsh speakers that use our premises.

Commercially, I think it would have some impact for the reasons given above..... a sense of identity adds something to the brand I guess. I think we have to find ways to be more imaginative in our use of the Welsh language as a business. I'm not entirely sure that having everything bilingual is the answer (although I accept it may be)... I do think... that the use of language in business needs to be presented as part of a larger vision for the Welsh language.

The issues that arise are the obvious ones of practicality. Sometimes it is a simple question of space and time. Personally I think it should be a priority, particularly in public spaces and for that reason we are looking at ways of moving it forward towards as much bilingual signage as possible. I do think though that this needs to be looked at in the context of the burdens on small businesses in general.....I can see the attraction of enforcing use of the language but in all honesty I think that would be counterproductive. So that's the dilemma. How can businesses be freed up to do this?

Perhaps also through some kind of funding linked to the award – I don't think this is a mercenary approach, I think it merely acknowledges that small and medium sized businesses in particular are finding it tough enough as it is and now is not the time to be making demands of them that will increase their costs.

A scheme of accreditation highlighting the level of Welsh language use in a business has also been suggested, but needs further consideration particularly as regards the accrediting body.

Section 4

How the public sector could support increased use of the Welsh language

Procurement

21 The definition of community benefits emanating from the current approach to public sector procurement makes no reference to the consideration of the benefits accruing to the Welsh language and Welsh speakers. The Group recommends that the provisions relating to securing equality and diversity should be extended to provide for these interests.

22 The Group recommends that as appropriate, public sector contracts put out to tender should require tenderers to demonstrate an ability to provide a service bilingually, particularly those delivered to the general public.

The Welsh Government policy document “Community Benefits: Delivering Maximum Value for the Welsh Pound”, published in March 2010, makes no reference to the Welsh language in relation to Procurement policy. We recommend that the provisions relating to equality, bearing in mind the statement in the guidance that “...Considering equalities issues in procurement is...not only about satisfying legal obligations but can also help public procurers deliver higher quality services and achieve better value...” should make specific reference to the Welsh language and the Welsh Government’s policies in relation to the language.

Grant Support

23 The Group recommends that businesses in receipt of a grant from the Welsh Government should be required to demonstrate an ability to provide a service bilingually. Any signage or other advertising material relating to a grant-aided project should be bilingual.

Numerous representations were made regarding the fact that public sector contracts, and the award of grant aid, including those relating to the Welsh Government, frequently failed to contain any requirement upon potential suppliers to observe Welsh language guidelines and policies in delivering their services.

Section 5

The use of labour market data to inform development of the Welsh language in the Welsh economy

24 The Group recommends that the Welsh Government provides resources to gather evidence on the impact of, and the links between, the Welsh language and the economy. This evidence is needed to persuade business of the benefits of operating bilingually.

The Group is aware of the work that the Department for Education and Skills, Welsh Government, in partnership with IFF Research, is currently undertaking to further its understanding of the Welsh language skill needs of employers across Wales (field work scheduled for September and October 2013). It is anticipated that this work will provide evidence on the effect of Welsh language skills on the business' bottom line, the reasons why some employers have no need for Welsh language skills, and what business support for the Welsh language is required. It is recommended that this evidence is shared across the Welsh Government and wider stakeholders.

Section 6

Future governance

25 The Group recommends that an independent panel be established which would provide the Minister with advice on how the Welsh language can benefit from, and contribute to economic development, building upon the recommendations made in this report.

The Sector Panels appointed to advise the Minister have made an important contribution in providing advice from a private sector focus in relation to issues impacting upon the particular sector to which they relate. Although the context is different in this case, the approach has merits in that such a panel would be able to offer advice on the development of policy emanating from the Minister's own department as well as that developed elsewhere, in other departments and by the Welsh Language Commissioner.

Were this suggestion to find favour, the Group would further recommend that the merits, and manner, of integrating the work of the panel with that being undertaken in the Department for Education and Skills be examined, with Secretariat functions being shared between the two departments.

The membership of the panel will be key to its success and it is recommended that the business community provides the majority of its membership. It is envisaged that the focus would be upon providing clear leadership in advising the Minister, focusing on delivery, rather than conducting further reviews.

Welsh Government

26 The Group recognises that the Welsh Government's role is not to enforce the use of Welsh Language on business but rather to support, signpost, and simplify its use.

27 It recommends that the current arrangements for monitoring equality issues in the Department for Economy, Science and Transport be reviewed with a view to encompassing a more strategic approach to matters relating to the Welsh language, including from the viewpoint of the manner in which the Department interfaces with business.

These recommendations recognise the need to provide sound advice to officials seeking to deal with Welsh language matters in relation to their day to day interactions with business, developing policy, and administering support programmes for business. The Group is aware that during the policy development process officials are obliged to undertake Welsh Language Policy Impact Assessment. The effectiveness of this procedure should be assessed.

The Welsh Language Commissioner has clear responsibilities, including maintaining a dialogue with business and a regulatory role. There's a clear need to ensure that the relative activities of the Commissioner and Welsh Government ensure additionally rather than duplication.

At the time of writing this report, discussions on the emerging Welsh Language Standards are ongoing. There remains much confusion and lack of clarity regarding the implications for the business sector. To ease this uncertainty there is a clear need to ensure adequate and appropriate help for the business sector to facilitate its navigation of the standards.

Contributors to the Call for Evidence

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Y Ganolfan Cynllunio Iaith

Recent relevant reports

Welsh Language Commissioner

Cyflwyniad i waith comisiynydd y Gymraeg

Cynllun Strategol Comisiynydd y Gymraeg 2013-15

Safonau mewn perthynas a'r Gymraeg:beth yw'ch barn?

Potensial y Gymraeg i gyfrannu at wireddu amcanion Rhaglenni Ariannu Ewropeaidd 2014–2020

Welsh Language Board

Y Gymraeg ac Adfywio

Strategaeth Sector Preifat

Welsh Government

Iaith Fyw: iaith byw

Datblygu Economaidd a'r Iaith Gymraeg Rhaglen Waith

Datblygu Economaidd A'r Iaith Gymraeg - Adolygaid Blynyddol Cyntaf y Grwp Trafod
Iaith-Economi

Datblygu Economaidd A'r Iaith Gymraeg - Ail Adroddiad Cynnydd y Grwp Trafod
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