Discussion paper: arrangements for implementing Cymraeg 2050

Purpose of this paper

1. The purpose of this paper is to stimulate a discussion, in light of the recent decision not to proceed to introduce a Welsh Language Bill, about the structures required to implement the Cymraeg 2050 strategy.

Context: Cymraeg 2050 strategy

2. The publication in July 2017 of Cymraeg 2050 signalled a major change in the Government's approach to Welsh language policy. The long-term nature of the strategy, the ambition behind the target, and the challenge which it now presents, provides a new impetus to ensure that information about, and promotion of, the Welsh language reaches new audiences across Wales. To achieve the target, we will need to persuade a much wider cohort of the population to take action to acquire, transmit and use the language. This includes fluent Welsh speakers, Welsh speakers who are reluctant to use the language, new speakers who have learned the language and, crucially, the 80 per cent of the population who do not consider themselves to be Welsh speakers. It also includes future generations who have not yet been born.

3. Whilst the headline of the Strategy is the target of reaching a million Welsh speakers by 2050, the Strategy is clear that its success must also be judged in terms of levels of Welsh language use. Too narrow a focus on achieving a million speakers who can speak Welsh, without enough attention being given to providing opportunities and creating contexts for the million to actively use the language in their daily lives, would not place the language on a firm footing. Cymraeg 2050 therefore includes a second overarching target relating to the use of Welsh:

   The percentage of the population that speak Welsh daily, and can speak more than just a few words of Welsh, to increase from 10 per cent (in 2013–15) to 20 per cent by 2050.

4. The main narrative of the Strategy therefore emphasises the close link between language acquisition and efforts to increase the number of Welsh speakers on the one hand, and efforts to embed linguistic practices and increasing use of the Welsh language on the other. In order to give context to enable that to happen, we also need to create favourable conditions in terms of language infrastructure and the context in which language is used.

Current situation

5. The strategy's targets are deliberately ambitious in order to create momentum for working towards the national goal in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 of *A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language*. This desire to significantly expand the number of people who speak and use Welsh requires a shift in attitude and resources in order to reach a better balance between:

    a. regulating in order to give rights to existing Welsh speakers;
    b. providing practical support and encouragement for regulated bodies to grow an user base;
    c. systematic planning to increase the numbers that acquire Welsh;
    d. a programme of work to increase the use of Welsh in family, social and workplace settings; and
    e. working across Government to ensure that policies in economic development, housing, planning, education, culture etc support the strategy's vision.

6. On 1 February 2019 the Minister announced her decision not to introduce the Welsh Language Bill. The proposals for the Bill were contained within the White Paper, *Striking the right balance*. In that paper the Welsh Government argued that the policy emphasis has moved too far in the direction of regulation at the cost of work to increase the use of the Welsh language. Proposals were made in the White Paper to simplify the system of Standards and strengthen the arrangements to increase the use of Welsh by creating a Commission as a corporate body to replace the office of Welsh Language Commissioner as a corporation sole.

7. The Welsh Government stands by this analysis and still want to see a better balance in the activities listed in paragraph 5 above. However, by now we have stated we do not intend to introduce new legislation given that there was no unanimity amongst stakeholders that the creating a Commission in place of the Commissioner was the best way of achieving the White Paper's aims. Whilst we will not be proceeding with the plans to legislate, these aims are still ones which we wish to pursue. We must therefore find other ways of achieving them within the current legislative framework, the Welsh Language Measure 2011.

8. The office of Welsh Language Commissioner is an integral part of the 2011 Measure. The term of the current Commissioner, Meri Huws, will come to an end on 31 March 2019. Aled Roberts will commence as the new Commissioner on 1 April 2019. Work has already commenced to develop a different and more effective working relationship between the Government and the new Commissioner.

Scope of this paper

9. We are keen to consider carefully the responsibilities of each of the relevant actors within Welsh language policy to ensure that we have the most appropriate structures to implement the Cymraeg 2050 strategy. This paper therefore discusses different options for doing so, and the risks and benefits of each. This includes the responsibilities of both the Welsh Government and those of the Commissioner

10. Some stakeholders have argued in favour of establishing a new external body or agency to promote the Welsh language. The Minister ruled out creating a new external body during evidence to the Culture, Communications and Welsh Language Committee. An additional body operating in the field of promoting the Welsh language would create confusion for the public with a high risk of duplicating functions. It would also create additional costs and overheads, taking scarce funding from programmes and services which would be of direct benefit to increasing the use of Welsh. As such, creating a new external body is not within the scope of this paper.

11. The paper does explore the possibility of establishing an internal body arms-length body or agency within the Welsh Government.

Language planning: the principles

12. Whilst ruling out creating a new body, it is worth considering the underlying reasons why those who argued for such a body to be created do so. Some stakeholders who presented evidence to the Committee said that a missing component of the current policy delivery landscape were sufficient intervention rooted in language planning principles to address the fundamental issue of the use of the language in society. They argued that rights and the provision of services in Welsh to citizens has received too much focus in recent years – at the expense of efforts to increase the use of Welsh in everyday life and at the expense of efforts to maintain communities, networks and spaces where Welsh is used by default.

13. To put those arguments into context, this section provides a broad overview of the social science of language planning and how it has been applied in Wales over the past 25 years.

14. Since the 1970s various attempts have been made to develop models of language revitalisation and language change. Joshua Fishman's 1991 Reversing Language Shift (RLS) theory and GIDS (Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale) provide an illustration of the attempt to view language revitalisation efforts as a series of interconnected and cumulative phases. Subsequent attempts to refine the model proposed by Fishman have

led to alternative ways of illustrating the dynamic of language behaviour and language change. Miquel Strubell's Catherine Wheel model identifies a relationship between four areas:

- Language competence
- Social use of language
- Presence and demand for products and services in the language
- Motivation to learn and use the language

15. The interrelationship between the above areas is illustrated as a circular (as opposed to a linear) concept (Strubell 2001). It is assumed that as more speakers become more competent in the language, the use of that language in social spheres will increase. This, in turn, will generate increased levels of demand. Increased prominence given to the language in the public sphere will have a positive impact on individuals' perception of the usefulness of the language and on their motivation to learn it.

16. Other attempts to capture the non-linearity of language behaviour and language change have also highlighted the need for a multi-dimensional model. Further elaboration of Fishman's model is provided in Grin and Moring's 'Policy-to-outcome Path' (2002), where language vitality is seen as requiring the combined presence of three conditions:

- the capacity to use the language;
- opportunities to use it; and
- the desire to do so.

17. One key underlying component in each of the models outlined above is the psychology of language behaviour. Whilst it would appear that there is general awareness of the importance of attitude-related factors in terms of speakers' readiness or reluctance to use Welsh, a more refined understanding of what triggers language choices and preferences is required.

18. More recent developments in thinking surrounding language planning, as articulated in the conceptual framework contained within the Cymraeg 2050 strategy, is the relationship between language use and wider social, economic and political changes that shape, and which will continue to shape, contemporary Wales.

19. The conceptual framework for the Cymraeg 2050 strategy also introduces the concept of a 'life-course approach' into language planning. Life-course models have largely been applied in areas such as public health, ageing and socioeconomic outcomes. The underlying concepts are in many ways relevant to language planning policy. The following elements of the life-course approach are particularly relevant:

- the influence of historical and geographical contexts on people's experiences and opportunities
- identifying key 'transition phases'
- acknowledging variations in the way in which different individuals respond to circumstances
- interrelationship between individuals and their families and their networks of relations
- how the past shapes the future, i.e. long-term perspective, and the cumulative effect of experiences
- individuals as active players who can make decisions and choices, and set objectives for their own actions.
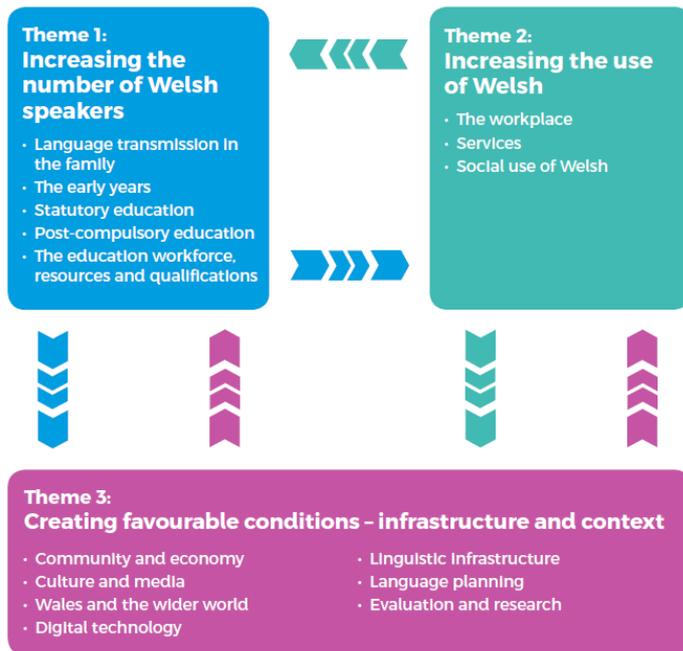
Turning theory into practice

20. Turning the theory of language planning into practice is the task facing us if we are to succeed in implementing Cymraeg 2050. However, it should be emphasised that we are not the beginning of the journey. Recognition of the interdependence between a variety of different factors is a well-established feature of language planning activity in Wales. The Welsh Language Board's language planning activity was developed in the later 90s under the following four key areas of language planning:

- **Acquisition planning:** promoting language transmission in families; planning of Welsh-medium education; planning of Welsh for adults provision.
- **Usage planning:** social use of Welsh, use by young people, social opportunities and spaces to use language in the community.
- **Status planning:** official legal status, provision of services (by compulsion through regulation or voluntarily through encouragement).
- **Corpus planning**: terminology, dictionaries, technology.

21. Similar approaches have been taken in other countries, albeit with different emphasis to different aspects of language planning.

22. Subsequent Welsh Government activity to support the Welsh language following the abolition of the Welsh Language Board has also been rooted in these general principles. The Cymraeg 2050 strategy was developed within a conceptual framework rooted in the social science of language planning - and the three themes of the Cymraeg 2050 strategy as shown in the diagram below demonstrate the interconnected nature of the various elements of language planning.

Theme 1:
Increasing the number of Welsh speakers
- Language transmission in the family
- The early years
- Statutory education
- Post-compulsory education
- The education workforce, resources and qualifications

Theme 2:
Increasing the use of Welsh
- The workplace
- Services
- Social use of Welsh

Theme 3:
Creating favourable conditions – infrastructure and context
- Community and economy
- Culture and media
- Wales and the wider world
- Digital technology
- Linguistic infrastructure
- Language planning
- Evaluation and research

23. The benefit of the Government leading on language planning in recent years is that we have been able to work across government departments to ensure that language planning principles are included in other policy areas. We recognised that there is much more work to do to in this regard to ensure that this happens in a systematic and strategic manner. That is one of the drivers for considering the most appropriate structures for delivering the Strategy.

24. The criticism which some stakeholders have levelled at the Government regarding our application of language planning principles may be related to a lack of visibility with regard to some initiatives in comparison with the Welsh Language Board era. This may be to be expected given that the Welsh language is one amongst many priorities of Government. It may also reflect the fact that as officials' attention and time may necessarily have been diverted to machinery of government tasks, with less time available to devote to policy development. There is merit, therefore, in considering how we can achieve a structure which devotes a higher proportion of time and effort into language planning activities.

Who does what in the current structure

25. The Welsh Government has certain responsibilities in relation to the Welsh language which only national government can undertake. They are as follows:

- prepare a national strategy and a plan to implement the strategy;
- set national policies for the Welsh language;

- propose and make legislation, with the consent of the Assembly (including imposing Standards on bodies);
- put in place practical arrangements to deliver the national strategy;
- provide resources to support the Welsh language;
- monitor the performance of bodies involved in delivering the strategy and review the strategy from time to time;
- maintain inter-governmental relations with other countries and regions with minority language concerns;
- be accountable to the Assembly.

26. The Welsh Government also currently undertakes a programme of work aimed at increasing the use of Welsh in the community via grant funding, by business, in families and by children and young people. We are also responsible for some aspects of language infrastructure such as language technology and corpus, and also fund Mudiad Meithrin and Welsh for Adults.

27. Welsh Language Commissioner's main responsibilities are:

- Consult on the preparation of Standards for different sectors and make recommendations to Welsh Government;
- Impose Standards on organisations once authorised by regulations made by Welsh Ministers;
- Monitor compliance with Standards and deal with complaints;
- Deal with complaints regarding the freedom to use Welsh;
- Encourage large businesses and the third sector to provides Welsh language services;
- Place-names and terminology standardisation;
- Prepare 5-year report on the Welsh language;
- Policy observatory – respond to consultations etc.

Options for future delivery arrangements

28. In this section, we briefly introduce an outline of some options available to us to achieve the aim of a better balance in responsibilities as mentioned in paragraph 5. These are based on discussions and review of evidence presented by lobby groups and also discussion with Welsh Government officials in other departments who have experience of establishing entities within Welsh Government. such as Cadw and Creative Wales. Further discussions are planned with the Office of the Chief Medical Officer, Visit Wales and Business Wales to evaluate the pros and cons of different governance models.

As a minimum, a change of focus for the Commissioner

29. As a minimum, and irrespective of other options discussed in this paper, we will expect the Commissioner to change its focus from being a regulator who reacts to complaints of failures in service delivery to an organisation which is proactive in its support for bodies that provide, or wish to provide, Welsh language services.

30. The Minister has already stated in evidence to the Committee that she expects the Commissioner to invest in activities to increase the use of Welsh language service by the public, in order to support the efforts being made by the bodies themselves, whether or not they ar liable to comply with Standards, and to report on the success of those activities in the Commissioner's annual report.

31. Discussions are also being undertaken with the Commissioner's office with regard to adopting an early-resolution policy for complaints handling, including asking complainants to first raise complaints with the relevant body.

Additional responsibilities for the Commissioner?

32. The Minister's evidence paper to the Committee said that if the Commissioner's office successfully changes its focus as outlined above, and also makes changes to the Commissioner's governance arrangements, then the Government would then consider whether further responsibilities should be transferred to the Commissioner.

33. An example of a responsibility that could conceivably by undertaken by the Commissioner would be the funding of the mentrau iaith given that they are a key delivery agent for county and county borough councils both in terms of delivering some services on their behalf and as a partner in delivering county Welsh language strategies: a requirement of the Promotion Standards imposed on all county and county borough councils and national park authorities.

34. However, it is also arguable that responsibility for the funding of the mentrau iaith and other third sector organisations who promote the use of Welsh would be better located from within an arms-length internal body or agency (see further options below).

Option 1: Minimal changes to responsibilities within Welsh Government's Welsh Language Division

Outline
- Welsh Language Division to establish new sponsorship arrangements for the Commissioner with the aim that the Commissioner changes emphasis in terms of the exercise of regulatory functions.
- Mentrau Iaith Cymru to be responsible for grants for the 22 menter iaith, papurau bro, Merched y Wawr, Young Farmers, local Eisteddfodau etc.
- Welsh Language Division to continue to sponsor the National Centre for Learning Welsh, Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, Urdd, Mudiad Meithrin, National Eisteddfod and Mentrau Iaith Cymru (umbrella organisation).

Pros	*Cons*
• Reduce bureaucracy within Government of administering small, community focused grants.	• It may not satisfy external calls for some sort of new entity within Welsh Government.
• Free-up Welsh Language Division resources to undertake increased project development and new interventions based on research, data and language planning principles.	• Giving the responsibility for distributing grants to mentrau iaith to MIC would change its function (it is currently an umbrella body) and could lead to uncertainty for the mentrau.
• Provides clarity to national partners.	• MIC would require additional resource to administer the grants.

Option 2: Establish a new language planning agency within the Welsh Government

35. A more substantial change which has been advocated by some lobbyists would be to create a new entity within Welsh Government to provide a greater focus to language planning as a core element of our work to implement the strategy. Such an entity, which dependent on governance model could be an agency or another division within Government, would be in addition to a Welsh Language Division which would lead on Government business, funding and sponsorship, strategy and external relations.

Outline
(i) To operate within Government but at arms-length from the daily business of Government, but with a clear focus on implementing the Government's Welsh language strategy.
(ii) Branded entity with a clear access point (similar to Business Wales or Visit Wales?)

(iii) Staffed by professionals with language planning backgrounds who would be civil servants.

(iv) Provide authoritative, professional advice to Ministers and civil servants across Welsh Government.

(v) Innovative organisation which embraces co-production and co-operation, and which creates partnerships within Government and outside.

(vi) A focus on being a catalyst which influences and inspires others to take action in support of the Welsh language.

(vii) A focus on evidence, research, data and evaluation and with a clear focus on future trends.

(viii) Develop a long-term programme for the Welsh language based on an understanding of how speakers use language in the wider context of how they interact and relate to each other.

Pros and cons

36. As mentioned already, we have held discussions with Welsh Government officials in other departments who have experience of establishing and working in entities within Welsh Government such as Cadw and Creative Wales. Further discussions are planned with the Office of the Chief Medical Officer, Visit Wales and Business Wales to evaluate the pros and cons of different governance models.

37. Our understanding is that the Cadw model of an executive agency is unique given its size, range of functions and the fact that it generates its own income – and our initial view is that such a model would not necessarily be required for undertaking the type of language planning functions envisaged. We have been advised that the process of establishing an agency would also be a time- and resource-consuming process. It is also likely to require additional resource in terms of running costs.

38. Establishing an entity which is separate to the Welsh Language Division could create uncertainty both internally and externally regarding accountability, with two heads being answerable to Ministers.

39. That said, we envisage that establishing an agency which is separate to would be welcomed by external lobbyists and opposition parties who have been advocating a new focus to language planning.

Option 3: Establish a dedicated language planning unit within a renamed Welsh Language Division

40. A hybrid option would be to establish a dedicated language planning unit within Welsh Language Division. This would be headed by a professional language planner answerable

to the Deputy Director. Other branches in the renamed Division – Cymraeg 2050 Division(?) –would be restructured to provide Ministerial support, sponsor external bodies (Commissioner, Urdd, Eisteddfod, Coleg Cymraeg, National Centre for Learning Welsh, Mentrau Iaith Cymru), provide secretariat to Welsh Language Partnership Council and undertake other corporate functions. This would provide a distinct split in functions to allow the language planning unit to focus its attention on developing policies and initiatives.

Outline

41. Points (iii) to (viii) in Option 2 above would apply in this option.

42. In terms of policy responsibilities, the language planning unit could lead on:

- Developing new initiatives based on latest behavioural insights, including marketing and communications
- Technology Action Plan and Corpus policy
- Language transmission in families
- Use of Welsh by children and young people, including school language charter
- Use of Welsh by businesses (Cymraeg Byd Busnes)
- Area-based language planning: WESPs(?); land-use planning; economic development/Arfor; mentrau iaith; support for local authorities to implement language strategies.
- Develop language planning capacity and awareness of bilingualism
- Research, data and evaluation

43. This option would have some impact on the Commissioner's responsibilities. It would appear to officials that the Commissioner's current responsibilities with regard to promoting the use of Welsh by businesses delivered by its Hybu Team should transfer into Welsh Government to avoid duplication of effort, and to maximise the economies of scale that being a part of the Business Wales offer can bring. At the same time, we feel that there is an opportunity for the Commissioner to lead on work with the third sector to increase use of Welsh (a responsibility which is currently split between the Welsh in the Community Branch and the Commissioner's Hybu Team). If this option were to be pursued, this would need to be handled carefully.

Pros and cons

44. This option would provide a new and clear focus to language planning activities within the Welsh Language Division.

45. At the same time, locating the unit within the Welsh Language Division would provide clarity in terms of accountability, and allow for the creating of the unit within a relatively

short period of time.

46. External challenge in terms of the work of the unit would come from the Welsh Language Partnership Council – and provide the Council with an opportunity to engage on substantive proposals based on evidence and language planning expertise.

47. Those who are lobbying for a separate entity/agency might not see this option as fulfilling their ambition. However, those concerns might well be assuaged with the delivery of a credible and well-communicated programme of work. Locating marketing, communications, research, data and evaluation within the unit alongside policy officers with experience in language planning would be key in this regard.

48. Further work is required to cost this option, but it is clear to us that this would be a more affordable option than option 2.