



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Language, Work and Bilingual Services

Report of the Working Group on
the Welsh Language and Local
Government

June 2016

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

Contents

Foreword.....	2
Introduction	3
Background.....	3
The Structure of the Report	6
Note.....	7
1. STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP	8
2. LOCAL LEADERSHIP	10
3. A BILINGUAL WORKFORCE.....	13
4. TRAINING	16
5. TECHNOLOGY	20
6. CHANGING BEHAVIOUR.....	23
7. THE ECONOMY	26
Background.....	26
What is a linguistic-economic strategy?	29
An economic strategy for the Welsh-speaking areas	31
The economic influence of Local Government	32
Local Government reform.....	34
8. TABLE OF RECOMMENDATIONS	36
APPENDIX A.....	39
1. Terms of Reference.....	39
2. Membership.....	39
3. Evidence	40

Foreword

The Labour Party manifesto sets a target of 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050. Achieving this would be a considerable feat. The education system would be the main means of creating Welsh speakers but bilingual public services could contribute substantially to the process. Language training in the workplace would create new Welsh speakers and would give confidence to those uncertain of their ability in Welsh to use the language from day-to-day. It would also give Welsh speakers a chance to use the language in the workplace and in using public services.

Considerable emphasis is placed on creating opportunities to use the language socially but instances of this are often vague and difficult to define, not to mention provide. Public services are an integral part of the daily lives of every citizen in Wales. Tens of thousands work in the sector and the rest of us use them constantly. This is the obvious context to allow Welsh speakers, both first language speakers and learners, to use the language daily.

If we are serious about creating a bilingual Wales with Welsh and English existing with equal status and with citizens able to use their language of choice, our public services must be provided bilingually. This will not happen without political commitment by the Welsh Government, Local Authorities and the Welsh Local Government Association. The pattern will vary in terms of the percentage of Welsh speakers, but if the numbers are to increase as expected, there will be a need for a higher level of service and administration in Welsh in every Authority.

Gwynedd is the only county in which both Welsh and English are accorded equal status in terms of the workplace and public provision. Ambition and determination exist in other Authorities to achieve the same aim but this will not happen without encouragement and support from the Welsh Government.

I would like to thank members of the Working Group for giving their time and expertise, to those who presented evidence in writing and orally and particularly to the secretariat for sustaining us during our discussions and steering us to the end of our journey.

We believe that our recommendations are challenging but practical and we believe that they are consistent with the Government's target of creating a bilingual Wales with a million Welsh speakers

Rhodri Glyn Thomas

Introduction

Background

The Minister for Public Services commissioned a report from this Working Group in the final months of the fourth Assembly, to make recommendations to the new Welsh Government at the start of the fifth Assembly.

Because of time constraints, the Working Group did not have time to commission original research. However, there is no lack of reports and evaluations, policy papers and strategies concerning the Welsh language, and many recommendations for action to be taken.

Although there are gaps in our understanding and lack of innovative research, it became evident at a very early stage that the key issues belong to a different dimension, namely vision, leadership and commitment by institutions of the Welsh establishment to turn the concept of a bilingual Wales into reality in our families and communities, in our public services and in our civic life. The demographic of the language in 50 years will be substantially different from the status quo. If we embrace this new future, we can embrace a future for the language also. What is needed now is ambition and determination.

The foundations of the progress seen in recent years, have mainly been laid by central government policies and legislation. These have been enormously influenced by individuals and organisations who have advocated and acted for the Welsh language, and often implemented by Local Government. These foundations include legislation to give status to the language and rights to individuals, to secure services in Welsh and to place duties on organisations which serve the public to provide opportunities for children and adults to learn and receive Welsh-medium education, to sustain culture, the arts and broadcasting through the medium of Welsh, and support organisations, groups and community activity.

We have been asked to look specifically at the Welsh language in its traditional heartlands in west and north Wales, through the lens of Local Government. Local Government has been central to the implementation of national policies and, particularly, to the provision of the Welsh-language education system. We owe an enormous debt to Local Government. Local Authorities in west Wales – the Isle of Anglesey, Gwynedd, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire – have been proactive in their support for the language, but good practice is evident in all parts of Wales. Frequently, practicality rather than goodwill is the obstacle, and help and support is needed to instigate and sustain change, particularly in areas where the Welsh language is less resilient.

It is often said that changing attitudes and behaviour is painstaking work, but the evidence suggests that best practice stems not from prolonged evolution, but from purposeful

decisions. Gwynedd councillors determined to give the language priority in the early 90s, and challenged the culture of 50 years of government in north Wales. Changes in culture and practice within North Wales Police stem from the decisions of the Chief Constable Richard Brunstrom, influenced by Gwynedd councillors on the Police Authority. Positive leadership is transformative.

However, not all Local Authorities have been keen to support and take action on these policies. We have seen many battles to increase places in Welsh-language education and to open new schools, for instance. Too frequently, leadership has been reluctant and actions limited to complying with the letter of the law.

The policy and legislative framework was strengthened substantially by the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Standards which came into force for the Welsh Government and Local Government this year.¹ There has been criticism of the number and the practicality of the Standards imposed on Local Government, but it is too early at this point to measure the impact of the Standards on the use of Welsh in various areas. Although the Working Group is optimistic that the effect of the Measure will be positive in the long term, we heard suggestions that it could lead to token compliance, rather than transforming culture and creating organisations which operate naturally in two languages. If this is a common experience, then we will need to look afresh at the legislation so that it does not lead to perverse consequences.

The response from some Authorities, and the number of appeals, provide continuing evidence perhaps that not all areas of Local Government accept their responsibilities towards the language in a positive and proactive way. This would be disappointing. Many of the counties in which the Welsh language is a minority today are areas which were predominantly Welsh-speaking when Local Government was established in its present form at the end of the 19th century. Local Government, as well as national government, must acknowledge that it was under their tenure that the linguistic decline occurred during the greater part of the 20th century. At that time, they made few efforts to protect this heritage until the Welsh Language Act 1993 was passed less than twenty five years ago. We can blame this on the attitudes of the period which accorded the English language status as the natural language of government, the language of authority. We can hope we are more enlightened today.

Today, there is a new governmental landscape in Wales following devolution. The Assembly is a fully-fledged legislative body, and there is a general desire for a more ambitious role for Local Government. This is an opportunity therefore to come to terms with the past, for the Welsh Government to legislate wisely and for Local Government to embrace the governmental and heritage responsibilities which give depth of meaning to the phrase *Local*

¹ The term 'Standards' is used in this report to mean any standards made by regulations under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

Government. Creating a public administration in two languages will require a cultural transformation within organisations which fostered a commitment for a century and more to the English language as the sole language of administration.

This year the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 also came into force and set a clear framework for Authorities seeking a national statutory context in which to support their efforts for the language. The national aims and the ways of working make this unambiguous, and permit and encourage Local Authorities to develop proactive policies towards the language. It is hoped that Local Government, with its democratic authority, will take advantage of this statutory framework and will demonstrate leadership in Public Services Boards to ensure that all public services work together energetically to accord the Welsh language a prominent place in their local well-being plans.

The challenges are enormous, but the Working Group is highly supportive of the role of Local Government within the state and argues that this role should be substantially enhanced. They have been various policy papers on Local Government reform since the publication of the Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery's report in January 2014. Leaving aside the complex problem of the structure of Local Government, namely the map, it appears that there is general agreement that Local Government is in need of reform and that it needs a new freedom to be active and to encourage an activist culture within communities. This freedom, coupled with leadership and the responsibilities mentioned above, are essential to the success of the aim of creating a bilingual nation. We note especially that Local Government cannot operate effectively in the field of local economic development in order to secure resilient Welsh communities without more powers to do so and greater commitment from Welsh Government to work in partnership with Local Government. The national focus on the economic rewards in south Wales is understandable, but this should not be at the expense of purposeful economic planning in the rest of the country.

As mentioned above, we have been asked to look specifically at the Welsh language and Local Government in those areas in which the Welsh language continues to be a language of substance. We decided to interpret this to mean the main councils in the counties of Anglesey, Gwynedd, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire, acknowledging that the language is still strong in parts of other counties, such as north Pembrokeshire and areas of Conwy, Denbighshire, Powys and others. At the same time Welsh-language communities exist in all parts of Wales, without necessarily living in the same street or town, and new Welsh communities are springing up under our feet in places such as Cardiff. Therefore, our recommendations are intended for Local Government in its entirety, not just the four counties identified. We believe also that a number of the recommendations are relevant to public services generally, and that the Welsh Ministers should consider this in preparing their response.

The Structure of the Report

The objectives of the Working Group in the remit we have been given are mercifully simple, namely to advise the Welsh Ministers on the following:

- the use of the Welsh language in Local Government administration;
- the role of Local Government as the facilitator of economic development to support the Welsh language; and
- to make recommendations on the above in the context of Local Government reform and the duties placed on Local Authorities, by the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015

The report is divided into seven sections. The first six sections relate to the aim of increasing the use of Welsh as the language of work and the language of administration in Local Government. The first three sections, Strategic Leadership, Local Leadership and a Bilingual Workforce encompass the main challenging recommendations of the Working Group, namely the need for leadership, vision and commitment by all levels of government in Wales. According to our analysis, legislation and Standards are not sufficient without incorporating responsibilities towards a bilingual Wales in the principles which are fundamental to our public services. This means going beyond the current statutory framework. A country which give status to two languages should demand personal and visible commitment from those employed to lead governmental bodies in Wales, and impose fundamental linguistic requirements on everyone employed by those services. Welsh-medium education and teaching Welsh is supported with significant resources, without our asking for language skills as general practice when recruiting to the public service, despite there being a lack of Welsh language skills in all areas of the workforce. This is an unnecessary waste.

The next sections, Training, Technology and Changing Behaviours, deal with practical issues if we are serious about moving towards bilingual public institutions. Huge changes are afoot in the sphere of Welsh for adults and these are most welcome. However, a very different and far more ambitious mind-set will be required if the Welsh for adults sector is to respond to the demand for a workplace which will, in time, be bilingual. We must also support those who lead bilingual services with postgraduate training of the highest standard. In terms of technology, we were surprised how little use is made in Local Government of machine translation, following pioneering work by the Assembly. It is a new, fast-developing area of digital capability, and the opportunities for Local Authority efficiencies are very attractive. Leadership is needed in this field as well as resources to ensure further progress. Changing Behaviours, which encompasses behavioural psychology and 'nudge', is also in its infancy and an area where we have much to learn. It can fill a gap where the ordinary apparatus of government – taxes, legislation, policy – are less successful.

Finally, we turn to the economy and the role of Local Government in supporting resilient and prosperous Welsh language communities. Two recent Ministerial reports have discussed in detail the language and the economy. Hence, a similar discussion is not required here. Rather, we support the recommendation of the previous Working Group that a regional linguistic-economic strategy should be developed with a focus on the towns of Bangor, Aberystwyth, Carmarthen and Llanelli. At the heart of the matter lies the Welsh Government's commitment to economic planning outside the city regions of South Wales and to sharing the responsibility for planning economic development with Local Government. Second, we consider the ways in which Local Government influences economic prosperity, jobs and the local economy and how these functions could be used to support linguistic prosperity. We believe that this is the basis for integrated planning by Local Authorities within the framework of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Finally, we pay some attention to the implications of this for Local Government reform, without venturing into this policy area in any depth.

Note

The report is unanimous with one exception. Chris Burns is unable to support Recommendations 2(a) and 3. He is of the opinion that these recommendations could not be implemented in some or many areas of Local Government in Wales.

1. STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

Following the abolition of the Welsh Language Board, a number of Local Authorities and others have expressed concern that there is a leadership gap in terms of national linguistic strategy, national campaigns and defects in the practical support given to them in implementing the Standards, raising ambition and sharing good practice. This is happening at a time when there is a real need for leadership and support with statutory duties coming into force. The Working Group believes that this reflects wider weaknesses in the strategic framework, statute and infrastructure for the Welsh language.

Some of these responsibilities fall within the remit of the Welsh Language Commissioner. The main aim of the Commissioner in carrying out her duties is to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language (s3(1) Measure 2011), including (s4(2)):

- a) promoting the provision of opportunities to use the Welsh language;
- b) encouraging best practice in relation to the use of Welsh by persons who deal with, or provide services to, other persons;
- c) keeping under review the adequacy and effectiveness of the law relating to the Welsh language;
- d) producing and publishing reports;
- e) carrying out, or commissioning others to carry out, research;
- f) carrying out, or commissioning others to carry out, educational activities; (g) giving assistance (including financial assistance) to any person;
- g) making recommendations in writing to the Welsh Ministers;
- h) making representations to any person;
- i) giving advice to any person.

Nevertheless, and maybe in view of her regulatory role and the detailed work involved in setting the Standards for a great number of organisations, it is not surprising that there is a general perception that promotional and facilitating work has abated somewhat. These observations are not to be construed as criticism of the Commissioner or of the considerable work she has already carried out in setting and implementing the Standards for so many public bodies.

What is, therefore – or what should be – the role and functions of the Welsh Government ? Some of the witnesses asked us to consider whether a separate body should be established to undertake various functions such as language planning and language promotion. Their argument was that an independent body could be more objective and analytical, and could operate as a one-stop shop for Local Authorities. The opinion of the Working Group and of the majority of witnesses, however, was that the Welsh Government is the natural body to undertake these leadership functions, with the power to create policy and to propose legislation under the auspices of the Welsh Ministers, scrutinised by the National Assembly's committees.

We believe that a language planning powerhouse is required within the Welsh Government with the skills and expertise to provide clear leadership. The perception is that the current department has developed expertise in community language planning, but that there is now a need to focus more on supporting public bodies and services. The remit of the powerhouse should include:

- to develop and sustain a national Welsh language strategy;
- to prepare legislation;
- strategic language planning, with a focus on the workplace;
- promoting and facilitating the language; and
- providing leadership in areas supportive to Local Government and other public bodies such as training, digital developments and original research.

In terms of a national strategy and a plan for its implementation, this is the responsibility of the Welsh Ministers under section 78 of the Welsh Language Act 2006. The current strategy is *A living language: a language for living*, together with the policy statement, *Moving forward*, published in 2014, partly in response to the findings of the 2011 Census and the Cynhadledd Fawr. *Moving forward* acknowledges that strategic planning needs to be strengthened for the Welsh language and the Working Group supports this objective. But clear political vision is also required for the language as a basis for clear and efficient planning, which builds on the foundations on which status for the language status, the rights of individuals and the Standards are based. By 'vision', we mean an ambitious political statement, such as 'a million Welsh speakers', 'every child to receive Welsh-medium education', 'completely bilingual public bodies'. A statement of vision by the Welsh Government and a strategy for implementation would oblige and enable Local Government in turn to raise ambition, if this vision is supported by a practical actions.

Although it is early days, we believe that the 2011 Measure requires revision and simplification. The Measure was made before the Assembly received primary legislative powers following the referendum in March 2011, and this is reflected in the way the legislation is drafted. We fear that what we have heard about the complexity of the Standards and the focus on process is likely to lead to perverse consequences. In addition, and for the reasons outlined above, we believe that we need to look again at the definition of the role of the Commissioner in the Measure, to ensure that there is neither conflict nor overlap between her regulatory functions and her promotional and facilitating functions, and the duties and functions of the Welsh Government. Clarity concerning this leadership framework is essential. We believe that there is early opportunity for the Welsh Government to propose new legislation in the Assembly as part of its programme of legislation in the Fifth Assembly.

RECOMMENDATION 1

- a) **The Welsh Government should articulate an ambitious vision and publish a new strategy for the Welsh language as a matter of urgency.**

A long-term vision (20 years) and an action plan which corresponds to an electoral cycle (five years) are required. Within this, the leadership framework for the Welsh language requires revision and reform with a clear description of the role of the various elements and the relationship between them, i.e. the role of the Welsh Government and the statutory framework, which includes the Welsh Language Commissioner, the Welsh Language Partnership Council and the infrastructure of sponsored bodies, public services, the third sector and private companies. The strategy should clearly state what is expected of Local Government.

- b) **The Welsh Government, on the basis of its long-term strategy for the Welsh language, should revise and introduce amendments to the 2011 Measure and introduce a Welsh Language Bill in the Assembly during the term of the Fifth Assembly (2016-2021).**

The Bill should provide statutorily for the Government's vision. A number of the recommendations in this report would require legislative provision to implement.

- c) **The Welsh Government should support these measures with a visible campaign to raise awareness of the position and importance of the Welsh language in our public life.**

2. LOCAL LEADERSHIP

Legislation is essential but is not sufficient. Acts have incorporated status for the language and have ensured the rights of the individual in Wales. The Standards place statutory obligations on Local Authorities to respond and plan corporately to that status and those rights. These are the constitutional and administrative foundations for a bilingual nation. The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 sets out a wider framework for consideration of the Welsh language as part of the well-being of individuals and communities. It is a framework that Local Authorities can use to encourage a more challenging ambition in terms of the Welsh language and Welsh-speaking communities. But this will not happen without personal leadership that is strong and visible.

The Working Group is aware of the difference visible leadership can make to the linguistic culture of the public bodies, for example, in the context of the councils of Gwynedd,

Anglesey, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire, and in the case of others, such as the Care Council for Wales, the Snowdonia National Park Authority, North Wales Police, and the National Assembly for Wales. We have heard of the importance of *behaviour* as a means of conveying visible leadership in modern organisations. The Working Group believes that the majority of leaders and administrators of public services, including large swathes of Local Government and the civil service, do not yet acknowledge the *personal* responsibilities and challenges that spring from governing and administration in a bilingual country. The obligations include linguistic skills as a way of embodying values and principles through behaviours, a gift for fostering an inclusive bilingual culture and the technical challenge of administering and providing services in two languages.

We could expect to see a response to the present statutory framework in the way in which we prepare our leaders, train our chief officials, and in the language and nature of the discussion about the relationship between national leaders and the Welsh population. The Well-being of Future Generations Act sets out a useful background, but this is not sufficient in isolation. It is disappointing, for example, that the statement of values and principles of One Public Service by Academi Wales does not acknowledge the unique challenges facing leaders in Wales or their unique responsibilities towards the language. If a prospective candidate from over the border were to apply for the job of chief executive or director of education in a Local Authority in Wales, for example, and refer to those values and principles, she would scarcely realise the responsibilities involved in leading in a bilingual country.

Leading public services in Wales involves more than securing effectiveness and efficiency. It involves demonstrating leadership through behaviour for a bilingual country and this is a fundamental difference between leading a Local Authority in Wales and an equivalent Authority in England. Unless this is embraced energetically by the leaders of Welsh Local Authorities, and by those who prepare the leaders of the future, they will fail in the essentials of the job.

In order to demonstrate the appropriate behaviours, the Working Group believes that Local Authority leaders (by which we mean the senior paid officials) cannot discharge their responsibilities unless they have a level of proficiency in Welsh sufficient to be able to communicate directly in the language of choice of those they serve, if nothing else out of simple courtesy and respect towards those who pay their taxes. There is nothing unusual about the Welsh language. Language skills, as we have learnt from North Wales Police, are skills which every individual can acquire through appropriate training. We expect leaders to be highly skilled and reward them accordingly, and a level of linguistic proficiency in our country's two official languages should be part of this. This expectation should encompass as a minimum those who have the chief responsibility for our Local Authorities and for the Authority's workforce, and those responsible for services for children and young people, older people and vulnerable people.

RECOMMENDATION 2

a) **The Welsh Government should legislate to ensure that a statutory level of proficiency in Welsh is essential for the following posts in Local Government in Wales:**

- ***Head of employed service and chief executive***: this person is responsible for the staff and workforce of the Local Authority. Usually, the chief executive fulfils both functions.
- ***Corporate director with responsibility for human resources***, including workforce planning, recruitment and training.
- ***Director of education***: this person is responsible for the education and well-being of our children and young people
- ***Director of social services***: this person is responsible for the well-being of vulnerable people.

All of the above posts should achieve level 1 in language proficiency within the probation period.² We are of the view, following the example of North Wales Police, the holders of these specific posts should be under a statutory duty to improve their linguistic skills over time, for example, to reach level 3 by the end of three years in the post, and level 4 within 7 years. Of course, some Authorities will wish to set requirements for a higher level of language proficiency when recruiting. The linguistic requirements must be a part of the contract of employment of these designated posts.

This recommendation is an extension of the basic expectations we believe should apply to all new members of staff (see Recommendation 4).

b) **If they do not already possess the required linguistic skills, the legislation should place statutory duties on Local Authorities to provide suitable training and to set aside time for the specified individuals to enable them to acquire the essential language skills.**

c) **The Welsh Government should direct Academi Wales (and any other national institution which provides leadership training for the public sector in Wales) in order to ensure that the Welsh language is given prominence in the principles of One Public Service and that Academi Wales should provide training for leaders of the public services on the challenges and responsibilities facing leaders in a bilingual country.**

² There are several ways of defining levels of language proficiency. In this context, 'level 1' is meant to signify basic oral skills and 'level 4' higher level proficiency in speaking, reading and writing the language. See the discussion in Section 4.

The relevant Assembly committee should assume responsibility for scrutinising the activities and progress of Academi Wales in this crucial field.

3. A BILINGUAL WORKFORCE

We heard much from contributors about the investment we have made as a nation in Welsh-medium education – Welsh medium education for those who want it, and a statutory duty for every child to be taught Welsh until year 11, that is, 15 or 16 years old. The Government’s commitment and that of the political parties to Welsh-medium education is to be welcomed as one of the most important foundations of a language strategy. By today, every young person in Wales *should* possess basic skills in Welsh. Anecdotally, this is not the case but the lack of inspection by Estyn gives us little hard evidence one way or the other.

However, to date, there has been little action to promote the demand for Welsh language skills by devising career paths which could make use of those skills in professional areas of public service. There is further work to be done to promote the demand for Welsh language services. In other words, policy in recent years has focused on increasing the number of Welsh speakers and the availability of services in Welsh, without increasing the demand for those skills and services. In economic terms, a better balance is required between supply-side policies and policies to increase demand.

And yet, much has been said about the shortage of candidates for Welsh-speaking posts and the costs which derive from having to train staff in Welsh, and the challenges the Standards create where there are insufficient numbers of Welsh speakers within a Local Authority workforce. We have heard of the shortage of Welsh speakers in specific professions, for example, social services. Yet, the Welsh Language Commissioner presented evidence that of 595 job adverts from nine Local Authorities checked, only 12 posts included ‘essential status’ language requirements (2%) and only 10 (1.7%) included ‘desirable status’ linguistic requirements.

Clearly, we need to ask: what is the point of educating generations of young people through the medium of Welsh, or to speak Welsh, unless use is made of those skills in public services which have statutory bilingual requirements?

Proactive planning is needed from the Welsh Government and Local Authorities to ensure that parents and pupils understand that there is a demand for Welsh language skills in the workplace in a variety of posts and professions, and that Welsh speakers have the opportunity to use their skills to their full potential in the workplace. The lack of progression between the different stages of education and the world of work means that those who have been educated through the medium of Welsh or who have learnt Welsh in school, often lose their skills. The Welsh Government and Local Authorities have a responsibility to ensure that this does not occur, in the interests of the personal development of individuals and in the interest of the Welsh economy.

This would assist in normalising the use of Welsh and would ensure that Welsh language skills were valued by employers because of the demand for them. The issue is particularly relevant to Local Authorities which are not only responsible for providing Welsh language education, but are also prominent local employers. There is an opportunity to take greater advantage of the connection between the investment in Welsh language education, the duties under the 2011 Measure and the requirements of the workforce.

Gwynedd County Council has led the way in this respect by making the Welsh language the council's official language of administration. This creates a demand for Welsh language skills which is certain to have a positive effect on the sustainability of Welsh in local communities and create professional career pathways which encompass linguistic skills. The Working Group welcomes the action taken by other councils, particularly the Isle of Anglesey, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire, to move in the same direction. Local Government restructuring should not weaken the ability of Authorities who wish to administer business through the medium of Welsh or bilingually to do so.

North Wales Police has demonstrated clearly that linguistic expectations can be placed on staff and they can be induced to improve their language skills in order to fulfil the aims of the workplace, bearing in mind that North Wales Police operates both in areas in which Welsh is the main language and areas where it is little used. The basis of the policy is the North Wales Police leadership agenda which demands that, at the very least, the public should expect every police officer to understand and pronounce personal names and place names in Welsh, and demonstrate basic courtesy in Welsh. The feasibility of the policy depends on treating language skills like any other skills: they are skills which individuals can acquire through training, and are measurable.

Consequently, job applicants to North Wales Police must be able to demonstrate basic skills in Welsh before their appointment and must commit to reaching a more advanced level during the probation period as part of the work contract. The policy notes that applicants for promotion must be able to demonstrate courtesy in Welsh (level 2 of the Police Framework) in order to be considered, if they don't already speak Welsh. They must also make a commitment to move to level 3 by the end of the probation period after promotion.

³

Language training is provided in the workplace to support staff in meeting these requirements and to ensure that there is no risk of discrimination. North Wales Police notes that the most efficient way of increasing language capacity is by recruiting good bilingual skills from the outset. The role of Welsh language training in the workplace is to help to fill gaps in language skills in the workforce for the benefit of the service.

³ North Wales Police has an ability framework in Welsh which includes levels 0 – 5 for measures of proficiency in the language. See further discussion in Section 4

It appears to the Working Group that the policies of North Wales Police respect the ethos of a bilingual country and show the way forward for all public services in Wales. Recently, the county councils of Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion have adopted similar policies to ensure that every new post requires at least a basic level of Welsh language skills, offering suitable training if the successful candidate does not already possess the appropriate level of skills.

Government in Wales should respond positively and energetically to the example of North Wales Police and the councils of Gwynedd, Isle of Anglesey, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire by adopting the same policies through national statute for the Welsh Government and Local Government. The Working Group believes that, as part of the vision for the Welsh language, there should be a stated national ambition to develop a bilingual workforce in public services within a decade, and to put to work the skills in which we invest so much through the education system.

The recommendations in this section fall into two parts. The first relates to a bilingual workforce policy and the second sets out the workforce planning which would be required in order to respond to these requirements. It would not be possible to achieve the aim of a bilingual workforce without fundamental changes in the way in which Welsh language training is provided and on general agreement about the definitions of the different levels of proficiency. This is discussed in Section 4. Although the focus in this report is on Local Government, we believe that the recommendations are relevant to Welsh Government and to the Welsh public service as a whole.

RECOMMENDATION 3

A bilingual workforce

Welsh language skills should be essential for all new posts in every Local Authority in Wales.

Practically, for most posts this would mean basic oral language skills (level 1) along the lines of North Wales Police. The basic requirements for new appointments should rise to level 2 within 10 years. In other words, by 2026 no new post in a Local Authority in Wales should have a language requirement of less than level 2. Local Authorities should have the freedom to set a higher level as their basic level of proficiency for their Authority.

Consideration should be given to including new teachers within this recommendation, so that awareness of Welsh and basic courtesy skills in the language are essential for every new teacher who works within the education system in Wales.

The above should not be construed as meaning that the number of posts requiring level 4 and 5 in Welsh ability can be lowered. It is necessary to ensure that sufficient staff members in organisations have Welsh skills at levels 4 and 5 in a number of work areas and posts. In order to ensure effective bilingual administration, organisations must have a critical mass of staff who can administer through the medium of Welsh. For a Local Authority which administers *primarily* through the medium of Welsh, a substantial number of posts will need to be at levels 4 and 5.

Appropriate training would be required to support staff in acquiring relevant skills, together with action by the Local Authority to support, promote and boost bilingualism in the workplace (see Recommendation 4).

The Welsh Government should introduce legislation which incorporates the aim of a bilingual public service workforce, either through provision in a new Welsh Language Act or by incorporating these requirements in new Standards under the 2011 Measure.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Workforce Planning

Local Authorities, including in their functions as Local Education Authorities, should be under a statutory duty to undertake workforce planning in terms of linguistic skills, and where required, to provide suitable training to meet those needs.

‘Workforce planning’ involves matters such as anticipating the demand for and the supply of particular skills, planning the recruitment and retention of staff, skills audit and analysis of the gaps, talent management, job planning, career planning etc. This would include determining the level of proficiency in Welsh which is required for each post. In reviewing the 2011 Measure, consideration should be given to the extent to which the present Standards implement workforce planning requirements effectively.

4. TRAINING

Achieving the aim of a bilingual workforce is impossible unless Welsh language training for adults, and particularly Welsh language training in the workplace is transformed. The report *Raising our Sights: Review of Welsh for Adults* (2013) made a number of important recommendations concerning the provision, noting, amongst other issues, the gaps in workplace provision. To date, the greatest focus has been on the requirements of learners at home and in the community, namely parents and families, and individuals who wish to

learn Welsh. The 2011 Measure has changed the context profoundly by placing statutory duties on public bodies.

Having heard the evidence, the Working Group is of the opinion that the priority for Welsh for adults is Welsh in the workplace, but it must be explicit that the purpose of the training is to help public services fulfil their statutory duties. The provision must respond to the requirements of public bodies and be cost-effective. The results must be swift and measurable. The Welsh Government should not support workplace provision that does not meet these requirements.

As a result of *Raising our Sights*, the National Centre for Learning Welsh (the Entity) was established by the Welsh Government in 2015, with grant funding for a period of seven years. The Centre's purpose is to:

- set a national strategic framework for the Welsh for Adults sector;
- offer guidance to Welsh for Adults providers;
- raise the standards of teaching and learning of Welsh for Adults; and
- develop an entertaining, appropriate and high quality national curriculum and produce resources appropriate for all kinds of learners.

The Working Group enthusiastically supports the role of the Centre. The Centre has decreased the number of providers from 25 to 10, with Welsh in the workplace part of their remit. These providers operate programmes of work agreed with the Centre and grant funded. There is also a demand for commercial providers from whom public bodies can purchase services to fill gaps and respond to requirements outside the Centre's programmes. The framework for the commercial provision should operate under the Centre's strategy, but should not limit innovation. Public bodies have limited resources to fund training, therefore it is essential to provide certainty that this provision is of a high standard and operates within a national strategy.

The Working Group heard evidence on several occasions of workplace training which was not suitable for the development of essential skills or sensitive to the context and requirements of business. Employees who deal with the public directly need one set of oral skills, while a substantially different language register is required for managers who deal with documents which use business language. We need one sort of provision for those new to learning Welsh, and different provision for fluent but reticent speakers or those who learned at school as a second language, but who require specialist vocabulary and language refinement skills. The latter groups are very important in terms of developing bilingual administration and will need less intensive training than those who are learning Welsh.

Crucially, Welsh language training provision for the workplace must be suitable for the needs of the business, that is, to help public bodies to meet their statutory duties and to

implement local language policies. The business is the customer, not the individual who is receiving the training. The format of training should be appropriate for the working practices of the business. Public bodies cannot free up staff from their roles for long periods and more could be made of digital resources and shared opportunities across the public sector. Local Government needs practical, purposeful and cost-effective solutions.

We can expect organisations to demand more evidence about the effectiveness of training. Evidence will be needed to show that training leads to measurable results, that staff members can undertake more duties following training, and that human resources departments can demonstrate value for money to the business. The Centre will be expected to demonstrate that the new strategy leads to measurable change in behaviour, culture and the use of Welsh within and by public bodies.

The need for change is enormous. We are aware of the Centre's resource limitations, but we recommend that it takes urgent action to give clear and innovative direction to Welsh language training in the workplace and assists providers to adapt quickly to the new requirements.

There was significant discussion on defining the levels of proficiency in Welsh. The majority of public bodies use some form of the standard ALTE framework (Association of Language Testers in Europe) which includes proficiency levels 0-5. However, the evidence strongly suggests that public bodies interpret the levels differently, so that it is not possible to say that level 2 in the ALTE framework in one body is the same as level 2 in another body. There may be good reasons for this but it frustrates the efforts of individuals to move freely between different parts of the public service and to measure levels of language proficiency in a consistent and credible way. We recommend the Welsh Government should show leadership in this field.

Connected with this is the question of recognising language skills through independent assessment. Employers appreciate the certainty given by recognised certificates. The Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol has developed a language skills certificate but at present it is aimed primarily at students on college courses. The Working Group believes there is an opportunity to develop the certificate to be a recognised proof of linguistic achievement for employers and to market it as part of the provision of Welsh language training in the workplace. This could be implemented quickly.

We should also consider Welsh-medium training. The emphasis of the Government's employment policy for the 16-24 age group is geared towards apprenticeships, vocational skills, experiential and job-based learning. There are plentiful opportunities to develop a bilingual public sector workforce by requiring certain apprentices to be trained through the medium of Welsh, and ensuring that the value of the investment in Welsh language education in the period after leaving school or college is not lost. Our further education colleges have a key role in this respect. Although the Working Group did not have time to

pursue this, we have heard evidence that the number of Welsh-medium learning activities in colleges has decreased enormously in the last three years. Clearly there is work to be done.

We heard on many occasions of elected members and officials in the Assembly and in councils throughout Wales who are fluent in Welsh for everyday purposes, but lack confidence in the type of language used for discussion in a democratic chamber or committee or in administration – the language of policy, strategy, planning and business cases, the language of influence and persuasion. As we heard from the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, this is reflected in the relatively limited provision for postgraduate courses through the medium of Welsh in designated professions, and the comparatively small number of senior managers and heads of Local Government (and within the Welsh Government, for that matter) who can speak Welsh or who are sufficiently confident to use Welsh. Reliable figures are hard to come by and there is scope for the Government to conduct further research in order to create a knowledge base about the Welsh-language proficiency of senior managers of public services in Wales. Appropriate workplace planning by Local Government would assist in filling the gaps in our understanding of the linguistic skills of the current and future leadership cohorts in Wales.

In order to develop a generation of senior managers confident in the use of Welsh, there is a need for Welsh-medium postgraduate courses in public administration and an increase in the numbers who pursue postgraduate training within specific professions in which the demand is increasing, for example social services. This will not be easy. The Working Group is aware of only one general postgraduate course (MPA) in recent years which has been open to elected members and officials and funded by Local Government itself (Torfaen). Some Authorities, if not the majority, fund continuous professional development for some professions, chiefly social services. And of course, Academi Wales has a choice of courses and workshops, though it is unclear how many, if any, are offered in Welsh. But by and large, there are few resources devoted to the training of leaders and administrators of public services in Wales, and very few in which training is available through the medium of Welsh. This hinders the development of a group of leaders who are totally at ease operating in Welsh.

RECOMMENDATION 5

- a) **The National Centre for Learning Welsh should develop a national strategy for Welsh in the workplace by the end of 2016, to be introduced by providers from the beginning of September 2017.**

The strategy should respond to the needs of public services and help them meet the Standards. A consistent framework for assessing skills should be adopted

(see (c) below) and consideration given to independent accreditation, for example, through the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol's certificate.

- b) **Commercial suppliers of Welsh language training in the workplace intended for use by the public services should be contracted within the strategic framework set by the National Centre for Learning Welsh .**
- c) **The Welsh Government should adopt a single national standard Welsh language proficiency framework to be used by the whole of the public sector in Wales.**

The framework should be based on the ALTE framework with clear definitions of the meaning of the different levels of proficiency that are consistent, for example, between a Health Board and a Local Authority. This would ensure consistency across the various sectors and facilitate bilingual workforce planning.

RECOMMENDATION 6

The Welsh Government should work with the National Centre for Learning Welsh and Welsh Universities to ensure that the Welsh-medium Masters in Public Administration (MPA) courses are available to future Local Government leaders, and fund eight places every year for the next five years.

5. TECHNOLOGY

Digital technology and artificial intelligence are beginning to exert a far-reaching effect on the use of Welsh in bilingual regimes. The National Assembly for Wales has undertaken pioneering work during the last five years in two specific ways: by collaborating with Microsoft to develop Welsh language capacity within Microsoft Translator, alongside the use of translation memory, and by the development of bilingual working practices within the Assembly, which is a case study for other organisations. Whatever the success of these exciting developments to date, we can expect the capacity of machine translation in print and in speech to develop to an advanced level within the next decade.

It is worth noting that multilingual working within services to the public is commonplace in many countries. The Basque Country and Canada are not the only comparisons, but India and the majority of the Far East countries, for example, and also companies which operate internationally, including the most prominent such as Microsoft, Amazon and Dell and

thousands of medium and smaller enterprises. This is an area, therefore, where there is a wealth of experience and case studies.

Microsoft outlines six circumstances in which machine translation can be of benefit to business. Although Microsoft's main target is private businesses, the circumstances are equally relevant to the use of two languages in Local Authorities in Wales.

- Readiness and training
 - provision of content and training in many languages
- Customer assistance
 - integration of automatic translation in the workflow
- Localisation and personalisation of websites
 - by combining human and automatic translation.
- Internal communication
 - fostering communication amongst staff by enabling them to share multi-language information via email, instant messaging, etc.
- Community and social
 - using linguistic assistance to add value to social media (Twitter, Facebook etc.), user forums etc.
- Information about the business
 - Facilitate a comprehensive analysis of multi-language business information in order to improve business decisions.

We can expect constant improvements over time, as artificial intelligence software develops, but it is fair to say that the technology is not dependable enough at present to produce public documents without the intervention of a language expert, but the basics are already there. We need to ensure the security of information on web-based machine translation systems, and human intervention is always necessary to proofread and edit.

However, even with the current technological capacity, the widespread adoption of machine translation could have a substantial effect on the internal culture of public bodies if assumptions are changed. For example, at present, the author of an internal email must turn to English if one of the recipients is a non-Welsh speaker. But if it is anticipated that a person receiving the email will be able to use MS Translator, if necessary, there is no reason for the author not to write in Welsh only. In the majority of cases, this will be good enough for the reader to understand the message clearly. The technology gives Welsh speakers freedom to use the language as the language of work by moving some of the responsibility from the originator to the recipient. Similarly, it enables staff members receiving correspondence or forms from the public in Welsh to translate them into English in order to decide how to process them.

This is an important example of digital technology transforming the business rather than merely digitising existing processes. Within the corporate context, where there are few Welsh speakers and the Standards are starting to kick in, it can reduce the burden on Welsh-speaking individuals and reduce costs. Even for documents and text intended for the public, it can cut translator time and costs by half.

The technology raises important questions concerning the role of the translator in public bodies and the extent to which they will be required to fulfil the same function in future. We can anticipate the development of the role of the linguistic editor whose function may be encompassed within a wider role, possibly in communications or a corporate role, for example.

This can only happen, of course, if the technology is widely adopted and Local Authority policies embrace its use, encouraging employees to correspond and compose internal documents in their language of choice and, where necessary, prepare guidelines and training for staff on the use of MS translator and similar technologies. Taking this action would demonstrate corporate leadership and signal a cultural shift, without placing additional costly burdens on the authority.

The Welsh MS Translator service was launched at the beginning of 2014. The basic service is web-based and is integrated into MS Office business software. However, from what we have learnt, it is seldom used in the public sector outside the Assembly and a number of dispersed business units. The Working Group believes that an important opportunity is being lost to boost the Welsh language in the workplace and to support the provision of services through the medium of Welsh. The Assembly and Bangor University (Canolfan Bedwyr) have taken the lead in this field and the Working Group is most appreciative of their innovative contribution. However, wider leadership is now required to advise Local Authorities on the new technologies, secure economies of scale in procuring licences and software for the public sector, and to ensure use of these technologies as an integral part of Local Authorities' everyday business.

It is impossible, of course, to gauge the rate at which the technology will develop within the next five or ten years. MS translator already provides an oral translation service in the main languages, and we can expect this to be available in Welsh in time. Canolfan Bedwyr in Bangor has adapted voice recognition software in Welsh (Julius-Cy) and through the Welsh Communication Infrastructure project, is laying the foundations of 'Siri' in Welsh. We encourage the Welsh Government and the higher education sector, particularly, to continue to invest in developing and enhancing these technologies, on the basis of invest to save.

RECOMMENDATION 7

The Welsh Government should establish a Language Technology Board and a language technology fund to provide leadership in this area.

The Board should be established with specialist support within Welsh Government, including the expert support of the Chief Digital Officer. The Board should be responsible for encouraging the use of digital linguistic resources, steering the development of digital language resources, ensuring value for money for the public sector in procurement processes, and offering direction and advice in this area to Local Authorities and the Welsh Government.

6. CHANGING BEHAVIOUR

It is widely acknowledged that the behaviour of individuals and the decisions they make, whether consciously or subconsciously, are substantially responsible for the well-being of the population and for the success of government policies. Dealing with diversity in the population, safeguarding children, drink-driving, smoking, alcohol consumption, healthy eating, financial planning for old age, travel choices, recycling and reducing waste, how to react when someone has a heart attack – the list is long. In every area of public policy, individual decisions are often the main determinant of outcomes.

Governments and policymakers are now seeking to devise intervention which inform those decisions by affecting specific behaviours. This involves:

- punishing ‘bad’ behaviour e.g. fining drivers who use public transport lanes;
- rewarding ‘good’ behaviour e.g. ensuring that travel costs on public transport are far cheaper than driving and parking, frequent collection of recyclable waste;
- rationing e.g. reducing the frequency of landfill waste bin collections;
- education e.g. permitting drivers who have exceeded the speed limit to attend a ‘speed awareness’ course;
- steering e.g. provide an opportunity for the users of one service to register for another the same time;
- changing the default e.g. offering the flu vaccine to everyone over 60, changing the organ donation scheme.

The same sort of means are used to change the behaviour of organisations as well as individuals (e.g. fining Local Authorities for sending a high percentage of waste to landfill, etc.). Many tools can be used to implement these objectives: laws, taxes, charges, fines, pricing, institutional rules (schools, leisure centre, services), means tests etc. Legislation is frequently a first step and rules can be tightened over time. It can be backed up with information campaigns, or information campaigns held without legislation. Campaigns can be highly visible (television advertising) or more contextual (food labelling). In the context of Local Authorities as public bodies, the main mechanism of central government is to impose

statutory duties on them, or to require that a strategy or action plan is produced, or to introduce new behaviours and practices through grant schemes.

More recently, the public sector focus has shifted to small interventions which avoid the need for legislation or more costly interventions. The recent origins of this method can be seen in publications such as *The Tipping Point: How Little Things can make a Big Difference* (Gladwell, 2000) and *Nudge: Improving decisions about health, wealth and happiness* (Thaler and Sunstein, 2008), and in the work of the 'Behavioural Insights Team' (BIT). It is fair to say that the 'nudge' theory is not without its critics. What emerges from this work is that the behaviour of individuals can be influenced by making small changes in the individual's environment and the way in which choices are introduced. BIT, for example, quotes an example where changing the wording of letters from HMRC to people who have not paid their taxes increases the proportion who pay on time. There are many online case studies.

In the context of the Welsh language in Local Government, there are two possible focuses for the use of behavioural change methods. First, behavioural change methods can be used to increase the use of Welsh by Local Government staff in the workplace, and the policy statement *Moving forward* acknowledges the importance of this area. In some workplaces, for example, we have seen extensive use of a 'lanyard' bearing the quotation 'Cymraeg'. Second, they could be used to increase the public's uptake of Welsh language services.

In terms of the first point, research has commenced at Bangor University which spans the field of behavioural change and language planning. The research considers how to develop use of the Welsh language at work by a better understanding of what encourages or prevents staff from doing so. In the autumn, another PhD in the field of changing behaviour and the Welsh language will commence in Bangor. The focus will be on establishing why some individuals who can understand Welsh are reluctant to use the language. In the context of the discussion on developing the Welsh language skills of the workforce, understanding the viewpoint of 'reluctant speakers' is crucial. The intention of both these research projects is to develop an evidence base which will help to put interventions in place to increase the use of Welsh. At present, our understanding of the possibilities is limited.

In terms of increasing the use of Welsh language services, changing behaviour is important because the considerable investment made in education, setting the Standards and ensuring that public services are available in Welsh has yet to lead to a corresponding increase in demand for Welsh language services. Securing an increase in the use of services through the medium of Welsh should be a high priority for both the Welsh Government and Local Government. The history of BIT suggests that the 'nudge' theory has a role in informing the choices of individuals by reducing the obstacles and making it easier for them to choose Welsh language services.

Although some recent reports have looked at the use of Welsh language services,⁴ there has been little qualitative work in this field to understand the factors that condition language choices as people seek access to services and the kind of considerations which could affect those choices. It can be as simple as how a cashpoint machine or online service introduces a choice of language on the screen. These are frequently choices which are recorded and which will influence how services are provided to those individuals for years. The way in which choices are presented can conceal hidden assumptions about the preferences of the majority, or can make a person feel uncertain or a nuisance.

It can also lead to perverse consequences. For example, the Standards require Local Authorities (and other organisations) to ask clients and the public for their choice of language for correspondence etc. An individual may be perfectly happy to receive routine material from a Local Authority in Welsh (information about refuse collection days or courses in the local leisure centre), but prefer to turn to English if the matter is complex or important (council tax discount form). A dual choice – black -and-white, Welsh or English – fails to take into consideration the way people use services in the real world.

This highlights the need for public service providers to understand the factors which influence public choice generally, under particular circumstances and over time; the factors that are important when the choice is introduced, including the circumstances, e.g. in person or on a website; and the opportunities the user has to change his mind or make different decisions for different services or over a period of time. The Working Group believes that this is a particularly important field, particularly at a time when digital services are expanding rapidly. We need to increase the use of Welsh language services, but it is equally important to create excellent services whatever the individual's language of choice.

In addition to the work in Bangor University already referred to, work is being done in Cardiff University to shape language choices, that is, to understand exactly how offering a language choice could make Welsh speakers choose Welsh and what other factors might have an effect, as well as work on changing behaviour in the context of Welsh/English computer interfaces. Work is being done in Aberystwyth University on understanding the psychology associated with making language choices in situations of uncertainty.

In order to develop the capacity to draw up effective behavioural interventions in the context of the Welsh language – in terms of the use of language in the workplace and in terms of Welsh language services – further expertise needs to be developed in this area in order to obtain an evidence base for interventions. This will be of assistance, not only in

⁴For example, *Research Report: Local Authority Welsh Language Services*, Welsh Language Commissioner (2015); *Welsh National Survey, 2013-14*; *Language Use Survey*, Welsh Government, ONS, Welsh Language Commissioner (2015); *A new Measure; a new mind-set*, the Welsh Language Commissioner's assurance report for 2014-15

boosting the Welsh language as an area of work in itself, but also in understanding the effect of the whole range of Local Government areas of work on the Welsh language.

The Welsh Government and Local Government need to focus more on promoting and boosting the use of the Welsh language by staff and the public. A climate needs to be created in which both staff and the public feel more confident and secure in trying out their Welsh language skills to give and receive information.

RECOMMENDATION 8

- a) **Increasing the uptake of Welsh-medium services should be a specific aim in the Welsh Government's next strategy for the Welsh language.**
- b) **The Welsh Government should commission qualitative research to understand the factors and conditions which influence the choice of individuals a) in using Welsh at work and b) in choosing Welsh language services.**

This should include drawing together previous research and case studies as a practical guide for Local Authorities to adopt good practice.

- c) **On the basis of this research, the Welsh Government should fund effective behavioural change interventions to increase the uptake of Local Government services in Welsh, including digital services, and to promote bilingual administration.**

7. THE ECONOMY

Background

As part of its remit, the Minister for Public Services asked the Working Group to look at the role of Local Government in supporting the Welsh language through its economic development functions. A number of previous reports have looked at the Welsh language and economic development, either directly or as an intrinsic part of their remit. Recent relevant reports of specific interest to the Working Group are:

- *Increasing the number of communities where Welsh is the main language*, report of the Task and Finish Group on behalf of the Minister for Education and Skills, December 2013.
- *The Welsh Language and Economic Development*, report of the Welsh Language and Economic Development Task and Finish Group to the Minister for Economy, Science and Transport, January 2014

- *The Welsh Language in Carmarthenshire*, report by the Welsh Language Census Working Group for Carmarthenshire County Council, March 2014

In turn, these reports draw on wider research concerning the Welsh language and other minority languages in Europe and Canada specifically. They are evidence of the increase in interest in this area since the publication of the 2011 Census results. The above reports make over 100 recommendations between them. However, the Working Group is unclear to what extent the recommendations have been implemented (except in the case of the Carmarthenshire report), or what difference they have made so far.

In August 2014, the Welsh Government published *A living language; a language for living – Moving Forward*, a policy statement which updates the Government's strategy for the Welsh language, following the 2011 Census and the Cynhadledd Fawr. The statement outlines a three-year strategy for the Welsh language, drawn up around four main headings:

- The Welsh language and the economy
- Better strategic planning for the Welsh language
- Use of Welsh in the community
- Changing linguistic behaviour

To a large extent, these reports follow the same general methodology, namely offering an analysis and recommendations based on social-economic factors. That is, they offer a description of the current status of the language and Welsh-speaking communities, a description of industries and the employment opportunities which exist, the factors which affect both and the interdependence between them. The recommendations, therefore, touch on a very wide range of possible interventions in the field of education, language transmission and use, training, business assistance, regional economic strategies, local economic development strategies, the value of the Welsh language as a marketing tool, the role of public workforces as universities for the languages etc. The recommendations suggest actions by a number of different organisations, amongst them central and Local government, wider public services, community and voluntary groups, organisations with a special interest in the development of the language in various ways, and businesses. However, whilst the individual recommendations may be justifiable, it is unclear whether there is a broader 'theory of change' underpinning these analyses and recommendations. We return to this important point below.

In view of this coverage, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that it is futile to cover the same ground again in this report. This Working Group has neither the time, the expertise nor the resources to conduct fundamental, thorough and original research in the field of linguistic-economic development. Consequently, the Working Group decided to limit its discussions to the concept of linguistic-economic planning and the specific role of Local Authorities as a tier of government. We could have expanded on specific functions such as

education and planning, but other reports have already focused on these policy areas. However, the question of the influence of Local Government in its entirety, as democratic governmental institutions with a civic purpose to strengthen and increase local well-being has seldom, if ever, been asked in the context of linguistic-economic development.

One fundamental fact emerges from the evidence, however. There is an exodus of young people from Welsh-speaking communities and the population growth in urban areas at the expense of the more rural population offers little hope that this flow will be halted in future. This is not a specifically Welsh phenomenon – it reflects social and economic changes in England, on the continent of Europe and indeed, throughout the world. There is a decline in rural populations and an enormous growth in cities. Put simply, young Welsh speakers are leaving, those who remain become older, and the Welsh language is in decline in market towns and in rural Wales.

If this situation were to persist, it suggests that the majority of Welsh speakers in future will live in cities and larger towns within or on the outskirts of city regions. This does not necessarily mean that the language will decline in current Welsh-speaking areas, but there will be wider changes in the distribution and demographic of those who speak Welsh, and Local Government responsibilities towards the language will increase rapidly in areas where Local Authority leaders have not traditionally had to give it much thought. It will be difficult for Local Government to plan in a credible way if these trends, and their possible implications for policies and services, are not understood. We recommend the Welsh Government should pay attention to this particular area in its first likely future trends report under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

There is little evidence that young people are willing or able to return to Welsh-speaking communities after university, or following career development, nor that interventions designed to persuade them to return have been effective. Nevertheless, the evidence suggests that this problem cannot be solved unless there is a strong and viable economy in the areas of Welsh-speaking communities. It is also clear that good jobs in themselves are not sufficient. Rural schools are struggling to find good teachers. The health service is experiencing problems in finding doctors to take up vacant posts and this is also true of some of the health professions. Local Government is having problems in filling some senior manager posts and in the professions. However, there is some evidence, in the outdoor pursuit industries for example, that young people can be persuaded to stay locally where they can find good jobs and an attractive lifestyle. A wider and more forward-looking policy response is required from both local and central government: not only good jobs, but an attractive community and lifestyle. The Welsh Government and Local Government could develop far more sophisticated methods of 'tracking' Welsh speakers who live beyond the boundary of Wales and try to persuade them to return – particularly where there are new job opportunities (e.g. new developments) in the offing in an area. For example, it should be possible to track Welsh speakers who attend English universities through student data.

None of these reports has looked at the problem specifically through the lens of Local Government and its unique statutory responsibilities in shaping community development. This, therefore, is the focus of this brief report.

What is a linguistic-economic strategy?

The majority of areas which can be considered Welsh-speaking areas are rural. The general pattern is of market towns surrounded by small towns and villages with a more remote rural hinterland.⁵ Main services are located in market towns (e.g. general practitioners, general social services), with more specialist services such as general hospitals located in the county towns or outside the county. A variation on this pattern can be seen in east Carmarthenshire, in Llanelli and the Gwendraeth and Aman Valleys, where the nature of the economy and culture is more urban and industrial.

It is not easy to distinguish linguistic-economic considerations from more general rural economic considerations. In terms of creating a prosperous economy and jobs which encourage younger people to remain in their communities, it may not be possible to make a distinction. The same pressures that exist in Welsh-speaking communities in Wales exist also in traditional communities in the countryside and market towns of England, such as the Lake District or East Anglia, where there is an exodus of young people and an influx of middle-aged people with different cultural values.

For example, the Carmarthenshire report contains the following recommendations under the heading of Planning and Housing:

AIM: To ensure a full understanding and awareness of the effect of planning on the Welsh language (locally and nationally) by ensuring that effective mitigation measures are placed and actioned in partnership with local communities.

Recommendations for the County Council

28. That the County Council further develops its affordable housing policy by ensuring more availability within housing developments.

29. That the County Council takes further action to address the number of empty homes in the county in order to return them for local use.

30. That the County Council sets a higher threshold for affordable housing for developments on land owned by the County Council.

31. That County Council undertakes a marketing campaign to raise awareness about the Housing Choice Register.

⁵ It is worth noting that the main towns in these areas, with the exception of Llanelli, are small: Bangor (18,800), Aberystwyth (16,420 including Llanbadarn Fawr), Carmarthen (14,185) and Llanelli (49,591).

32. That the County Council works with the Welsh Government, the local Mentrau Iaith, estate agents and the County Council's 'tax register' system to develop a 'Welcome to Carmarthenshire' pack for new residents and develop a distribution program by working in conjunction with community groups and Town and Community Councils .

It can be argued that all these recommendations, with the exception of the last, relate to the rural economy in general without being specific to Carmarthenshire or Welsh-speaking areas. Strengthening the rural economy is a fundamental condition for a linguistic-economic strategy for these areas, but it is not sufficient. Economic growth can have a positive effect on the language: it can also have a detrimental effect. City region strategies as witnessed in England, and now emerging in south Wales, prioritise economic development above other aspects of 'place'. Emphasis is put on coordinating various parts of the region by improving connections (transport and communications) in order to remedy imbalances or maximise opportunities in the distribution of jobs, homes, skills and markets. Community and culture are treated as secondary issues, if at all, for consideration at a local planning level, for example. Consequently, at the Local Authority level, the community and linguistic impacts which stem from a city region economic strategy can only be only mitigated or maximised. Local socio-cultural objectives and regional economic objectives are poorly integrated.

But this is a model for cities and city regions with a high density of population in the main centre and a complex and varied economy. We note that Swansea city-region includes the rural areas of Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire, as well as those closer to the city itself in the Gower peninsula and the Nedd and Afan valleys. Similar rural areas are found not far from Cardiff and Newport. However, the 'city region' model depends on the existence of a large city and the economic impact on communities which fall under its influence.

A strategy for rural areas without a large city would, of necessity, pay more attention to matters such as economic hubs, growth towns, regeneration of market towns, the needs of micro-businesses, the 'rural pound', purchasing plans, public facilities, cultural experience, and so on. There is practical work to draw on, for example, the model of a Welsh language labour market developed by the Mentrau Iaith. There is practical experience to evaluate and learn from, such as the Welsh Government's office location strategy or relocating S4C headquarters to Carmarthen. It's not clear, however, how these individual elements should be brought together formally to create an effective strategic framework for linguistic-economic development.

We heard as a Working Group that we lack of clear understanding of the fundamentals and characteristics of a linguistic-economic strategy, where linguistic issues must be treated as

an integral aspect of the economic strategy. As stated by a report of a seminar in Aberystwyth University on *The Welsh language as a community and economic force*,⁶

Whilst appreciating that the task of considering language and economy is a significant one as the field is wide, it was argued there had been no success in analysing the field and interpreting clearly enough what's under considerations when talking about language and economy. At one pole, it could include everything to do with language and everything to do with the economy. At another pole, it could be confined to use of Welsh in the field of the economy. Greater efforts could have been made to be clearer about interpreting and conceptualising the field in a way which would make it easier for different officials in public sector and private bodies to understand the different aspects of the relationship and how to go about taking action for the good of the economy and the Welsh language.

Moving forward offers a description of the relationship between language and economy as follows: 'any future development must go hand in hand with language planning'. But is carrying out these processes 'hand in hand', rather than in a more integrated way, sufficient in order to plan interventions whose outcomes we can forecast and which we can test how effective they will be? On a strategic level, what is the 'theory of change' in a linguistic-economic strategy? Without a conceptual framework, it is difficult to expect Local Authorities or central government to develop and implement a linguistic-economic strategy as a basis for planning purposeful interventions and for steering other programs such as the Rural Development Programme and other European programmes. We therefore recommend the Welsh Government and our Universities should invest in fundamental research to develop a model which describes the main elements of a linguistic-economic strategy as a basis for developing public policy.

An economic strategy for the Welsh-speaking areas

The gaps in our understanding, however, should not hinder action now. The economic priorities of the Welsh Government over the last five years have focused strongly on city regions, for understandable economic reasons: half of the Welsh population lives within the city region of Cardiff, it is the area of greatest economic growth, the majority of infrastructure and capital projects are to be found there, and the city deal from the Westminster Government and the Welsh Government will bring in substantial sums. We fully understand these pragmatic considerations.

However, this is no reason not to develop and adopt economic strategies in other areas. In the context of the Welsh language, it is most disappointing that this obvious step has not already been implemented following the results of the 2011 Census. The Welsh Government

⁶ *Adroddiad briffio polisi*, Welsh Language and Public Policy Seminar Series, Institute of Welsh Politics, Aberystwyth University, Spring 2014

has been reluctant to consider an economic strategy for rural areas, not to mention a linguistic-economic strategy, or to collaborate with Local Government as an equal partner. Since it is the Welsh Government that makes the key decisions in terms of capital and infrastructure investments, leadership from the Government is necessary, but also necessary is more prominent ambitious leadership from Local Government, which has its roots and authority in the community.

Although the Working Group has reservations concerning the appropriateness of transferring the city-region model to Welsh-speaking areas, for the reasons outlined above, we are in full agreement with the finding and recommendation of the Task and Finish Group on communities that economic and regional strategies are required in west and north-west Wales, with a particular focus on the university towns of Bangor, Aberystwyth and Carmarthen. We recommend the new Welsh Government should act on this recommendation as a matter of urgency and in full partnership with Local Government.

The Working Group is of the opinion that Llanelli should be added to this trio because of its importance as an industrial town on the outskirts of the core of the city region of Swansea, and in order to ensure that any city-region strategy based on Swansea Bay includes the prosperity of the Welsh language as a priority in its planning from the outset.

We note that Swansea Bay City Region Board is not subject to the Welsh Language Standards. If a joint committee (or, subject to legislation, a combined authority) were formed of Local Authorities to implement any city deal, the Welsh Language Standards would apply to it. However, it is not clear whether the Standards as an accountability mechanism are sufficient to secure that any plans would integrate linguistic ambition with economic ambition. We therefore recommend that the Welsh Government and the Welsh Language Commissioner should monitor developments in this area and that the Future Generations Commissioner should pay particular attention to this in her scheme of work and to report on policy and good linguistic-economic practice, including in the context of city-regions, in her first Future Generations Report.

The economic influence of Local Government

One of the few specific studies of Local Government and economic development is *The Levers of Local Economic Development* (Baars, S., Local Government Knowledge Navigator, May 2014). This report draws on a wide range of academic research. One of its main conclusions is that Local Authority economic strategy in general should focus on internal ('endogenous') rather than external ('exogenous') factors. Fundamentally, it does not pay for one Authority to compete against other Authorities to attract investment at the expense of developing the indigenous capital of the area, namely local wealth, creativity and skills. External capital is too volatile and too ready to disappear when circumstances change. This suggests a linguistic-economic strategy must focus on increasing existing community capital, rather than depending too much on attracting work and jobs from outside. In this respect,

the Welsh language and the bilingualism of residents of communities in Wales are an intrinsic part of the 'wealth, creativity and skills' they can offer .

Local Authorities have a substantial influence on economic growth, jobs and community resilience by virtue of their democratic and governmental functions. This influence is likely to be more important in areas in which the size of the private sector is relatively smaller. At the same time, their capacity may be more limited – for example, with regard to charging fees, creating new revenue streams or offering financial incentives such as cutting business taxes or creating enterprise zones.

We can categorise the economic influence of Local Government generally across its various functions:

- **Civic leadership:** partnerships with central government, the private sector, the third sector, universities; links with external markets (regional, national, international); placing obligations for social responsibility on suppliers; progressive focus (not a 'tick box') on statutory linguistic obligations and equality in their strategies; developing an image, the marketing offer; co-ordinating the priorities of local language movements, e.g. Mentrau Iaith, the Urdd, Young Farmers Clubs etc.
- **Community leadership:** devolution of functions/decisions/money to community level; supporting community groups; grants; transfer of assets and services to community groups; supporting social activities (culture, the arts, heritage, sport) etc.
- **As an employer:** jobs, including professional and senior posts; career paths; the central role of the director/human resources department; statutory language standards (and more); recruitment and training policies; designating posts where Welsh is essential; offering apprenticeships, language in the workplace; paying a living wage, etc.
- **As a spender of public money:** procurement and commissioning strategies; developing suppliers and local supplier chains; combining requirements with other public purchasers; social procurement conditions; developing markets /creating co-operatives e.g. for social services provision; investment in infrastructure; capital investment in services (schools, integrated service centres); using the power of pension funds; civic bonds; community infrastructure levy; combining investments with partners (NHS, other public bodies, housing associations, colleges and universities); assets strategy and combined assets
- **Functions/ services:** planning, framework for assessing linguistic impact, measuring the effect of housing developments, measuring the need for affordable housing; housing, provision of housing and supporting services;; urban regeneration, wider benefits of regeneration; skills policies; adult training; education, working with others to raise attainment; broker between employers, learners and skills providers;

services for families, children and young people; childcare; services for older people; transport; tourism; support for business; effective regulation.

We believe that councils could combine these elements in order to create a strategy and corporate plan which takes advantage of all the functions of Local Government to support the use of the language and the demand for Welsh language skills, as part of a regional linguistic-economic strategy.

Local Government reform

It is not for this Working Group to report specifically on the democratic structures that would help Welsh language communities to thrive. That is a matter for politicians and the new Welsh Government.

In the context of economic development and the resilience of Welsh communities, however, the Working Group is of the view that the first recommendation of the Task and Finish Group on Increasing the number of communities where Welsh is used as the first language should be acted on. In order to do that effectively, we believe there is a need for a statutory duty on Local Government to promote local economic development, and to ensure consideration of the growth and prosperity of the Welsh language as part of that duty. Such a duty would underpin the authority of Local Government to provide leadership and direction to the efforts of other partners such as the Mentrau Iaith and the private sector, in order to support Welsh communities to reach their full potential.

A duty to promote economic development would ensure Local Government in the west and north-west was able and required to undertake linguistic-economic planning in partnership with Welsh Government and others, but it would also permit other Authorities, including those in the city-regions, to contribute much more effectively to economic growth in Wales.

RECOMMENDATION 9

The Welsh Government should place a statutory duty on Local Government to promote local economic development, and ensure consideration of the growth and prosperity of the Welsh language as part of this duty.

RECOMMENDATION 10

The Welsh Government, in a full and equal partnership with Local Government, should develop and implement a linguistic-economic strategy for the counties of Anglesey, Gwynedd, Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire and adjacent and relevant areas, based on the towns of Bangor, Aberystwyth, Carmarthen and Llanelli.

RECOMMENDATION 11

The Welsh Government should monitor the development of the Swansea Bay City Region to ensure that the prosperity of the Welsh language in east Carmarthenshire (including Llanelli and the Gwendraeth and Aman valleys) is a specific priority.

RECOMMENDATION 12

The Welsh Government and our Universities should invest in fundamental research to develop a model which describes the essential elements of an effective linguistic-economic strategy as a basis for further policy development.

RECOMMENDATION 13

The Welsh Government should include a section on the trends for the geographic distribution of Welsh speakers over the next 25 years in its first report on likely future trends under the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015.

RECOMMENDATION 14

The Future Generations Commissioner should have regard to linguistic-economic policy and good practice in her work plan, including in the context of city regions, and report on it in her first Future Generations Report.

8. TABLE OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1

- a) The Welsh Government should articulate an ambitious vision and publish a new strategy for the Welsh language as a matter of urgency.
- b) The Welsh Government, on the basis of its long-term strategy for the Welsh language, should revise and introduce amendments to the 2011 Measure and introduce a Welsh Language Bill in the Assembly during the term of the fifth National Assembly (2016-2021).
- c) The Welsh Government should support these measures with a visible campaign to raise awareness of the position and importance of the Welsh language in our public life.

RECOMMENDATION 2

- a) The Welsh Government should legislate to ensure that a statutory level of proficiency in Welsh is essential for the following posts in Local Government in Wales:
 - **Head of employed service and chief executive:** this person is responsible for the staff and workforce of the Local Authority. Usually, the chief executive fulfils both functions.
 - **Corporate director with responsibility for human resources,** including workforce planning, recruitment and training.
 - **Director of education:** this person is responsible for the education and well-being of our children and young people
 - **Director of social services:** this person is responsible for the well-being of vulnerable people.
- b) If they do not already possess the required linguistic skills, the legislation should place statutory duties on Local Authorities to provide suitable training and set aside time for the individuals in question in order to enable them to acquire the essential language skills.
- c) The Welsh Government should direct Academi Wales (and any other national institution which provides leadership training for the public sector in Wales) in order to ensure that the Welsh language is given prominence in the principles of One Public Service and that Academi Wales provides training for leaders of the public services on the challenges and responsibilities facing leaders in a bilingual country.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Welsh language skills should be essential for all new posts in every Local Authority in Wales.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Local Authorities, including in their function as Local Education Authorities, should be under a statutory duty to undertake workforce planning in terms of linguistic skills, and where required, to provide suitable training to meet those needs.

RECOMMENDATION 5

- a) The National Centre for Learning Welsh should develop a national strategy for Welsh in the workplace by the end of 2016, to be introduced by providers from the beginning of September 2017.
- b) Commercial suppliers of Welsh language training in the workplace intended for use by the public services should be contracted within the strategic framework set by the National Centre for Learning Welsh .
- c) The Welsh Government should adopt a single national standard Welsh language proficiency framework to be used by the whole of the public sector in Wales.

RECOMMENDATION 6

The Welsh Government should work with the National Centre for Learning Welsh and Welsh Universities to ensure that the Welsh-medium MPA/MBA courses are available to future Local Government leaders, and fund eight places every year for the next five years.

RECOMMENDATION 7

The Welsh Government should establish a Language Technology Board and a language technology fund to provide leadership in this area.

RECOMMENDATION 8

- a) Increasing the uptake of Welsh-medium services should be a specific aim in the Welsh Government's next strategy for the Welsh language.
- b) The Welsh Government should commission qualitative research to understand the factors and conditions which influence the choice of individuals in using Welsh a) at work and b) in using Welsh language services.
- c) On the basis of this research, the Welsh Government should fund effective behavioural change interventions to increase the uptake of Local Government services in Welsh, including digital services, and to promote bilingual administration.

RECOMMENDATION 9

The Welsh Government should place a statutory duty on Local Government to promote local economic development, and ensure consideration of the growth and prosperity of the Welsh language as part of this duty.

RECOMMENDATION 10

The Welsh Government, in a full and equal partnership with Local government, should develop and implement a linguistic-economic strategy for the counties of Anglesey, Gwynedd, Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire and adjacent and relevant areas , based on the towns of Bangor, Aberystwyth, Carmarthen and Llanelli.

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APPENDIX A

1. Terms of Reference

The Working Group was asked to present a report to the Welsh Ministers by 31 May 2016 on the basis of the following terms of reference:⁷

1. Background

1.1. The Working Group on the Welsh Language in Local Government Administration and Economic Development (“the working group on the Welsh Language in Local Government”) is being established to advise Welsh Ministers on support for the Welsh language in the context of the rapid development of the programme of Local Government reform. The Working Group will be required to advise Welsh Ministers on the use of Welsh in Local Government administration, and the role of Local Government as a facilitator of Welsh through its economic development functions

2. Role of the Working Group on the Welsh Language in Local Government

2.1. The role of the Working Group on the Welsh Language in Local Government will be to advise the Minister for Public Services on:

- the use of Welsh in Local Government administration;
- the role of Local Government as a facilitator of economic development to support the Welsh language; and
- to make recommendations on the above in the context of Local Government reform and the duties imposed on Local Authorities by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

2.2. The main focus of the Working Group should be on areas with a high percentage of Welsh speakers, primarily in west and north-west Wales, but it should consider the opportunities in all parts of Wales.

2. Membership

- Chair: Rhodri Glyn Thomas – President of the National Library of Wales since the beginning of April 2016. For the majority of the period under consideration, Assembly Member for Carmarthenshire East and Dinefwr, and Member of the Assembly Commission.

⁷ *Terms and Conditions of Appointment to the Working Group on the Welsh Language in Local Government Administration and Economic Development*

- Gwyneth Ayers – Corporate Policy and Partnerships, Carmarthenshire County Council
- Chris Burns – Chief Executive, Caerphilly County Borough Council
- Sarah Dafydd – Business Change and Improvement Manager, National Assembly for Wales
- Dr Lowri Hughes – Bangor University
- Annwen Morgan – Assistant Chief Executive, Anglesey County Council
- Carys Morgan – Welsh Language and Equalities, Ceredigion County Council
- Meic Raymant – Head of Welsh Language Services, North Wales Police

3. Evidence

The Working Group received written and oral evidence from the following individuals in person:

- Cllr. Cefin Cambell, Carmarthenshire County Council
- Llion Jones, Canolfan Bedwyr, Bangor University
- Alwyn Evans Jones, ex.Gwynedd County Council
- Geraint Wyn Parri, Cymdeithas Cyfieithwyr Cymru
- Rhian Huws Williams, Care Council for Wales
- Ceri Williams, Care Council for Wales
- Gruffydd Jones, National Assembly for Wales
- Lowri Williams, Office of the Welsh Language Commissioner
- Dyfan Siôn, Office of the Welsh Language Commissioner
- Ioan Matthews, Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol
- Gwennan Schiavone, Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol
- Efa Gruffudd Jones, National Centre for Learning Welsh
- Helen Prosser, National Centre for Learning Welsh
- Gareth Ioan, IAITH Cyf.
- Wynfford James
- Alun Jones, Menter a Busnes
- Rhodri Llwyd Morgan, Aberystwyth University

We are grateful for the written submissions received from the following in response to the call for evidence:

- Individuals: Bethan Michael, David Jones, Janet Kaiser, Wyn Thomas
- Cymdeithas yr Iaith
- Dyfodol i'r Iaith