

Dear Minister,

Thank you for this opportunity to share my comments on the White Paper Consultation Document (Welsh Language Bill).

Certainly, the document contains much that deserves praise, and particularly:

The commitment to place the promotion of the language at the heart of the agenda, and the recommendation to establish an arms'-length body with a strategic overview. Extending powers to cover the private sector, and setting language planning duties also represent a step in the right direction.

If the steps outlined in the document are to represent a meaningful contribution to the aim of creating a million Welsh speakers by 2050, then it must be stressed that adequate funding is essential. As is the commitment of all Government Departments; careful co-ordination in terms of policy, action-planning and projects; and ensuring a high level of language planning expertise within the Welsh Language Department and the proposed Commission.

Going into further detail, I would endorse the points submitted by the organisation, Dyfodol i'r iaith, which can be summarised as follows:

- That establishing one body (the 'Commission') to unite the work of regulating and promoting the language is not an ideal response. These two elements require different approaches, and if the intention is to press ahead with one body, then care must be taken to ensure that the regulatory work is in no way diluted.
- To ensure a strong independent voice, I would argue that the Regulators, rather than the Government should have the power to set standards, publish guidelines, and codes of practice.
- The Commission will need to take on a strong coordinator role; to advise the Government and ensure that various projects work together in synergy.
- Raising awareness of the value of the Welsh language is key to ensuring the success of the work, and academic research is needed into how best to share this message with the various sectors and the general public.
- I welcome the intention to revise the Welsh language standards, but in the meantime, care should be taken that this change in no way undermines the functioning of present arrangements.
- I would favour a more flexible complaints process, which would allow a fast-track approach or a thorough investigation, where appropriate. I also feel that that the fine of £5,000 for failure to comply is far too low.
- I warmly welcome the proposed language planning duties, and believe that such duties are essential if we are to ensure a cultural shift. More detail is

needed regarding their legal power over the coming months. I would also press for an additional duty to ensure an environment that favours the Welsh language; this would ensure an obvious visual and community presence for the language,

Yours Faithfully,