



Comisiynydd y
Gymraeg
Welsh Language
Commissioner

The Economy, Energy and Connectivity Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
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Dear Chair,

Priorities for the Economy, Energy and Connectivity Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this consultation. Cymraeg 2050 and recent Welsh Government statements emphasise that economic, housing, planning, energy and connectivity policies must take account of their impact on the Welsh language. As my [5 Year Report on the State of the Welsh Language](#) argues, these factors shape whether people can live, work and use the Welsh language in their communities, and therefore have a direct bearing on the long-term sustainability of the language. The Welsh language also contributes to community prosperity, economic development, skills, technology and the attractiveness of Wales on the international stage.

In light of this, the Committee should consider how effectively the Government is mainstreaming the Welsh language across economic, energy and connectivity policy, and whether those policies are helping to sustain Welsh-speaking communities.

Based on the findings of my report and the recent work of the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities, I suggest that the following areas deserve specific attention from the Committee:

1. The economy and the sustainability of Welsh communities

The economic condition of areas with higher densities of Welsh speakers is a key factor in the future of the Welsh language. Local economic opportunities enable young people to stay in their communities and to contribute to the social and linguistic life of those areas.

The Committee should focus on:

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- How the Government is implementing the recommendations of the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities in the context of economic development.
- The impact of economic development strategies and budgets on Welsh speaking communities, including the establishment of a new National Development Agency, the work of the Welsh economic ambition boards, and the development of the Arfor programme.
- The use of linguistic impact assessments in the development of economic policies and programmes.
- The relationship between economic growth, employment and linguistic sustainability.
- The extent to which transport and digital connectivity influence people's ability to live and work in Welsh communities.
- The implementation of the Rural Development Strategy and the importance of the growth of the rural economy for Welsh-speaking communities.

2. The role of the labour market and employment in the development of Welsh language workplaces

Many people develop their Welsh language skills through the education system but have limited opportunities to use the language in the workplace. In its report [Cymraeg in Every Community, strengthening the Welsh Language](#), the Commission for Welsh Speaking Communities highlights the need to create environments where people feel confident to use Welsh at work and in daily social interaction. The workplace is one of the main settings where the use of Welsh can be encouraged, especially in areas with lower density of Welsh speakers. Workplaces that support the use of the Welsh language is key to realising the Cymraeg 2050 goals, ensuring that the language is seen and promoted as a valuable economic skill that benefits individuals, businesses and communities.

The Committee should focus on:

- The contribution of organisations in receipt of public funding to the promotion and normalisation of the use of Welsh.
- How large private employers provide opportunities for people to use the Welsh language in workplaces.
- How the education and training sector responds to Wales's economic needs and promotes the Welsh language as an employability skill, including the Welsh Government's commitment to undertake skills audit for Wales.
- How economic and workforce development policies are contributing to an increase in the use of Welsh in the workplace.
- The use of the Welsh language in strategic growth sectors, including energy, technology, agriculture, and advanced manufacturing.



3. Energy and strategic infrastructure projects

Wales is entering a period of significant change in energy policy, with increasing investment in renewable energy projects and associated infrastructure. These developments can affect Welsh-speaking communities directly, through their local economic impact, employment opportunities and influence on community sustainability.

In scrutinising this area, we urge the Committee to address:

- The impact of large energy projects on areas of higher density linguistic significance and how a net zero agenda can be integrated with the Government's vision for the Welsh language.
- Opportunities to develop Welsh language workplaces in the energy sector.
- How the economic benefits of projects are shared with local communities and how that contributes to Cymraeg 2050's priorities.

4. Technology, innovation and artificial intelligence

Digital technology and artificial intelligence are likely to play an increasingly important role in the future of the Welsh language, particularly in relation to access to public services, digital participation, language technology and the visibility of Welsh in everyday online interactions.

The Committee should consider:

- How Wales' innovation strategies support the development of Welsh language technology.
- The impact of artificial intelligence on citizens' ability to use Welsh digitally.
- Opportunities to ensure that the Welsh language is fully involved in future technological developments.

5. Using public funding to support the Welsh language

Grants, contracts and public investment offer an important opportunity to support Welsh language policy objectives.

Therefore, the Committee should pay attention to:

- How requirements relating to the Welsh language are reflected in procurement and funding arrangements.
- How organisations that receive public funding contribute to increasing the use of the Welsh language?
- The use of social value criteria that include linguistic outcomes.



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6. Extending Welsh language standards to the private sector

The Government's manifesto committed to extending the Welsh Language Standards, including to parts of the private sector, including communications businesses, utilities, banks, car parks and supermarkets. Although the process of extending the standards does not fall directly within the Committee's remit, scrutiny of the potential impact of introducing them to the private sector would be relevant to its work. My office has an expert team that works with private sector businesses to encourage and support the provision of more Welsh language services. Businesses that reach an acceptable threshold will receive official recognition of the Welsh Offer. I would therefore be delighted to be able to contribute to any scrutiny of this issue.

While many of the above issues fall within the Committee's remit, the future of the Welsh language depends on coordinated action across different policy areas. I therefore encourage the Committee to work with other relevant committees of the Senedd when considering the impact of economic, energy and connectivity decisions on the Welsh language and its communities.

I hope that these comments will be useful as the Committee plans its future work. I wish you every success in that work and would be pleased to contribute further if that would be helpful.

Yours sincerely

Efa Gruffudd Jones

Welsh Language Commissioner