

### INTRODUCTION

- 1. The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) represents the 22 local authorities in Wales. The three national park authorities and the three fire and rescue authorities are associate members.
- 2. It seeks to provide representation to local authorities within an emerging policy framework that satisfies priorities of our members and delivers a broad range of services that add value to Welsh Local Government and the communities they serve.
- 3. The Welsh Local Government Association welcomes this opportunity to respond to the Welsh Government's consultation on the National Policy on Welsh Linguistic Infrastructure.
- 4. The following response is structured around the specific questions set out in the response form.

### **CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

## Question 1 - Do you agree with the proposed approach of developing a policy to better coordinate Welsh linguistic infrastructure?

- 5. The WLGA and local authority representatives agree with the proposed approach of developing a policy to better coordinate Welsh linguistic infrastructure. Standardising terms and making these accessible will help reduce the barriers to using Welsh and will increase public confidence in which terms are most appropriate to use across all contexts.
- 6. It is recommended that a range of user perspectives and different user profiles are used as a basis for developing the new interface to improve Welsh linguistic infrastructure. Individuals with linguistic expertise across a range of fields should contribute to ensure the end product is as practical and user friendly as possible.

### **Question 2 - What dictionaries or tools do you use to search for Welsh words?**

7. Most respondents used the Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru (the standard historical Welsh dictionary) online version, the Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru app, The Welsh Academy English-Welsh Dictionary print version and the Ap Geiriaduron. All respondents used Cysgeir.

- 8. Few respondents used the Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru print version, the Welsh Academy English-Welsh Dictionary online and the Bangor Welsh-English Dictionary online. A few respondents also used the Gweiadur Online, The Geiriadur Mawr, The Geiriadur Gomer, Bing, Microsoft and Google Translators. No Local Authority reported using the University of Wales Trinity Saint David online dictionary.
- 9. The WLGA and local authorities agree with the proposal to create one reliable source which is easy to access. The creation of one general online dictionary suitable for everyday use which is also available as an app would be welcomed by all. It was recognised that a more comprehensive dictionary, such as the Academy or University dictionaries, are sometimes required, but that one accessible reliable English-Welsh, Welsh-English dictionary is needed for general use by the public to support the use of Welsh on a day-to-day basis.
- 10. Local authorities reflected that some new tools supporting Welsh language use had not been marketed effectively, which has meant that colleagues tended to resort to using the same, older, print version dictionaries that were at hand. It is therefore important to raise awareness and effectively market available resources as well as increasing their accessibility.

### Question 3 - What terminology resources do you use to search for Welsh terms?

- 11. All respondents used Cysgeir to search for Welsh terms. Most used the Ap Geiriaduron, and Y Termiadur Addysg. Some used BydTermCymru, the Welsh National Terminology Portal and The Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol's Terms for Higher Education.
- 12. One local authority also cited 'My Memory Translated' as a tool they occasionally used to search for Welsh terms.

# Question 4a - If we were to develop a website to provide various linguistic resources in one place, apart from what we've noted in area 5 in the consultation document what else would you like to see the website doing?

13. Area 5 provides a comprehensive list of resources and local authorities welcome the suggestions for developing this useful content and infrastructure. Local authorities work very closely with schools and appreciate how beneficial this resource will be to learners and are keen to promote its use among staff and pupils. It is essential that these resources are clear and user friendly to secure high levels of engagement and the best outcomes.

- 14. The opportunity to request a specific term or word if it is not already available on the website, as noted in Area 5 of the consultation, is very welcome. This would be a positive step forward in increasing ownership of our evolving Welsh language and will help keep resources up to date and relevant to its users.
- 15. It would be helpful if the website had a function which enables users to practise language exercises, such as verb pattern exercises and using mutations correctly. It is felt that Welsh language learners would also benefit from a function that enables them to practise using syntax correctly.
- 16. Local authorities have also suggested that this website could be an excellent opportunity to publicise opportunities to use Welsh through language projects, initiatives, and upcoming events.
- 17. Building on this, the website could also provide useful links to examples of key Welsh terms being used in the media by including radio or television clips showcasing how Welsh is used in these real-life contexts. There are several excellent examples of the media making terms accessible for sports such as rugby and football in Welsh. This helps normalise the use of the correct Welsh terminology in these fields, however other areas remain underrepresented and developing this new platform provides an opportunity to address these gaps.
- 18. By increasing the standardisation of the Welsh language there is a risk of reducing the use of some regional terms, phrases, or dialects. To protect these terms and promote their everyday use, it would be useful to include these terms alongside the standardised terms where appropriate. This is important in maintaining the richness of the Welsh language and empowering speakers to use terms that fit more naturally with audiences in some areas. If a dictionary or app only provides one standardised word which is technically correct but not widely understood in a particular area, then there is a greater chance users will resort to the English word. A change in linguistic policy should therefore consider ways of overcoming this potential barrier.

## Question 4b - If we were to develop a website to provide various linguistic resources in one place, under what circumstances would you use the website?

19. The WLGA and local authorities fully support the idea to develop a website which provides linguistic resources in one place. Colleagues who work through the medium of

Welsh have reported that they foresee themselves using this resource on a daily basis if available.

- 20. Education Officers across local authorities welcome this proposal emphasising how valuable it could be to ensuring accuracy and consistency in reporting, drafting guidance and translating. Having a resource in one central place benefits all users of the Welsh language, especially those learning Welsh. Local authorities are keen to promote the use of this technology amongst their staff, customers, partners, local businesses and schools providing this is a high-quality resource which is easy to use.
- 21. It is vital that this resource is also available as an app for maximum usage.

## Question 5a - This draft policy sets out our proposals to better coordinate all elements of Welsh linguistic infrastructure. Will what we propose enable us to do this?

- 22. The consultation proposals are comprehensive and clear and should help better coordinate elements of Welsh linguistic infrastructure.
- 23. The success of the project will depend heavily on reaching a wide audience. Effective marketing is important. It is essential that people with a range of Welsh language competencies can use this resource and that children, young people, learners, the workforce, and members of the general public see the value of the resource and to use it extensively while acquiring the language.

# Question 5b - This draft policy sets out our proposals to better coordinate all elements of Welsh linguistic infrastructure. Is anything missing from the draft policy?

- 24. It would be useful to include additional resources such as templates e.g., application letters, formal and informal letters. Resources that also summarise language rules, common errors and mutation examples would also be beneficial as suggested in the response to question 4.
- 25. Including examples of best practice and relevant links to the use of key terms in the media could also build user confidence. This new interface has the potential to advocate the use of Welsh across all fields and so demonstrating how Welsh is used across different groups, initiatives and in the media will strengthen the status of the Welsh language.

Question 5c - This draft policy sets out our proposals to better coordinate all elements of Welsh linguistic infrastructure. Should we follow a different path in relation to some of these areas?

- 26. The WLGA and local authorities support this approach to better coordinating elements of the Welsh linguistic infrastructure and welcome this clear and comprehensive draft policy.
- 27. An area that needs further consideration is the development of technology which 'captions' live conversations and the development of BOTS that support and enable Welsh language use. To reach the widest possible audience developing the software for apps to be available in Welsh is also essential.

Question 6 - We would like to know your views on the effects that the proposals in this draft policy on Welsh linguistic infrastructure would have on the Welsh language, specifically on:

- i) opportunities for people to use Welsh
- ii) treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?

- 28. The WLGA and local authorities believe this draft policy will improve outcomes for Welsh speakers by enhancing the digital technologies available to support Welsh language users. Local authorities are keen to promote such a resource with their key stakeholders, particularly in the education sector to support staff and learners.
- 29. Developing a clear, accessible, and user-friendly resource will have a positive impact on Welsh language use. The proposal should raise the status of the Welsh language, which helps move closer to ensuring the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language.
- 30. This project has the potential to rejuvenate the use of Welsh and increase public interest in our linguistic heritage.

## Question 7 - Please also explain how you believe the proposed policy could be formulated or changed so as to have:

- i) positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language
- ii) no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.
- 31. Introducing the Welsh Language Standardisation Panel, as well as consulting with experts within specific fields, would be beneficial by ensuring grammar and spelling is used consistently.
- 32. By ensuring there is one, easy to use, central resource, this proposal should increase the number of opportunities for people to use the Welsh language. This in turn should help ensure that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language.

# Question 8 – We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them.

- 33. Careful consideration should be paid to the importance of regional dialects or colloquial terms to help preserve and promote Wales' rich linguistic landscape. This will help ensure that key words are used naturally and remain relevant to different users across Wales.
- 34. The WLGA understands that there is some concern from local authorities that one unit solely based in Cardiff may mean that linguistic expertise gradually erodes across other parts of Wales. In developing this proposal further, the unit should plan how they will overcome this risk e.g., one overarching vision with some local units or hubs, or developing a process to increase the linguistic input from a range of different areas within Wales. It is also important to consider how existing institutions can contribute to these proposals to strengthen Welsh linguistic infrastructure while maintaining regional dialects.
- 35. Developing technology that supports Welsh speakers to send text messages in Welsh could be another way of encouraging Welsh speakers to use more Welsh when socialising. This could build confidence and reduce barriers to using Welsh.

### CONCLUSION

The WLGA welcomes and supports the proposals outlined in the consultation document. The proposals should help raise the status of the Welsh language. The successful implementation of these proposals should help users use the Welsh language with greater confidence more regularly.

### For further information please contact:

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We welcome correspondence in Welsh and English and will respond to correspondence in the same language. Use of either language will not lead to a delay.