

Welsh Parliament

**Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport,
and International Relations Committee**

Annual Report 2022-23

August 2023



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**Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport,
and International Relations Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1SN**

Tel: **0300 200 6565**

Email: **SeneddCulture@senedd.wales**

Twitter: **[@SeneddCultureIR](https://twitter.com/SeneddCultureIR)**

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About the Committee

The Committee was established on 23 June 2021. Its remit can be found at:
www.senedd.wales/SeneddCulture

Current Committee membership:



**Committee Chair:
Delyth Jewell MS**
Plaid Cymru



Hefin David MS
Welsh Labour



Alun Davies MS
Welsh Labour



Llyr Gruffydd MS
Plaid Cymru



Tom Giffard MS
Welsh Conservatives



Carolyn Thomas MS
Welsh Labour

The following Member was also a member of the Committee during this period.



Helen Fychan MS
Plaid Cymru

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Chair's foreword

It is my pleasure to introduce a summary of activity for the second year of the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee. We present this report at a time when global and domestic crises still affect the sectors within our remit: and we write at a time when the importance of culture, the arts, and of sport in giving meaning to people's lives has arguably never been greater. The past year has been significant in cementing Wales's presence on the international stage, and from football to opera, our Committee has charted the ways in which Wales, our culture and our language have grown in international prominence.

It has not been a year without its challenges. The continued impact of the pandemic, the war in Ukraine, Brexit and other developments internationally have caused a significant increase in the cost-of-living, and inflation. The arts, sports, and communications sectors have not escaped these pressures, and we have heard troubling evidence about the effects being felt, particularly in leisure, sport, and the arts. The recovery from these crises is mixed: whilst parts of the creative industries sector have bounced back decisively (and continue to be one of the strongest performers in the Welsh economy), live music venues, theatres and the arts sectors more broadly are still recovering. Our Committee's work in looking at the issues facing the sector's workforce will be published early in the autumn.

Pressures facing these sectors have been a particular area of focus for us as a Committee, and last summer, we held a panel discussion on the future challenges facing the arts in Wales at the National Eisteddfod in Tregaron.

There have been domestic crises, too. In early 2023, accusations of misogyny, bullying and harassment were levelled at the Welsh Rugby Union, when a small group of brave women spoke to the BBC about their experiences. Our Committee acted swiftly, taking evidence from the WRU, the Welsh Government and Sport Wales, and we will be keeping a close eye on how the culture within not just the WRU, but other prominent organisations within our remit, is improved.

We are all aware of the disappointing Welsh language Census results which were published at the end of 2022. Our Committee has viewed these results as

an urgent call to introduce change, and to focus efforts on reversing these trends, instead of giving into despair. It is our hope that the recommendations arising from our review of the framework that supports Welsh-medium education will go some way in assisting with this. Moreover, our work will shortly turn in earnest towards scrutinising the results of the Welsh Government's White Paper consultation on a Welsh Language Education Bill, and the subsequent legislation that will follow. The goal of achieving 1 million speakers by 2050 is never far from our minds.

Finally, our work in monitoring and scrutinising the Welsh Government's work on international relations continues apace. We have recently undertaken an inquiry into Wales-Ireland relations, which earlier this year took us to Dublin, where we were able to see first-hand the strength of the ties which link our two nations. There is much that Wales can learn from Ireland, but there is also much in Wales which causes our Irish friends to look across the sea with envy (for inspiration?), most notably our relative success in keeping Cymraeg as a living, vibrant language which belongs to every citizen of our nation. As so often in life, that visit taught us to remember that gaining an outside perspective can help us to see things most clearly. For the remainder of our term as a Committee, we look forward to bringing yet more perspectives to our work, and to continue our scrutiny of these areas which are of such crucial importance to our nation, and to our lives.

I would like to thank all Members of the Committee for their work, as well as our hard-working Committee team. I'd like to extend my thanks to Heledd Fychan MS for her work as a Member of our Committee over the previous two years, and to welcome Llyr Gruffydd MS as a new Member of our Committee.



Delyth Jewell MS

Chair of the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee

1. Introduction

1. The Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee of the Sixth Senedd was established on 23 June 2021. The purpose of the Committee is to scrutinise policy and legislation, and to hold the Welsh Government to account in specific areas. These areas include the Welsh language, culture, the arts, creative industries, historic environment, communications, broadcasting, the media, sport, and international relations.

2. The remit of this Committee was decided at the start of the Sixth Senedd. The Committee set out its work programme, objectives, and values in a report, *Priorities for the Sixth Senedd*, which was published in March 2022.¹

3. The Committee comprises six Members who come from the different parties represented in the Senedd:

- Delyth Jewell MS, Chair (Plaid Cymru)
- Hefin David MS (Welsh Labour)
- Alun Davies MS (Welsh Labour)
- Heledd Fychan MS (Plaid Cymru)
- Tom Giffard MS (Welsh Conservatives)
- Carolyn Thomas MS (Welsh Labour)

4. On 4 July 2023, Llyr Gruffydd MS replaced Heledd Fychan MS on the Committee following a motion to elect Members to Committees.²

¹ Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee report: *Priorities and strategy for the Sixth Senedd 2021-26* – March 2022 [PDF 279KB]

² Plenary minutes: *Motions to elect Members to Committees: NNDM8317 Elin Jones (Ceredigion)* - 4 July 2023

Values

5. The Committee has agreed that the following values will be demonstrated throughout its work:

- Promote, and be a champion for the sectors that fall within our remit.
- Work to ensure equality of access and participation to culture, the arts, heritage, Welsh language, and sport for all in Wales.
- Drive change by being challenging, impactful and constructive in our scrutiny.

Objectives

6. The Committee has agreed that it will seek to achieve the following objectives:

- Be a critical friend to the Welsh Government and their sponsored bodies and scrutinise the delivery of the Programme for Government and Co-operation Agreement commitments. It will also scrutinise the activity of the UK Government and other relevant UK bodies relating to Wales.
- Ensure a range of different voices are heard on matters which affect them.
- Be transparent and accessible in all our activities to ensure the progress of our work is open and clear to all.

Outcomes

7. The Committee has agreed it will:

- Establish and maintain relationships with a wide range of stakeholders to ensure a diversity of voices are represented in our work.
- Ensure our work is shaped by real life experiences by meeting and learning from people on the ground from different backgrounds across Wales.

- Be accessible to all stakeholders by normalising a flexible working approach including meeting on a hybrid basis as standard.
- Provide an honest assessment of our performance by publishing an annual report at the end of every summer term; and ensure transparency by publishing a forward work plan at the start of every autumn term.

8. This annual report provides a summary of the Committee's activity and signposts any further issues that will influence our work in each area during the Sixth Senedd.

2. Cost-of-living increases

9. The cost-of-living has been steadily increasing since the early part of 2021 due to a number of external factors. This was driven early-on by the strong global demand for goods, and supply chain issues arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. Earlier in the year, the main driver of inflation was energy prices, with both household energy costs and petrol costs increasing significantly. In addition to this, the impact of new trading arrangements following Brexit has also contributed to increasing costs.

10. Given that no one person, household, business, or organisation has been immune to these price increases, the Committee agreed during the summer of 2022, that it should undertake an urgent inquiry into the impact of increasing costs on the sectors that fall within its remit.

11. The Committee considered written evidence following a public consultation, alongside oral evidence from a range of representatives across the cultural and sports sectors in Wales.

12. The Committee noted that Welsh Government budget allocations in culture and sport have been outstripped by inflation. At the time of the inquiry, participation in culture and sport had still not fully recovered from the Covid-19 pandemic. This meant that neither sector was well placed to weather the impact of increasing costs through improved revenues. Further, cost-of-living pressures on disposable incomes were further damaging levels of participation in sports; those from lower socioeconomic groups, or with longstanding illnesses and conditions being the worst affected. In the report, the Committee called for the:

- Welsh Government to urgently work with the National Library to resolve its concerns about the “very serious risk to the collections”³;
- UK Government to provide sports and cultural venues with support with energy costs beyond the six months of the initial Energy Bill Relief Scheme; and

³ Committee consultation: [Impact of increasing costs: IIC22 National Library of Wales](#) – September 2022 [PDF 685KB]

- Welsh Government to provide capital funding to the sports and cultural sector to “green” their energy consumption.

Next steps

13. The Committee will:

- Continue to monitor the Welsh Government’s response to the impact of increasing cost on cultural venues and sports facilities, in particular swimming pools.

3. International relations

14. The Committee is responsible for scrutinising the Welsh Government's approach to international relations, including the delivery of its international strategy⁴, and associated actions plans⁵. The Committee is particularly keen to ensure that the global profile of Wales does not diminish because of the UK and Wales's changing relationships with the EU and the wider effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Committee is also eager to keep abreast of how the Welsh Government's international work overlaps and impacts other areas of the Committee's remit.

Annual scrutiny of international relations

15. The Committee held its annual scrutiny session on international relations with the First Minister on 10 May 2023. The session focused on the Welsh Government's delivery of its international strategy, UK-EU relations, and future plans. The Committee discussed reporting on the outcomes of its engagement activities, the launch of the year of Wales in France initiative, the role of major sporting events as a diplomatic platform, and continuing work with partners across Europe following the UK's exit from the EU.

16. The Committee undertakes regular monitoring of the Welsh Government's international relations activities, including of its overseas office network, overseas visits and visitors, and Wales's bilateral relations with priority countries and regions. The Committee recently agreed to publish annual reports on its international relations work from autumn 2023.

Joint statement on the anniversary of the Ukraine war

17. To mark the first anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Committee, alongside other Senedd Committees, issued a joint statement. The statement reads:

⁴ Welsh Government: [International strategy for Wales](#) – 14 January 2020

⁵ Welsh Government: [International action plans](#) – 14 December 2020

“On the anniversary of Russia’s illegal invasion, Senedd committees stand in solidarity with Ukraine. Over the last 12 months, we have watched in horror with the rest of the world as the tragedy of the ensuing war has unfolded.

Our thoughts are with the people of Ukraine, who continue to face unimaginable hardships. Our hearts go out to those who have been forced to make the impossible choice between fleeing from their homes or staying to bear the brunt of the Russian invasion, in particular Ukraine’s women and children.

Collectively, as Senedd committees, we have considered and raised issues related to support for Ukraine in our work since the invasion and will continue to do so.

We call on the Welsh and UK governments to redouble their efforts to support the people of Ukraine.”⁶

Submission to House of Lords inquiry into the future UK-EU relationship

18. The Committee also responded to a House of Lords European Affairs Committee inquiry into the future UK-EU relationship. In the response, the Committee called for:

- Greater clarity of UK-EU ministerial responsibilities at UK level, and clarity on how engagement across governments is coordinated at all levels;
- Clarification on the roles of devolved governments across UK-EU relations; and
- Improvements in reporting and transparency of UK-EU relations for parliamentarians, stakeholders and citizens.

⁶ Welsh Parliament: [Senedd Committees' joint statement on the Ukraine war anniversary](#) – 24 February 2023

19. The House of Lords Committee published its report on 29 April 2023, reflecting many of the points raised by this Committee.⁷

Wales-Ireland relations



20. In November 2022, the Committee agreed to undertake an inquiry looking at Wales-Ireland relations. As Wales's closest European and external neighbour, Ireland and Wales have a history of cooperation based on historic, cultural, linguistic and economic ties. Both countries cooperate on a number of matters including on trade, economic development, education and research, energy and climate change. The Committee received evidence that the Wales-Ireland relationship is undergoing changes post-Brexit as both countries adapt to the new UK-EU relationship.

21. The Welsh Government's international strategy, launched in 2020, identifies Ireland as a priority country relationship and both governments have signed a shared statement and joint action plan. This is the Welsh Government's most developed strategic international relationship with another country and its government, with structured engagement mechanisms, strategic objectives, and specific actions all being in place. This inquiry allowed the Committee to assess the effectiveness of this approach to international relations, and whether this model for bilateral international engagement should be used as a blueprint to engage with other priority countries and regions.

22. Across eight evidence sessions, the Committee considered written and oral evidence from higher education providers and business representatives, language organisations, cultural and heritage bodies, recipients of EU funding, the Consulate General of Ireland, the British and Irish Parliamentary Assembly,

⁷ House of Lords: [European Affairs Committee report: The future UK-EU Relationship](#) – 29 April 2023 [PDF 1.7MB]

and the First Minister. In April 2023, the Committee went on an official visit to Dublin and undertook a detailed programme of engagement with Irish counterparts. This included colleagues from the Oireachtas and the British and Irish Parliamentary Assembly; officials from the Welsh Government Ireland Office; the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs; the UK Embassy; the Irish Maritime Development Office; representatives from Trinity College Dublin; the National Museum Ireland; private business; and EU funded projects.

23. The Committee will publish its report on this inquiry early in the autumn.

24. The Committee would like to thank every individual and organisation who took the time to contribute to the inquiry, and to note the warm welcome and hospitality Members received during the visit to Dublin.

Northern Ireland Protocol Bill

25. The Committee also considered the Legislative Consent Memorandum for the Northern Ireland Protocol Bill. In its report, the Committee noted that it was concerned that the Bill:

- Marks a deterioration in UK-EU relations which could in turn impact the delivery of the Welsh Government's international strategy and Wales-EU relations.
- Impacts Wales-Ireland cooperation.

26. On 22 November 2022, the Senedd refused consent to the Bill. As part of the conclusion of the UK-EU Windsor Framework, the UK Government agreed not to pursue the Bill.

Next steps

27. The Committee will:

- Publish its report on the Wales-Ireland inquiry and hold a debate with Members of the Senedd on the recommendations in the report; and
- Publish an annual report on its broader work on international relations during the Sixth Senedd.

4. Communications

28. During scrutiny work on public service broadcasting in October 2021, the Committee heard that rapid changes in technology, viewing habits, and the entrance of global players to the market have introduced new challenges for broadcasters across the UK.

29. Against that backdrop of rapid change, the UK Government has proposed changes to media regulation in their Media Bill White Paper. In July 2022, the House of Commons' Welsh Affairs Committee also launched an inquiry into broadcasting in Wales to consider how to ensure a successful and dynamic broadcasting sector in Wales.

30. On behalf of the Committee, Delyth Jewell MS was invited to sit with the Welsh Affairs Select Committee as a guest at a meeting on 28 June 2023, in order to consider evidence relating to their broadcasting in Wales inquiry. The Committee Chair's contribution provided an important opportunity to scrutinise a UK Government minister on the matter. During the session, Delyth Jewell MS extended an invitation to the Minister, the Right Honourable Sir John Whittingdale, to attend a future Committee meeting. The Minister responded by saying that:

*"I will do my very best to make sure that my diary does allow me to attend if there is such an invitation."*⁸

31. The Committee is grateful to the Welsh Affairs Committee for their willingness and enthusiasm in embracing such an approach to joint working, and will be seeking an early opportunity to invite the Minister of State to an evidence session.

32. While broadcasting is a reserved matter, it is a policy area in which we as a Committee have a strong interest. The Committee will work to ensure that the

⁸ House of Commons: Welsh Affairs Committee meeting - 28 June 2023, Q440

proposed reforms enable public service broadcasters to continue to thrive in the best interests of the people of Wales.

33. In May 2023, the Committee was made aware of allegations of bullying at S4C. The Committee will be keeping a close eye on this issue and will be awaiting the result of any investigations.

34. The Committee also awaits with interest the publication of the Welsh Government's report from its expert panel on a Shadow Broadcasting Authority for Wales.

Next steps

35. The Committee will:

- Hold a short inquiry on broadcasting in the autumn term. As part of this work, the Committee will issue an invitation to the Minister of State for Media, Tourism and Creative Industries, the Director General and Chair of the BBC, Ofcom, S4C and ITV to participate;
- Consider the findings of an independent review set up to investigate allegations of bullying at S4C; and
- Review the Welsh Government's report from its expert panel on a Shadow Broadcasting Authority for Wales once it is published.

5. Culture

Protecting national collections in museums and archives

36. In February 2023, Amgueddfa Cymru told the Committee that there were ongoing risks to the national collections because of maintenance backlogs across its sites.

37. We learned that significant work is needed relating to the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing infrastructure at the Cathays Park site in Cardiff. Expenditure totalling £90 million is needed over the coming decade to make the national collections secure and safe across different sites. The National Library also informed the Committee that “...the continued reduction in capital funding will only create further and serious risks to the national collections”.⁹

38. The Committee remains concerned about the real risk that is posed to our collections and estates – collections which are of significant cultural and historical value. The Committee has raised these concerns through its report on the Draft Budget 2023-24, as well as through ongoing correspondence with the Welsh Government. The Committee will continue to seek assurances from the Welsh Government that the risk to important collections housed by Amgueddfa Cymru and the National Library is acknowledged and acted upon, and that safeguarding these national collections for future generations is made a priority.

Future of St David’s Hall

39. During December 2022, the Committee raised concerns about the future of St David’s Hall in response to plans by Cardiff Council that would see the hall being run by an external company. The Committee’s interest in the issue stemmed from the fact that the hall is the national operatic and symphonic hall of Wales. This was an issue which gathered over 25,000 signatures on various petition sites.

⁹ Letter from the National Library of Wales: Scrutiny of the Welsh Government’s Draft Budget 2023-24 – 26 January 2023

40. The Committee queried how the plans met existing Cardiff Council policy commitments in ensuring the hall retains its position as a world class auditorium, and that it would maintain its world leading acoustics.

41. The Committee was also concerned by the speed with which Cardiff Council was undertaking the process, as well as the transparency of information that was being published by the council at the time.

Non-statutory cultural services

42. As with funding for national institutions, non-statutory cultural services delivered by local government are not immune from funding deficits and the increased costs of living. The Committee heard concerns raised by the Museums Association regarding Cardiff Council's budget consultation which included plans to close the Museum of Cardiff. The Museums Association told the Committee that it firmly opposed plans to close the museum and make it a mobile attraction. The Association told the Committee that:

"The Museum of Cardiff has long pioneered community engagement; closing the museum would mean losing a thriving cultural asset that is consistently delivering against local and national priorities."¹⁰

43. The Committee remains concerned that continued funding pressures could lead to changes in the delivery of non-statutory services in the culture and arts by local authorities. The Committee will continue to review this over the coming year.

Creative industries workforce

44. During the summer of 2021, a number of respondents to the Committee's Priorities for the Sixth Senedd consultation called for the Committee to look at the condition of the creative industries workforce.¹¹ The Committee heard that the Covid-19 pandemic had disproportionately affected freelance workers, who make up an estimated half of the cultural sector workforce in Wales. The

¹⁰ Letter from the Museums Association: Cardiff Council proposal to close the Museum of Cardiff – 23 December 2022 [PDF 149KB]

¹¹ Committee consultation: Priorities for the Sixth Senedd – September 2021

Committee also heard that recovery from the pandemic within the live music industry, cinema and theatre sectors was slow, with audience participation failing to return to pre-pandemic levels, which in turn could lead to widespread venue closures. A report published by industry body, Cultural Freelancers Wales, in January 2022 also included a number of startling conclusions, including that almost a quarter of freelance workers were still uncertain about whether they would stay in the industry.¹²

45. In recent years, the creative industries have been one of Wales's best-performing economic sectors. Given the significance of the creative industries for Wales's economy and the concerns raised about potential skills shortages and slow post pandemic recovery in some sectors, the Committee decided to undertake an inquiry to review this. The inquiry looked at the current health of the sector's workforce and the impact of support from public bodies such as the Welsh Government.

46. The Committee has been considering evidence on this inquiry throughout this year and will look to publish its findings early in autumn 2023.

47. The Committee is grateful to every individual and organisation who took the time to contribute to the inquiry.

Contemporary Art Gallery for Wales

48. In July 2023, the Committee began a short inquiry into the delivery of the proposed Contemporary Art Gallery for Wales. Discussions on the gallery began in 2016 and it is now a commitment outlined in the Co-operation Agreement between the Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru. The Committee has decided to review the development of the plans to date as well as the merits of the model that is being proposed.

49. The Committee's work during this year has included two oral evidence sessions with delivery partners and interest groups. In addition to this, the Committee is undertaking focus groups with a range of artists to seek their

¹² Cultural Freelancers Wales: Road to Recovery? – January 2022

views. The Committee will be taking evidence from the Welsh Government in the autumn about this issue.

Cardiff Singer of the World

50. On 9 June 2023, the Committee sponsored an event to mark the 40th anniversary of the BBC Wales Cardiff Singer of the World competition. On behalf of the Committee, the finalists were welcomed by Delyth Jewell MS, ahead of a week of competition to celebrate the competition's continuing success as a cornerstone of the BBC's commitment to promote and develop artistic excellence.

51. Since its beginnings in 1983, this biennial competition has been a celebration of new talent which has launched the careers of some of the world's greatest opera stars, including Wales's own, Bryn Terfel. The 16 singers who are selected to compete in Cardiff will have made it through three virtual audition selection stages from nearly 500 applications. As they compete, their performances are broadcast across the BBC to audiences around the UK and beyond.

52. At the event, Delyth Jewell MS, welcomed this year's competitors by saying:

"We in Wales remember well the battle of the baritones in 1989 when Bryn Terfel won the Lieder Prize, and Dmitri Hvorostovsky won the main prize. So many careers have been catapulted into the public consciousness because of this competition. And you in this room have rightly earned your place on that hallowed stage in St David's Hall. What a treat awaits us all in the days ahead."



Next steps

53. The Committee will:

- Publish a report of its findings and recommendations relating to the challenges facing the creative industries workforce in the autumn, and hold a debate with Members of the Senedd on the recommendations in the report;
- Continue to seek assurances that the risk to important collections housed by Amgueddfa Cymru and the National Library is understood, and that safeguarding these national collections for future generations is made a priority by the Welsh Government;
- Continue the inquiry into the Contemporary Art Gallery for Wales; and
- Continue to review the impact of funding pressures on the delivery of non-statutory cultural and arts services by local authorities.

6. Sport

Participation in sport in disadvantaged areas

54. The Committee published its report, *Levelling the playing field: A report on participation in sport and physical activity in disadvantaged areas*, in August 2022.

55. The Committee held a debate on the report in the Senedd on 30 November 2022, in which 11 Members of the Senedd participated. The Committee will continue to push its recommendations throughout the course of the Sixth Senedd.

Allegations surrounding the Welsh Rugby Union

56. On 23 January 2023, BBC Cymru Wales broadcast a documentary, “Welsh rugby under the spotlight”¹³, which included serious allegations about sexism, misogyny, homophobia, and racism within the sporting governing body, the Welsh Rugby Union (WRU). The Committee received correspondence from several parties (including fan representatives the Joint Supporters’ Group Cymru, the Leader of the Opposition, Andrew RT Davies MS, and three Members of Parliament for constituencies in Wales) calling for an investigation into the issue. In view of the severity of the allegations, and the centrality of rugby to Welsh public life, the Committee thought that it was important that the response to these allegations should be discussed in the national parliament. The Committee took evidence from the WRU, the Deputy Minister for Arts, Sport, and Chief Whip, and Sport Wales officials. The purpose of these sessions was not to investigate the allegations themselves, but to explore the WRU’s response, and the relationship between the Welsh Government, Sport Wales, and the WRU.

57. The Committee published a report of its findings on 16 June 2023. In the report, the Committee said that the Welsh Government should ensure that any future funding for the WRU complies with all aspects of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence strategy, and the Economic Contract. The Committee called for the Welsh Government to review how

¹³ BBC Wales Investigates: [Welsh Rugby under the Spotlight](#) – 23 January 2023

Ministers and civil servants respond to concerns raised with them regarding inappropriate behaviour in organisations in Wales.

58. The Committee also recommended that when the Independent Review Panel commissioned by the WRU to investigate the allegations publishes its report, the WRU should, as soon as practical, publish an implementation plan showing how, and when it will implement its recommendations. It should also attend a meeting of the Committee to explain its current and planned actions in this area.

Increased costs of running swimming pools

59. Concerns were raised with the Committee during the past year about the significant cost increases related to running swimming pools. Following our inquiry relating to increasing costs in the autumn of 2022, stakeholders raised significant concerns that not enough was being done by the Welsh Government to support the sector.

60. The Committee was told that there was a misguided view from the Welsh Government that leisure services such as swimming pools were not under threat, and that:

“While facilities may stay open, programmes, activities and staffing levels will be significantly affected.”¹⁴

61. The Committee was also told about widespread changes being proposed by local authorities to sport and leisure services. Such changes included increasing fees and charges, or closing facilities.

62. The Committee raised the issue with the Welsh Government, asking whether the £63million announced by the UK Government for swimming pools would trigger a Barnett consequential, and whether they would use any

¹⁴ [Letter from Community Leisure UK Wales and the Wales Sports Association \(WSA\) regarding the Committee's inquiry into the impact of Increasing costs](#) - 23 February 2023 [PDF 219 KB]

additional funding to support pools. The Committee also reiterated previous calls for capital investment in energy efficiency for sports and leisure facilities.

FIFA World Cup

63. This year saw the return of the Wales men's football team to the FIFA World Cup for the first time in 64 years. The impact the appearances had on the nation was something to behold. As well as supporting the team, a range of different activities took place alongside the World Cup to note and celebrate the country's achievements. This included showcasing Welsh culture to the world with performances by singers, rappers, brass bands and others as part of the Gŵyl Cymru Festival which was held in Qatar, the USA and Canada.

64. The Committee also monitored the work of the Welsh Government with regards to maximising opportunities presented by the tournament. The Committee sought clarification from the Welsh Government about how it was planning to evaluate the range of work undertaken in both Wales and Qatar during the World Cup. The Committee wanted to know how the evaluation was being conducted and by whom, as well as what key performance indicators were being used to measure progress, and whether an analysis of the use of resources was being undertaken. The purpose of raising these queries was to ensure that the work was appraised properly - given this was the first time that the Welsh Government had participated in a global event of this size.

65. In response, the Welsh Government confirmed that an independent evaluation was taking place. The evaluation was published on 11 July 2023¹⁵.

Washington Post - Absent from the World Cup for 64 years, Wales insists: 'We are still here'¹⁶

66. The global interest in Wales was highlighted when the Committee Chair was asked to contribute to an article in the Washington Post. When discussing the impact that Wales's participation in the tournament would have on the

¹⁵ Welsh Government: [Evaluation of Welsh Government-funded World Cup Activities](#) - 11 July 2023

¹⁶ Washington Post: [Absent from the World Cup for 64 years, Wales insists: 'We are still here'](#) - 18 November 2022

nation's sense of identity on the global stage, Delyth Jewell MS told the Washington Post:

"The weight of history is on [the team] in lots of ways But rather than seeing it as a weight on their heads, I would prefer for them to see it as a support beneath them ... I really feel we've made it now, and whatever happens from here is a wonderful bonus. I hope the players see that – that in our eyes they're already winners."

Next steps

67. The Committee will:

- Monitor the WRU's response to the findings and recommendations of the independent review looking into these matters;
- Continue to review the impact of funding pressures on the delivery of non-statutory sport and leisure services by local authorities, including swimming pools; and
- Review the findings of the Welsh Government's evaluation of its activities at the FIFA World Cup.

7. Welsh Language

Census data and future work on coherence of Welsh language statistics

68. The Committee was disappointed by the drop in the number of Welsh speakers in Wales over the past ten years. The Census data shows that it will take a long time and sustained support to reverse decades of decreases in the number of Welsh speakers. The Committee is of the view that this shows the urgency of the need to act to stop the decline.

69. Against the backdrop of the disappointing Census results, the Welsh Government has announced that it will be working with the Office for National Statistics during 2023-24 and beyond to improve understanding of the main survey and administrative data sources used to produce statistics about the Welsh language. The need for this work arises in part due to the different numbers of Welsh speakers recorded in the Census, the Annual Population Survey and various Welsh Government surveys. The Committee will be reviewing this work as it progresses before considering what further action to take.

Inquiry on the legislative framework that supports Welsh-medium education provision

70. In 2017, the Welsh Government set an ambitious target to increase the number of Welsh speakers to a million by 2050 (Cymraeg 2050), along with an increase in the language's daily use. The Strategy noted that the education sector would play a pivotal role in creating the bulk of new Welsh speakers, with the effective implementation of Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs) by local authorities a critical aspect of this work. The Committee agreed to take a closer look at the legislative and policy framework, and the resources supporting WESP development, to determine whether the resources in place are sufficient to achieve the Cymraeg 2050 targets and ambitions.

71. This inquiry was also the first, hopefully of many, inquiries to be undertaken jointly by Senedd Committees on matters of shared interest. Rapporteurs from the Children, Young People, and Education Committee participated in the oral

evidence sessions as full Members of the Committee and contributed to the inquiry report. The model chosen for this inquiry worked well, enabling us to tap into broader expertise, knowledge and Member views.

72. The Committee considered written evidence from a range of stakeholders following a public consultation. Over five evidence sessions, the Committee spoke to stakeholders from local government, those in the education sector and the Welsh Language Commissioner, among others. The Committee took evidence from the Minister for Education and Welsh Language in November 2022. The Committee also hosted a focus group with stakeholders who are involved in supporting the development of local authority WESPs.

73. Following the publication of Census 2021 data, which showed a decline in the number of Welsh speakers in Wales, it was decided that we would issue a further call for evidence. This call for evidence asked those who had already given evidence to the Committee to share their views on the implications of the Census 2021 data on matters relating to the inquiry. Among the key challenges highlighted by the responses was the urgent need to increase capacity in the bilingual education workforce, which includes increasing Welsh and bilingual capacity within the early-years sector. Additional evidence also highlighted the critical role which the English-medium sector has in developing fluent Welsh speakers if the decline in the number of Welsh speakers is to be reversed. This includes the need to move schools along the linguistic continuum at pace.

74. The Committee is grateful to every individual and organisation who took the time to contribute to the inquiry.

National Eisteddfod 2022



75. The Committee held a panel discussion at the first National Eisteddfod held since the Covid-19 pandemic. At the event in Tregaron in August 2022, the Committee hosted a discussion asking “What next for arts and culture in Wales?” following the pandemic. The panel, chaired by Delyth Jewell MS, included contributions from actor Mali Ann Rees, Gwenllïan Anthony from music band Adwaith, and Steffan Donnelly, Artistic Director for Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru.

Next steps

76. The Committee will:

- Review joint work by the ONS and the Welsh Government on improving understanding of the main survey and administrative data sources used to produce statistics about the Welsh language; and
- Consider the outcome of the Welsh Government’s White Paper consultation on its Welsh Language Education Bill, and scrutinise any legislation that is introduced.

8. Other activity

Welsh Government Draft Budget for 2023-24

77. The Committee has undertaken scrutiny of the Welsh Government's Draft Budget for 2023-24 during January and February 2023.

Legislation

78. The Committee considered the following Legislative Consent Memoranda:

- The Legislative Consent Memoranda on the Data Protection and Digital Information (No.2) Bill.
- The Legislative Consent Memoranda on the Online Safety Bill.
- The Legislative Consent Memorandum on the Northern Ireland Protocol Bill.

Pre-appointment scrutiny

79. For the first time in the Sixth Senedd, Welsh Government Ministers and the Senedd have agreed to introduce pre-appointment scrutiny by committees of some Chair appointments to improve the scrutiny and transparency of the public appointment process.

80. The Committee held a pre-appointment scrutiny session for the Welsh Government's preferred candidate for the posts of:

- Welsh Language Commissioner
- Chair of Arts Council of Wales; and
- Chair of Amgueddfa Cymru.

Annex 1: Reports published during 2022-23

Date	Topic
July 2022	Annual Report 2021-22
August 2022	Levelling the playing field: A report on participation in sport and physical activity in disadvantaged areas
October 2022	Pre-appointment hearing the preferred candidate for Welsh Language Commissioner
November 2022	Increasing costs Impact on culture and sport
November 2022	Northern Ireland Protocol Bill Legislative Consent Memorandum
December 2022	Online Safety Bill Supplementary Legislative Consent Memorandum (No.2)
February 2023	Online Safety Bill Supplementary Legislative Consent Memorandum (No.3 and No.4)
March 2023	Welsh Government Draft Budget - 2023-24
March 2023	Pre-appointment hearing the preferred candidate for Chair of Arts Council of Wales
May 2023	The legislative framework that supports Welsh-medium education provision
June 2023	Online Safety Bill Supplementary Legislative Consent Memorandum (No.5)
June 2023	Allegations concerning the Welsh Rugby Union
July 2023	Pre-appointment hearing the preferred candidate for Chair of National Museum Wales
July 2023	Data Protection and Digital Information Bill No.2 Legislative Consent Memorandum (No.1 and No.2)