

Welsh Language Impact Assessment

Welsh Language Impact Assessment

Title: Reforming Local Government: Resilient and Renewed	WLIA Reference No <i>(completed by WLU):</i>				
Name of person completing form:					
Date:					
Policy lead:					
Contact details:					
Programme/Project Type					
<input type="checkbox"/> Policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Project or programme				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Legislation	<input type="checkbox"/> Research, evaluation				
<input type="checkbox"/> Grant	<input type="checkbox"/> Services				
<input type="checkbox"/> Business change	<input type="checkbox"/> Contracts, tenders				
<input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure					
<input type="checkbox"/> Construction, Capital					
<input type="checkbox"/> ICT					
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify below)					
Costs: How much is the projected whole life cost for the programme/project? If below £25k, then a full WLIA is not always required (see guidance).					
Under £25k	£25k - £49k	£50 - £249K	£250K - £1m	Over £1m	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Of the above, please provide details if there are any identified costs directly associated with the Welsh language? No costs directly associated with the Welsh language have been identified at this stage.					
How long is the programme/project expected to run?					
Up to 1 yr	Up to 2yrs	Up to 5yrs	Up to 10yrs	More than 10 yrs	Unknown
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Key milestone dates for the programme/ project:					

This Welsh Language Impact Assessment relates to the proposals in the White Paper: Reforming Local Government: Resilient and Renewed, published for consultation on 31 January 2017, and the proposals which received wide support in the draft Local Government (Wales) Bill published in 2015 (referred to as the Draft Bill throughout the document).

This consultation document sets out the Welsh Government's vision for a new relationship between national and local government. One where there is a mutual understanding and recognition of respective roles and interests, and where all partners are given the space to maximise the positive impact they have through working alongside citizens on mutually agreed agendas. It sets out a new approach to reform focused on greater regional working. It sets a framework for local government to work within, providing a menu of options that local government can use, based on their local circumstances and strengths. It also highlights those proposals previously consulted upon which received broad support and we intend to take forward.

The White Paper, Reforming Local Government: Resilient and Renewed, follows on from three earlier White Papers, an Assembly Act and a Draft Bill.

The first White Paper, *Reforming Local Government*, was launched in July 2014. It outlined the Welsh Government's response to the findings of the Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery in relation to local government. It proposed major reform through two pieces of legislation. The first Act, the Local Government (Wales) Act 2015, puts in place preparations for a programme of local government mergers and reform, such as the setting up of Transition Committees.

The second White Paper, *Public Services Staff Commission*, was launched in October 2014. It proposed the establishment of a Commission to develop and disseminate good practice in workforce arrangements across public services. The Public Services Staff Commission was established on a non-statutory basis in autumn 2015.

The third White Paper, *Reforming Local Government: Power to Local People*, was published in February 2015. It focused on the internal development of councils to complement and support the structural reform set out in the first White Paper, *Reforming Local Government*. It proposed a range of fundamental reforms to ensure strong performance, robust democracy and, good governance and effective delivery for communities.

These, together with the provision for local authority mergers, formed the basis of the Draft Bill. Although the majority of the provisions within the Draft Bill, published October 2015, were welcomed and are being proposed as part of any future local government Bill, the proposed mergers option did not receive sufficient political support.

The latest White Paper sets out a new mandatory and systematic approach to regional working, whilst retaining the existing 22 local authorities¹ as the democratic foundation local government.

Should this consultation lead to the preparation of a Bill, the potential impact on the Welsh Language as a result will be considered throughout the drafting process. An updated Welsh Language Impact Assessment will be published alongside any future Bill.

¹ local authorities refers to the 22 county and county borough councils throughout this document.

STAGE 1: PLANNING

What are the aims and objectives of the policy?

What are the desired outcomes/ what constitutes 'success'?

The White Paper sets out the Welsh Government's vision for a new relationship between national and local government. One where there is a mutual understanding and recognition of respective roles and interests.

The White Paper highlights our ongoing commitment to fundamental reforms to ensure strong performance, robust democracy, good governance and effective delivery for communities.

The White Paper aims to build on existing capability and capacity among local authorities, through a range of reforms. New regional arrangements would aim to strengthen the way that local authorities take strategic decisions and deliver services, which will impact upon Welsh speakers, Welsh-speaking communities and the Welsh language. Many further outcomes will be determined by local authorities themselves, and it is important not to pre-empt those decisions here, as the impacts will be determined in due course.

Although the White Paper contains no provisions focused solely on Welsh speakers, Welsh-speaking communities, or the Welsh language, the provisions aim to benefit all communities in Wales. A summary of the proposals is set out below.

Regional Arrangements

- Create a more resilient and sustainable local government. Increasing capacity and building resilience are essential if local authorities are to meet the financial and demographic challenges that lie ahead.
- Considering a range of regional arrangements, taking into consideration a number of factors and evaluating the benefits and disadvantages of these options.
- Effectively distributing scarce or specialist resources throughout local government.

Shared Service

- Pursuing shared support services and collectively making more rapid and deeper progress in this area, continuing to secure even more efficient delivery of services as well as other wider benefits.
- Consider the possibility of shared services based on shared technology platforms, specialist services and joint or shared transactional services.
- Wider consideration of the potential for better management and use of public sector assets through regional planning and governance.
- A more proactive collaborative asset management approach across the Welsh public sector.

Voluntary Mergers

- Enable local authorities to proceed with voluntary mergers.
- Support local authorities to develop their cases for merger, and help align proposed mergers with any mandatory and systematic regional arrangements. This would be done on the understanding that the rationale and circumstances around any voluntary merger would be unique to the local authorities involved.

- Any voluntary merger proposal should take account of ongoing resilience of the organisation, effective delivery of services and proposed financial position of the future entity. It must set out sufficient benefits to citizens and communities to warrant the merger. In doing so it must take account of any guidance issued by Welsh Government.

Governance and Accountability

- A regional governance model will require that decisions which are being taken are in the best interests of people across the region.
- Ensuring that Elected Members remain at the heart of the decision making and scrutiny process.
- Regional arrangements will need to be appropriately scrutinised to ensure effective performance and value for money are being delivered, and that better outcomes are being achieved at a regional level.
- Provide a clear framework for making arrangements to hold those making decisions to account.
- A proposed common framework to support pooling of budgets to support functions exercised by Joint Governance Committees.

Performance and improvement

- Remaining committed to reducing performance reporting requirements, including plans, annual reports and strategies. Reducing where possible unnecessary burdens put on local government.
- Remaining committed to putting a new duty on leaders of political groups to promote good standards of conduct by their members and co-operate with Standards Committees exercising their functions. Where appropriate, Standards Committees will hear cases of alleged failure by members to perform prescribed performance duties, as well as breaches of the member code of conduct.
- As proposed in the Draft Bill, external audit and review bodies will be required to work more closely together, to ensure they gather a more holistic overview of local authority performance through 'stock take' discussions. These bodies will also be required to cooperate more closely with internal scrutiny committees.
- Local authorities will be required to undertake a robust self assessment process, supported by regular peer reviews.
- A commitment to strengthen the role of Corporate Governance and Audit Committees.
- The Welsh Government will retain a power of intervention and the ability to commission and act upon the findings of independent governance reviews, where there are concerns. This is in addition to intervention arrangements under service specific areas.
- An ongoing commitment to changing performance management arrangements. Subject to consultation, the Welsh Government proposes to repeal Part 1 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 for all Improvement Authorities.

Leading Localities

- Take steps to increase diversity among those who stand for election and encourage greater participation in local democracy.

- Local authorities will be provided with a General Power of Competence, to allow them to become more innovative in their service delivery.
- Require local authorities to produce strategies explaining how the public can understand how decisions are made and how they can participate in the process.
- Make broadcasting of council meetings a statutory requirement and councils will be required to allow Members to attend council meetings remotely if they have domestic, business or travel difficulties preventing them getting to the main meeting.
- Require leaders and elected mayors to make arrangements to make themselves accessible to interaction with the public.
- New arrangements will be put in place to make council meetings more accessible and open, including requirements for the compulsory broadcasting of council meetings.
- Clearer expectations of the performance of Elected Members will be set out in the form of performance duties including duties to report on how they have engaged with the public. Cases of breach of those duties will be considered by Standards Committees.

Community Councils

- Making the General Power of Competence available to innovative ambitious community councils that meet eligibility criteria and are looking for more freedom to serve their communities.
- Put an obligation on community councils to consider and plan for their training needs, publish the plan and review it regularly.
- Ensure citizens are kept informed and have the right to make representations on any business conducted at a council meeting.

Elections and Voting

- An intention to explore how a single electronic register for Wales might be developed.
- Continued commitment to moving to a five-year term for local government, however, in doing so a requirement for greater transparency for those standing for office.
- Allow councils in Wales to determine a voting system that best reflects the needs of their local people and communities. Local authorities will be able to decide for themselves between the 'First Past the Post' or the 'Single Transferable Vote' systems for elections to their council

An updated WLIA will be published with any future Bill.

What policy options have been considered?

and

What impacts will there be if the policy is *not* implemented?

The White Paper is part of the Reforming Local Government work programme, which forms part of the Welsh Government's response to the Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery (the Williams Commission), published in January 2014. Policy options have also been informed by the responses to consultations on the three White Papers and the Draft Bill.

The Williams Commission was clear that public services in Wales face severe and prolonged challenges. The effects of recession and austerity on public sector budgets will continue to be felt for many years. At the same time, Wales' population is growing, becoming older, and public expectations on the providers of public services are higher than ever before.

The Williams Commission was clear that there are wide variations in local performance. There are some good examples of performance, but reform is required. Recent Welsh Government interventions, inspections and audit reports highlight the need for change. Smaller organisations face a greater challenge as their capacity and flexibility is more constrained.

The Williams Commission considered policy options throughout its report and final recommendations, which the Welsh Government has broadly accepted. The Welsh Government have consulted thoroughly on options for local government reform and responses to these consultations have generally expressed support for the majority of proposals, and have been influential in developing the policy options. Some of the options considered, but ultimately not pursued, include:

- A range of different configurations for merging local authorities
- Term limits for elected members to local authorities.
- Lifting restrictions on officers standing for election in their own local authority.

A recent consultation on the White Paper *Reforming Local Government: Power to Local People* included questions on the proposals' impacts on the Welsh language and Welsh-speaking communities. Many participants did not respond to these questions. Those that did noted effects on the Welsh language. Responses tended to either suggest that the Welsh language should not be prioritised, or, among those responding positively, that the wide proposals for more open and representative local government would benefit Welsh speakers and Welsh-speaking communities.

The Welsh Government also recently concluded a Working Group *Language, Work and Bilingual Services*² which considered Welsh language in the context of local government. A move towards greater regional working will enable many of the Report's recommendations to be taken forward.

It is worth restating the Welsh Government's overall policy position on the Welsh language. The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 gives official status to the Welsh language in Wales. This includes treating the language no less favourably than English, and the freedom of people to use the Welsh language with one another. Public bodies in Wales, including local government, must promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language, and support those who wish to work or conduct their business through the medium of Welsh. Through the 2011 Measure and associated regulations, the Welsh Government has introduced a regime of duties known as Welsh Language Standards for Local Government. These are enforced by the Welsh Language Commissioner. The standards apply to local authorities generally and also to their committees and joint committees; it is the Welsh Government's intention that standards should apply to the proposed 'Joint Governance Committees' and provision will be made to that effect if needed. The standards will also apply to services provided through regional working, and to services which they may delegate or contract out to the third sector, the private sector, or another public body.

If the policies set out in the White Paper are not implemented there will be no direct negative impacts, however, the wide ranging positive opportunities would be missed.

² <http://gov.wales/docs/dsjlg/publications/160614-language-work-bilingual-services-en.pdf>

Does the programme demonstrate a clear link with the Welsh Government's strategy for the Welsh language - *A million Welsh speakers by 2050*

The Welsh Government's present strategy for the Welsh language - *iaith fyw: iaith byw* – is currently being replaced by a new strategy to support the Welsh Government's objective of a million Welsh speakers by 2050. A draft of the new strategy has been consulted on and a summary of the consultation responses published. The final strategy will be published during the spring of 2017. It is likely to stress the importance of education and early years provision, use of Welsh in the workplace and in delivering public services, and promoting the use of Welsh more widely. There is likely to be a particular focus on using the language – in the community, when accessing public services, and within the workplace. Local government plays a key role in all these areas. It is worth noting that local government in Wales has specific duties to promote the Welsh language under the standards regime, including a requirement to produce a strategy which shows how a local authority intends to promote the Welsh language and facilitate its use in its area, with targets for increasing or maintaining the number of Welsh speakers in the area.

The vision set out in the White Paper will support local government in meeting its commitments to the Welsh language, Welsh speakers, and Welsh-speaking communities. Regional arrangements will increase the resilience within local government, improving the shared capacity and capability of regions. This is likely to support them in delivering Welsh-medium services, particularly in light of current and future financial and demographic pressures.

Regional working arrangements will present opportunities for Local Authorities to build sustainable services. As part of this there will be scope to share Welsh language capacity to ensure those wishing to receive services through the medium of Welsh are able to do so, for example, through improved regional education planning. This will be enabled by both the sharing of staff and professionals who plan and deliver services, and the sharing of Welsh language capacity in corporate services. Local Authorities working together can be a catalyst for ambitious improvements to the standard of Welsh language services.

Regional arrangements will also provide an opportunity for local authorities to come together to exploit digital technology to open up a wider range of services to delivery through the medium of Welsh. Welsh language services include Welsh-medium services for children and young people, as well as the infrastructure for delivering such services to Welsh speakers and Welsh-speaking communities, including innovative digital options. Particular aspects of the White Paper (such as the General Power of Competence) will support local authorities to become more innovative when commissioning and delivering such services.

Regional arrangements will provide a clear opportunity to provide proactive support and systematise the use of Welsh within the areas they serve. It will be essential that the development of regional 'Joint Governance Committees' does not erode current practice in those local authorities which conduct their internal administration either entirely or largely in Welsh. Indeed, whatever the current practice across local government in Wales, the Welsh Ministers seek that such practice be strengthened and built upon.

The White Paper is also likely to support the position of the Welsh language in communities: not just through improving Welsh-medium services, but through its proposals to ensure local government better reflects the communities it serves. A local government closer to communities – through more diverse Elected Members, having more open and transparent local authorities is likely to strengthen the ability of Welsh speakers and Welsh speaking communities to influence decisions which affect

them.

As major employers, local authorities play an important part in the economies of the areas in which their headquarters and other offices are located. In Welsh-speaking areas of Wales, the existence of such places of work provide an important piece of the jigsaw in the local economy. They provide opportunities for the local Welsh-speaking population to remain in, or return to, their local areas – something which is vitally important for the future sustainability of the language in those communities. As such, we will expect decisions regarding the management of the estates within the regions to take full account of the potential impacts on the Welsh language. Supporting a collaborative approach to leadership, making Welsh language a firm part of the regional economic development agenda will be important for the resilience of communities where Welsh is strong.

In line with the principle of subsidiarity, the full effects of these reforms are likely to be realised through decisions taken by Regional ‘Joint Governance Committees’. The impacts of these decisions will be appraised at a local level in due course, through the requirement on local authorities to consider matters which both positively and adversely affect the Welsh language when making policy decisions (standards 88 to 97). It is the responsibility of the Welsh Language Commissioner to monitor and enforce compliance with these standards.

What are the impacts/ effects (both positive and/or adverse) on the Welsh language you have identified at the initial planning stage

i.e. Welsh speakers, Welsh language communities, Welsh medium education, Welsh learners, services available in Welsh?

The Welsh language, Welsh-speaking communities, and Welsh speakers in communities where Welsh is not the main language are all likely to benefit from the general aims of the White Paper.

The reforms proposed in the White Paper seek to ensure local government is more resilient, efficient, accountable, and shares more power and responsibility with communities. **In this context, ‘communities’ means communities of interest as well as communities of place, and so encompasses Welsh speakers in all parts of Wales, not just those communities where the Welsh language is predominant.** This should ensure local authorities can better serve and represent those who speak Welsh and better provide services, facilities, and education in the Welsh language. The proposals should also enhance the ability of local authorities’ to support culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and to meet their requirements under the Welsh Language Standards to promote and facilitate use of the Welsh language, including in the workplace.

However, certain proposals are also likely to have some particular impacts on the Welsh speakers and Welsh-speaking communities. These are summarised below.

1. Local Authority Regional Arrangements

The regional working arrangements will present opportunities for local authorities to build sustainable services. As part of this there will be scope to share Welsh language capacity to ensure those wishing to receive services through the medium of Welsh are able to do so. This will be enabled by sharing professional expertise in the planning and commissioning of services, sharing staff delivering services, and sharing corporate Welsh language capacity (such as translation services). It will also potentially enable local authorities to come together to explore how digital technology can open up a wider range of services to delivery through the medium of Welsh.

If local authorities come together on the economic development footprint to deliver a range of services such as strategic land use planning and transport management, it will be important for consideration of the implications for the Welsh language to be built in to these processes. Local authorities will also need to consider their role in the delivery of *A million Welsh speakers by 2050* at this level.

*Language, Work and Bilingual Services*³, the Report of the Working Group on the Welsh language and Local Government was published in June 2016. A move towards systematic and mandatory regional working in local government will enable many of the Report's recommendations to be taken forward. For example, by supporting a collaborative approach on leadership, making Welsh language a firm part of the regional economic development agenda will be important for the resilience of communities where Welsh is strong.

There may also be opportunities for working across regional footprints where that is the right approach. For example, the *Language, Work and Bilingual Services*, Report recommends that a linguistic-economic strategy is developed for the counties of Anglesey, Gwynedd, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire. Flexibility in regional working arrangements would allow for such an approach to be considered.

Overall, the Welsh Ministers believe that strengthening the capacity and capability of local authorities should support their ability to work bilingually, and to enable staff to work through the medium of Welsh, if they wish. Regional working will present local authorities with new opportunity to share and strengthen best practice, which would be realised according to decisions taken locally.

2. Shared Services

The proposed regional arrangements set out in the White Paper will require local authorities to consider how back office and administrative services can most effectively support regional working and create opportunities for the sharing of supporting services.

Regional arrangements would provide good opportunities to develop shared Welsh language services, such as translation services and better use of digital, such as intranet services, machine translation and bilingual software. There will be opportunities for sharing valuable Welsh language expertise in organisational development. This is particularly important in the area of human resources, for example, in relation to HR policies, recruitment, training through the medium of Welsh, learning Welsh and workforce planning.

3. Diversity of Elected Members

The White Paper includes proposals to improve the diversity of Elected Members, so they more closely represent the communities they serve. Measures to encourage this include placing a requirement on the Leader of the council to have due regard to guidance relating to equality and diversity when selecting a Cabinet. This should help to ensure that local authorities more closely reflect their communities as a whole.

4. A Framework for Local Leadership

The White Paper sets out our continued commitment to a range of measures to ensure that the

³ <http://gov.wales/docs/dsjlg/publications/160614-language-work-bilingual-services-en.pdf>

corporate governance of all local authorities is consistently robust.

A regional governance model will require decisions to be made in the best interest of the people across the region, including decisions regarding the Welsh language.

The Welsh Government will provide a framework within which local government can operate to best meet the current and future needs of individuals and communities. This framework must be flexible, offering a menu of choices to allow local government to operate in the way that best meets local needs. Welsh language considerations will play a significant part in making these choices, ensuring the needs of Welsh speakers and the promotion of the language are fully considered throughout the process.

The White Paper continues with the policy intention set out in the Draft Bill to introduce a range of provisions to strengthen local authority's abilities to identify and realise opportunities for improvement. These include new measures on self assessment, peer review, and working more closely with external review bodies. The intention is also for audit, inspection and regulation bodies to work together more effectively and also work more closely with Authorities to support better outcomes for citizens. The Welsh Government will retain a power of intervention and the ability to commission and act upon findings of independent governance reviews. These changes should support local authorities to continue to improve their performance, meaning that, for example, Welsh Language Standards are more likely to be met, and quality services provided in Welsh. Strengthened corporate governance processes should ensure any shortcomings are more likely to be identified, and effective solutions implemented. Again, these provisions could be particularly beneficial in areas where Welsh is not the main language.

5. Openness, engagement, and transparency

The White Paper seeks to ensure local democracy is stronger, more open, and more participative. It does so by setting out our continued support for a public participation duty for local authorities, and provisions affording communities specific rights to contribute to council discussions, and to participate in community governance. Under the participation duty, local authorities will have to set out how they intend to encourage local people to participate in local authorities' decision-making, and how they can make representations before and after decisions are made. This is likely to improve engagement with Welsh speakers and Welsh-speaking communities, increasing the likelihood their needs are met effectively.

It will give Welsh speakers a greater opportunity to make representations about decisions which might affect the Welsh language, either positively or negatively. In addition, local authorities will be required to broadcast council meetings, allowing Welsh-language communities, often in rural areas, to understand how decisions affecting them are taken.

6. General Power of Competence

The White Paper contains provisions to extend a general power of competence to all principal councils and to community councils which meet certain criteria and resolve themselves to be eligible.

Within certain constraints, the general power of competence enables County and County Borough Councils and eligible community councils to do anything an individual generally may do. The power has been used by local authorities in England, for example, to run mortgage indemnity schemes to support first time house buyers, in partnership with private lending bodies and housing associations. The general power could be used by County and County Borough Councils to take action to promote

and facilitate use of the Welsh language, directly or indirectly, in ways they may not be currently authorised to do, but it will be for individual councils to determine how they wish to exercise the power. The general power will give eligible community councils wider powers to act in new ways in response to the cares and concerns of their communities.

Where the general power can be used to develop alternative delivery models on behalf of a local authority, for example involving co-operatives, mutuals or other partners, it is worth noting that the delegated function continues to be a function of the local authority and so subject to the Welsh Language Standards. For example, it is the local authority's responsibility to ensure service users are able to access services (to which the Welsh Language Standards apply) in the Welsh language where the service is delivered by another body on behalf of the authority, and for the Welsh Language Commissioner to ensure those standards are enforced.

Who are the stakeholders? Are the needs of Welsh speakers and learners addressed? To what extent are Welsh language interest groups likely to respond positively to the proposals?

Anyone living or working in Wales is a stakeholder for the changes proposed in this White Paper, including all Welsh speakers and learners. Other key stakeholders directly affected include local authorities, community councils, Elected Members, and senior officers.

Consultations on the Draft Bill and previous White Papers received responses from a wide range of organisations and members of the public, many of which were in Welsh. These consultation documents asked specific questions on the proposals' impacts on the Welsh language and Welsh-speaking communities. A number of events have also been held across Wales which provided opportunities for views to be put forward including on the impact of the proposals on the Welsh language. Welsh Ministers and officials have also engaged in a dialogue with the Welsh Language Commissioner.

Contributions in respect of the potential impact of the proposals on the Welsh language will again be welcome during this White Paper consultation exercise. In accordance with the standards there is a specific question contained in the White Paper seeking views on the impact of the proposals on the opportunities to use Welsh and equal treatment of the Welsh language compared to the English language.

Where an assessment was not completed, or no impacts were identified, please provide a full account for record keeping purposes?

(This could be used in the Welsh Language Tribunal in future)

N/A

What actions/ further work has been identified at the initial planning stage?

e.g. data requirements, need for peer review, external engagement with Welsh speaking groups, identify stakeholders or consultation list, need to contact Welsh Language Unit for advice)?

N/A

Following the White Paper consultation, a further Welsh Language Impact Assessment will be published if future legislation is introduced to the National Assembly.

STAGE 2: IDENTIFYING AND ASSESSING IMPACTS

Impact Assessment Summary

Summarise the detailed impact assessment carried out together with the scores assigned.

Positive effects/ impacts:

1. Regional Arrangements

The White Paper proposes a number of new regional arrangements, whilst the existing 22 local authorities remain, subject to any voluntary mergers. Existing local authorities will continue to be subject to the Welsh Language Standards, as will 'Joint Governance Committees'. The new regional arrangements present an opportunity for best practice to be strengthened and shared widely throughout local government. A more robust and resilient local government will be more equipped to face the financial and demographic challenges which lie ahead, alongside effectively fulfilling their commitments to the Welsh Language.

IMPACT SCORE 9 (Impact: 3, Probability: 3)

2. Voluntary Mergers

The White Paper proposes to allow existing local authorities to come forward with voluntary merger proposals. Welsh language considerations will form a key part of any voluntary merger proposal and the impact of any changes will be considered thoroughly. At this stage it is not possible to predict any future voluntary mergers and the impact of any proposals would be considered if any proposals are brought forward.

IMPACT SCORE 6 (Impact: 3, Probability: 2)

3. Diversity of Elected Members

The White Paper proposes a range of measures to improve the diversity of Elected Members, so they more closely represent the communities they serve. This could improve the representation of Welsh speakers and Welsh-speaking communities, with positive impacts on the decisions taken relating to the Welsh language.

IMPACT SCORE 9 (Impact: 3, Probability: 3)

4. Corporate governance, performance, and improvement

The White Paper sets out our continued support for a range of measures to improve the corporate governance and performance of local authorities, putting authorities in a better position to implement their strategies on promoting and facilitating use of the Welsh language. It is considered that establishing new regional arrangements would allow capabilities and expertise to be shared wider, creating new opportunities to improve their fulfilment of Welsh language commitments.

IMPACT SCORE 9 (Impact: 3, Probability: 3)

5. Shared Service

The regional arrangements proposed in the White Paper provide local authorities with a clear opportunity to pursue opportunities for further sharing of back office services. Greater regional working would benefit the Welsh language, creating clear opportunities to share translation services, regional digital services, and sharing valuable Welsh language corporate expertise.

IMPACT SCORE 9 (Impact 3, Probability 3)

6. Openness, engagement, and transparency

The White Paper aims to provide a vision for local government which ensures local democracy is stronger, more open, and more participative. It proposes the introduction of measures to provide greater openness and transparency which would bring Local Government closer to citizens, including Welsh speakers and Welsh-speaking communities, so that decisions would more likely be taken in their interests. Communities would benefit from being more directly and closely involved in decision-making and service-delivery.

IMPACT SCORE 6 (Impact: 2, Probability: 3)

7. General Power of Competence

The White Paper proposes to extend a general power of competence to all local authorities and to eligible community councils, thus enabling local government to become more innovative in its service delivery. This would provide a greater range of options to take action to promote or facilitate use of the Welsh language. Where the general power could be used to develop alternative delivery models on behalf of a local authority, the Welsh Language Standards continue to apply to that function.

IMPACT SCORE 6 (Impact: 2, Probability: 3)

Adverse effects/ impacts:

The policies in the White Paper aim to make positive changes, intended to improve the services local authorities provide to everyone in their communities. However, there is a risk that some negative impacts could materialise. Many facets of culture and identity are inherently local and grounded in place. Any regional arrangements will need to be sensitive to the very local impact of decisions, considering the risk that regional decisions could negatively impact local areas. At this stage of the policy development, very few possibilities have been identified, some potential negative impacts include:

- if new, larger regional bodies deliver services, there could be some initial disruption to Welsh language services while new processes are implemented;
- delivering services at scale might result in local needs of Welsh language speakers being overlooked; and
- the proposed change to relax rules relating to on remote attendance of meetings, carries the potential risk that it might decide that translation facilities are not required in a remotely attended meeting. However, local authorities will still be bound by their own Welsh Language standards.
- The location of posts, including Welsh language posts, would need to be considered carefully. There is a risk that regional arrangements could alter the current distribution of roles within Wales, the potential impact of this would need to be fully considered.

As policy development continues and proposals become more focused, further steps will be taken to identify and assess any potential negative impacts. Part of this includes asking the following questions as part of the White Paper consultation:

29a. *The Welsh Language Impact Assessment published alongside the White Paper outlines the Welsh Government's view of the effect of the proposals contained in the White Paper on the opportunities*

for people to use the Welsh language and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language. The Welsh Government seeks views on that assessment. Are there any other positive or adverse effects not identified in the assessment?

29b. *Could the proposals be re-formulated so as to increase the positive effects or reduce any possible adverse effects?*

The Welsh Government are seeking feedback on whether all the potential positive and negative impacts have been identified or if there are impacts which have not been fully recognised at this stage.

Once policy proposals become more specific and the associated negative impacts have been fully assessed, clear plans will be made to mitigate risks.

Opportunities to promote the Welsh language e.g. status, use of Welsh language services, use of Welsh in everyday life, Welsh at work increased?

All the effects identified above give opportunities to promote and facilitate use of the Welsh language.

Evidence/ data used including demographic profile when considering the effects/ impacts:

No further analysis has been undertaken at this stage.

A further Welsh Language Impact Assessment will be published if a Local Government (Wales) Bill is introduced into the National Assembly.

What is the overall anticipated likely impact on the Welsh language if this policy is taken forward based on the impact assessment/ risk assessment?

Positive:
 Adverse:
 Neutral:
 Unknown:

Decision following IA

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1. No major change | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Adjust the policy to improve impacts | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Continue the policy with mitigation measures | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Stop and remove the policy | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If answered 2,3, or 4 above – then answer the following:

How will you address these impacts in order to improve the outcomes for the Welsh language? Details of mitigation measures/ action points/ alternative options to reduce adverse impacts and increase positive outcomes:

If engaging or consulting, what are your plans? What questions do you wish to ask stakeholders about the Welsh Language Impact Assessment and Welsh language related issues?

Stakeholders will be free to identify and highlight potential impacts of the proposals on the Welsh language, Welsh speakers, and Welsh-speaking communities.

The White Paper includes the following specific question regarding the impact on the Welsh language as required by the Welsh Language Standards:

The Welsh Language Impact Assessment published alongside the White Paper outlines the Welsh Government's view of the effect of the proposals contained in the White Paper on the opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language. The Welsh Government seeks views on that assessment. Are there any other positive or adverse effects not identified in the assessment? Could the proposals be re-formulated so as to increase the positive effects or reduce any possible adverse effects?

Prior to the publication of this White Paper, engagement events were held across Wales. The issues raised during these events, along with the all responses to this White Paper, will form part of the evidence used to inform any future Local Government (Wales) Bill.

STAGE 3: POST CONSULTATION AND PREPARING FOR PUBLICATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Following consultation, what changes have you made to address any Welsh language issues that were raised?

During previous Reforming Local Government consultations a range of considerations have been raised by Welsh-language stakeholders. This feedback has been used to inform and shape this White Paper and our on going programme of local government reform.

A further Welsh Language Impact Assessment will be completed to accompany any Local Government (Wales) Bill as introduced to the National Assembly. This will provide the opportunity to address any issues identified during this consultation, and will assess the impacts of any proposed policy changes.

How will you monitor the ongoing effects during the implementation of the policy?

The Welsh Ministers will continue to closely monitor the effects of the proposed reforms as they are implemented. Monitoring will take place as part of the wider Reforming Local Government programme, with the input of the Welsh Language Commissioner and other stakeholders.

Please outline how you will continue to capture effects/ impacts in future monitoring and evaluation?

Reports by the Welsh Language Commissioner on local authorities' Regional Joint Governance Committees implementation of the Welsh Language Standards, both before and during reform.

These reports will be used by the Welsh Ministers, the Welsh Language Commissioner, local authorities, and other stakeholders to inform their ongoing dialogue, and to improve the quality of services in Welsh.

Any other comments – ongoing results of evaluations, emerging impacts

4. Declaration

Policy lead: <i>*Please delete as appropriate:</i> The policy <i>*does / does not</i> have an impact upon the Welsh language. Where there were identified adverse impacts or missed opportunities, the appropriate amendments and actions have been put in place.
Name:
Department: EPS
Date (s):
Signature:
Planned Review Dates:

SRO ENDORSEMENT and REVIEW	
I am satisfied that the WLIA is an accurate reflection of the programme/project at this stage of development. By signing, I am able to confirm that the Welsh Language Standards have been given the appropriate attention. I will re-assess the programme/project at key stages throughout the life of the programme/ project, including policy reviews.	
Signed (Senior Responsible Owner)	Date
Signed (Senior Responsible Owner)	Review Date
Signed (Senior Responsible Owner)	Review Date
Signed (Senior Responsible Owner)	Review Date