

Ymgynghoriad cyhoeddus ar Wasanaethau Dwyieithog cyn y broses ddeddfu

Tystiolaeth gan Charles Heaven

National Assembly (Official Languages) Bill

I set out below my response to the consultation letter set in the website regarding public views on the above.

Question (a) No. The whole process of so-called 'equality' is biased in favour of Welsh when only a small proportion of people are bilingual and the whole population is English speaking. This process should be initiated via a process of a referendum put to individual members of the population for a proper consideration and not via the present arrangement which involves minimal advertising in the local press.

Question (b) Bilingual provision should be based on reasonable expense first and public request second.

Question (c) It is biased in favour of Welsh and this leads to an unreasonable amount of public expenditure on Welsh language provision in areas where the greater proportion of the local population is monoglot English speaking. The South Wales Argus for the 10th September 2011 contains a prime example of what is to my mind a disgraceful waste of public money. That is, a public notice advert for traffic restrictions on the A449 Usk to Raglan section. It fills two whole pages of the paper which is expensive advertising by any standard. The whole of the population of this area is English speaking and 98% or more monoglot English. There is little sense in doubling up the advert in Welsh when there is so little requirement for it and in these circumstances it should be available in Welsh on request. The same could easily apply in areas which are predominantly Welsh speaking.

Question (d) On the basis of proportionality English should have priority with Welsh/English provision being decided on reasonable expense and public request. This should be applicable particularly in Local Government where a disproportionate and unreasonable amount of money is spent on Welsh provision in areas where hardly anyone speaks Welsh.

Welsh or English if relevant in any locality should then be provided on request.

Question (e) Biased in favour of Welsh and out of all proportion to public requirements particularly as to reasonable expense.

Question (f) This question reveals a Welsh language bias and should be dropped altogether or re-phrased to reflect the requirements of the tax paying public.

Question (g) The whole business of language provision should reflect what the majority of the tax-paying public want. I like most English speaking people I know am not against Welsh as such but its provision is disproportionate and out of touch with public requirements. It has reached a level where the expense of the way provision is made has to be questioned in a serious manner. The advert above is an example, and a poll of people affected by that advert would be wholly against its bilingual content.

Question (h) Publish the facts as to the true cost of Welsh provision as now required and proposed by this draft Bill in both National and Local Government and then hold a referendum on every adult taxpayer for their views. The publicity for this consultation has been nominal and in my opinion is government and legislation by apathy.