

Welsh Parliament

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

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# Wales-Ireland relations

Exploring an old relationship in a  
new age

October 2023



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# **Wales-Ireland relations**

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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](http://www.senedd.wales/SeneddCulture)

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## 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 inquiry:



**Heledd Fychan MS**  
Plaid Cymru

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## Chair's foreword

The ties linking Wales with Ireland have always been about more than a simple expanse of water: it is a relationship which spans centuries, from the time before maps charted our seas to today's urgent challenges which lap at our shores. Out of shared legends and myths, a kinship developed between our lands which has withstood the tests of time and trade, and though the basis of that relationship has been affected greatly by Brexit, our Committee has found much evidence to attest to the strength of that ongoing kinship.

But just as the importance of our relationship has never been greater, so too have the challenges intensified. Brexit has wrought changes and tensions, and questions remain as to how joint work between the nations will be resourced in future years. Clarity is required on this matter, and urgently – for it would be regrettable indeed were this to place any limits, or lead to any loss in the close ties that link the two countries. Our report examines the detail of this area, both in terms of how that lack of clarity is impairing investment, and how this impasse might be addressed.

In spite of these challenges, our Committee was encouraged to learn about - and indeed witness first-hand - the significant goodwill, passion and enthusiasm which so many partners feel about continued cooperation across the Irish Sea. From ports to marine technology, our nation's answers to the most pressing crises facing our populations lie in joint working and innovation, and from our conversations with cultural organisations and artists, we have been gladdened to see that the rich tapestry which weaves and connects our national stories is as vibrant as ever. Can Wales and Ireland rely on this shared culture to ensure that our economic and research ties remain strong? Philip King remarked to us that, "...where culture leads, commerce follows," throwing down a gauntlet for those tasked with developing our future relationship. There is a challenge for us all in this point, of course, not to take these connections for granted, and it will be incumbent on the governments, parliaments and national organisations of our countries to strive for ever greater ties at this crucial juncture in our shared history.

Keeping those conversations going will be of vital importance. As Seamus Heaney reminds us, "If you have the words, there's always a chance that you'll find the way". The work of the coming years must be to ensure that future ties rely on more than chance alone. We were encouraged to hear from colleagues at University College Dublin that, "... while some projects have ended, interest in collaboration opportunities have not...", and it is in this vein that we would desire

to see our nations continuing to work together: to ensure that our unique partnership flourishes through renewed investment and enthusiasm. We are neighbours in more than just geography, and through linguistic, cultural, research and commercial ties, the preservation of that relationship will be of vital importance in the years ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Delyth Jewell'.

**Delyth Jewell MS**

Chair, Culture, Communication, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations



## Conclusions and Recommendations

**Conclusion 1.** We welcome the conclusion of the Windsor Framework and the potential opportunities it unlocks, particularly with respect to the UK’s association to Horizon..... Page 15

**Conclusion 2.** We welcome the association agreement reached between the UK and EU in relation to Horizon, and the opportunities it presents. The Welsh Government previously produced annual reports detailing Welsh participation in Horizon, and outlining achievements and successes. In light of this development, we believe there is an opportunity to resume reporting on Horizon participation in Wales..... Page 15

**Recommendation 1.** The Welsh Government should outline the potential opportunities provided by renewed Horizon participation in response to the Committee’s report..... Page 15

**Recommendation 2.** The Welsh Government should resume publishing annual reports on the achievements of Horizon participation in Wales. .... Page 15

**Recommendation 3.** The Welsh Government should increase the visibility of Wales-Ireland relations on its website by bringing together its strategies as they relate to Ireland in one place, to include the Irish Sea Framework, the International Strategy, the Shared Statement, and information about the role of the Dublin office, by the end of February 2024. This should be accompanied by clear explanations of how each strand relates to the others, and how this is coordinated..... Page 24

**Recommendation 4.** The Welsh Government should clarify roles and responsibilities of the Welsh Government in Wales and its office in Dublin, including where responsibility for: coordinating Wales-Ireland strategies; setting clear objectives and key performance indicators lies. .... Page 25

**Recommendation 5.** The Welsh Government should involve relevant civil society expertise (including the Future Generations and Welsh Language Commissioners) in its future Wales-Ireland relations work and explain how this will be done in its response to the Committee’s report. .... Page 25

**Recommendation 6.** The Welsh Government should provide more information about its activities to raise awareness of its Wales-Ireland strategies amongst Welsh stakeholders in its response to the Committee’s report. .... Page 25

**Recommendation 7.** The Welsh Government should produce an annual Wales-Ireland relations report which captures all its activity across its different strategies and any additional activity that falls outside of a strategy. This should demonstrate how Wales-Ireland activity across its different strategies is coordinated. The report should include performance indicators, evidence outcomes and reach, and evaluate progress..... Page 26

**Recommendation 8.** The Ireland-Wales Forum should produce annual activity reports, which monitor progress, summarise its meetings and identify next steps. The reports should help to better identify areas for targeted future support and should be completed after the next Forum meeting in October 2023. .... Page 26

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**Recommendation 10.** The First Minister should provide further details of how the Welsh Government would like to see the BIC improved, and the Welsh Government should request that the UK Government considers these proposals. .... Page 26

**Recommendation 11.** Where the Welsh Government adopts a similar approach for other priority international relationships, it should build in the findings of this report from the outset. .... Page 27

**Recommendation 12.** The Welsh Government should review the evidence we have gathered and use it to inform future decisions on priorities for Wales-Ireland cooperation post-2025. These lessons should be taken forward by the Welsh Government and reapplied to its other priority international relationships in future. .... Page 36

**Recommendation 13.** The Welsh Government should outline how this Committee, the Senedd, Welsh Government sponsored-bodies and other stakeholders will be involved in Wales-Ireland cooperation beyond 2025..... Page 36

**Recommendation 14.** As international relations policy appears indivisible from trade in respect of Wales-Ireland relations, the Welsh Government should clarify how they are coordinated across the work of government. .... Page 37

**Recommendation 15.** The Senedd Commission should provide the Committee with its views on the potential increase in the number of BIPA committees, as well as its considerations on increasing the number of Senedd representatives and filling the vacant seat.....Page 39

**Recommendation 16.** The Welsh and Irish governments should commit funding to Wales-Ireland relations proportionate to their ambition beyond 2025 without delay, to provide certainty to stakeholders and to ensure that opportunity costs are minimised.....Page 45

**Recommendation 17.** The Welsh Government should provide more information on Agile Cymru, including its focus on developing new links rather than preserving existing ones and the involvement of stakeholders.....Page 45

## 1. Introduction

- 1.** As Wales's closest European and external neighbour, Ireland and Wales have a history of cooperation based on historic, cultural, linguistic and economic ties. Their cooperation spans a range of matters including trade, economic development, education and research, energy, and climate change, some of which is formalised in government strategies and funding programmes.
- 2.** Whilst we welcome and applaud these efforts in light of what we have learned, we are surprised at how much of this valuable, ground-breaking joint work is not captured in regular reporting. We hope this report marks the start of the process to shine more light on this important chapter in the history of Wales-Ireland relations, and of Wales's own international story, and our recommendations are made in this spirit.
- 3.** The Wales-Ireland relationship is the Welsh Government's most developed strategic international relationship with another country. However, it continues to be subject to a period of significant change as both countries adapt to the United Kingdom's ("UK") exit from the European Union ("EU").
- 4.** The significant appetite on both sides of the Irish Sea to preserve, continue and extend cooperation is clear, borne of a renewed focus to retain their unique bonds. This provides exciting opportunities for the future. Equally clear to us is the challenge of funding this future, particularly in light of the challenge of replacement EU funding as projects draw to a close.
- 5.** Given the importance of the Wales-Ireland relationship to the Welsh Government's international relations, and the challenges of navigating the UK's post-Brexit relationship with the EU, we decided to undertake an inquiry to assess the effectiveness of the Welsh Government's approach, and whether this model for bilateral, international engagement could be applied to other priority countries and regions.
- 6.** Finally, the evidence we have received during this inquiry has shown us that our Committee also has an important role to play in enhancing Wales-Ireland relations. This report marks the first of this Committee's contribution to enhancing Wales-Ireland relations. Our next steps are detailed throughout this report.

## Terms of reference

**7.** In November 2022, we agreed to undertake an inquiry into Wales-Ireland relations. The terms of reference<sup>1</sup> for this inquiry were published on 12 December 2022, and set out the following areas for consideration:

- Wales-Ireland relations post-Brexit.
- Current approach to bilateral engagement between the Welsh and Irish governments and whether it is fit for purpose post-Brexit.
- The Ireland-Wales Shared Statement and Joint Action Plan (2021-2025) as an approach to international engagement.
- The funding of future cooperation and collaborative projects between Ireland and Wales.
- Priority areas for cooperation between Ireland and Wales.
- Opportunities in developing parliamentary relations between the Senedd and Oireachtas.

## Evidence gathering

**8.** To gather evidence for this inquiry, we ran a public consultation between 12 December 2022 and 24 February 2023.<sup>2</sup> We received 12 written responses.

**9.** We considered evidence from a range of organisations over eight oral evidence sessions between 22 March 2023 and 10 May 2023.<sup>3</sup> An outline of both the written and oral evidence can be found in Annexes 1 and 2 of this report.

**10.** We also undertook a visit to Dublin, Ireland between 26-28 April 2023, to meet Irish stakeholders. A note summarising our discussions during this visit was published on 3 October 2023.<sup>4</sup>

**11.** Since the conclusion of our evidence gathering, we have received additional information, including correspondence from the Welsh Government<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Committee inquiry: [Wales-Ireland relations](#)

<sup>2</sup> Committee Consultation: [Inquiry into Wales-Ireland relations](#)

<sup>3</sup> Committee meetings: [Wales-Ireland relations](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Engagement with stakeholders in Ireland](#) – October 2023 [PDF 162KB]

<sup>5</sup> Committee meetings: [Wales-Ireland relations](#)

We would like to thank everyone who took the time to contribute to our inquiry and to share their experiences with us. The insights shared with us have been truly invaluable.

Ba mhaith linn ár mbuíochas ó chroí a ghabháil le gach uile dhuine a chuidigh lenár bhfiosrúcháin agus a roinn a dtaithe linn. Tá an léargas a fuair muid thar a bheith luachmhar.

**12.** It is clear that this inquiry has generated interest throughout which we believe is testament to the strength of positive feeling for the Wales-Ireland relationship. For this, we are very grateful.

## 2. Brexit impact

**13.** Most witnesses told us that Brexit has had a significant impact in their sectors and on their cross-border cooperation and that ongoing work has required them to adapt to some extent. There was a clear desire from witnesses to preserve links developed during the UK's membership of the EU.

**14.** We are disappointed and concerned that Welsh participation in some cross-border cooperation will cease as EU funding streams come to an end, with little to no prospect of future involvement.

**15.** The Consul General of Ireland ("Consul General") said that Brexit, "...has already brought change and it will undoubtedly alter and reshape the Ireland-Wales relationship in the coming years.". She pointed to the end of the European Territorial Co-operation Ireland-Wales programmes ("INTERREG programmes"), which have, "...fostered the creation of uniquely strong and focused connections across the Irish Sea at local and sectoral levels." for 25 years.<sup>6</sup>

**16.** The First Minister and the Consul General both committed to preserving as many links as possible in their evidence and stated that work is ongoing to do so. The First Minister told us that officials are working to, "...ensure the successes gained are not lost".<sup>7</sup>

**17.** The Consul General told us that the Irish Government's goal is to ensure that the close relationship is maintained.<sup>8</sup> She added:

*"... what we want to do is work together to make sure that all of those links we have, those people-to-people links, trade, business, culture, community, all of that, that that all keeps going as smoothly as possible, despite Brexit."<sup>9</sup>*

**18.** The Consul General also told us that the Windsor Framework presents an "...opportunity for improved relations and stronger partnerships."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Consultation response: [WIR07.Consulate.General.of.Ireland](#) [PDF 335KB]

<sup>7</sup> [Evidence from the First Minister: Inquiry into Wales-Ireland relations](#) – 10 May 2023 [PDF 160KB]

<sup>8</sup> Consultation response: [WIR07.Consulate.General.of.Ireland](#) [PDF 335KB]

<sup>9</sup> [Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee – 30 March 2023, paragraph 158](#)

<sup>10</sup> [Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee – 30 March 2023, paragraph 158](#)



**19.** Pembrokeshire County Council said, regardless of Brexit, Ireland will remain important to the county due to its proximity and business links. However, challenges remain as they told us that, “...nothing of any great significance has been put in place to replace...” existing programmes which are drawing to a close.<sup>11</sup> They warned that:

*“... there is a risk, or even a likelihood, that many of the relationships that have been established between Welsh and Irish organisations through the programme will wither.*

*[...] there is now a vacuum in Welsh-Irish relations such that it is not at all clear how cross-border initiatives are to take place, other than at the sole initiative of individual organisations in Wales and in Ireland.”<sup>12</sup>*

**20.** Some witnesses explained that the absence of EU structures had required a new and deliberate focus on the bilateral relationship to ensure that it was not taken for granted. Wales Arts International told us that, “...even greater efforts are needed...” for this to continue.<sup>13</sup> This had led to deliberate and targeted decision-making, including the development of individual bilateral agreements, such as Amgueddfa Cymru’s Memorandum of Understanding with National Museum Ireland.<sup>14</sup>

## **Our view**

**21.** It is clear to us that Brexit has, and will continue to have, an impact on Wales-Ireland relations as both countries adjust to the new UK-EU relationship. We have heard about a range of changes that are challenging and difficult to navigate; from the additional requirements placed on touring artists to the cessation of EU funding. However, we have also seen examples of organisations collaborating well, driven by shared passion, innovation and a renewed focus. There is also a governmental desire to continue working together and this will be vital in preserving bilateral links.

**22.** We share and echo the concerns of the First Minister, that some collaborative links may be lost as a result of the UK’s exit from the EU. We welcome the

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<sup>11</sup> Consultation response: [WIR05 Pembrokeshire County Council](#) [PDF 312KB]

<sup>12</sup> Consultation response: [WIR05 Pembrokeshire County Council](#) [PDF 312KB]

<sup>13</sup> Consultation response: [WIR01 Wales Arts International](#) [PDF 696KB]

<sup>14</sup> [Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee - 22 March 2023, paragraph 179](#)

commitments made by the Welsh and Irish governments, that positive outcomes gained to date are not lost.

**23.** We are also concerned that the future of existing cooperation is at risk if future funding commitments do not match governmental ambition. We discuss these concerns in Chapter 5 (“Resources”) of this report.

**24.** Since we began our inquiry, the UK and EU agreed changes to the Northern Ireland Protocol in the Windsor Framework. We agree with the Consul General that the Windsor Framework provides a chance to improve UK and EU relations.

**Conclusion 1.** We welcome the conclusion of the Windsor Framework and the potential opportunities it unlocks, particularly with respect to the UK’s association to Horizon.

**25.** On 7 September 2023, the UK Government and the EU also announced that they had reached an agreement on the association of the UK to the EU’s Horizon programme. This was announced following the conclusion of our deliberations on the evidence we had received.

**Conclusion 2.** We welcome the association agreement reached between the UK and EU in relation to Horizon,<sup>15</sup> and the opportunities it presents. The Welsh Government previously produced annual reports detailing Welsh participation in Horizon, and outlining achievements and successes. In light of this development, we believe there is an opportunity to resume reporting<sup>16</sup> on Horizon participation in Wales.

**Recommendation 1.** The Welsh Government should outline the potential opportunities provided by renewed Horizon participation in response to the Committee’s report.

**Recommendation 2.** The Welsh Government should resume publishing annual reports on the achievements of Horizon participation in Wales.

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<sup>15</sup> UK Government: [UK joins Horizon Europe under a new bespoke deal](#) – 7 September 2023

<sup>16</sup> Welsh Government: [Horizon 2020: case studies and reports](#) – 15 July 2022

## 3. The Welsh Government's approach

### Wales-Ireland strategies

**26.** The Welsh Government's approach to Wales-Ireland relations is set out in different strategies and plans. The framework for this relationship is described in paragraphs 27-31 below.

**27.** The Welsh Government's International Strategy<sup>17</sup> for the period 2020-2025 ("the Strategy"), identifies Ireland as a priority international relationship. The Strategy states that efforts will focus on increased cooperation and governmental activities that benefit Wales economically, culturally, and socially. Ireland features across four of the Strategy's accompanying Action Plans on diaspora, priority relationships, diplomacy and soft power, and exports.<sup>18</sup>

**28.** The Welsh Government's overseas office in Dublin ("the Dublin Office") promotes the ambitions and aims of the Strategy. Further information is available in the Welsh Government's Annual Overseas Network report<sup>19</sup>, and in the International Office Remits document<sup>20</sup>.

**29.** Both the Welsh and Irish governments have also signed a Shared Statement and Joint Action Plan<sup>21</sup> for the period 2021-2025 ("the Shared Statement"). The Shared Statement outlines the ambitions and plans for Wales-Ireland relations and how the governments will cooperate on six shared policy areas supported by 45 activities set out in an action plan. The Consulate General of Ireland in Cardiff and the Dublin Office are jointly responsible for its delivery.

**30.** The Shared Statement commits the two governments to convene an annual, ministerial Ireland-Wales Forum. This Forum intends to engage political, economic and broader stakeholders to build relationships as well as exchange policy perspectives, share learning and build co-operation in areas for which the Welsh Government has devolved responsibility. It is also intended to strengthen the broader Ireland-Wales bilateral relationship. The inaugural meeting of the

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<sup>17</sup> Welsh Government: [International strategy for Wales](#) – 14 January 2020

<sup>18</sup> Welsh Government: [International action plans](#) – 14 December 2020

<sup>19</sup> Welsh Government: [Overseas network: Annual report 2022 to 2023](#) – 19 May 2023

<sup>20</sup> Welsh Government: [Welsh Government International Office Remits](#) – November 2020 [PDF 185KB]

<sup>21</sup> Welsh Government: [Ireland-Wales shared statement and joint action plan 2021 to 2025](#) – 1 March 2021

Ireland-Wales Forum was held in Cardiff in October 2021.<sup>22</sup> The second forum was held in Dublin and Cork in October 2022.<sup>23</sup>

**31.** In February 2023, the Welsh Government announced the Irish Sea Framework<sup>24</sup> (“the Framework”) to guide and influence actions to increase economic co-operation across the Irish Sea space. The Framework states that it does not have formal status. However it aims to provide strategic direction in the short term, and a pathway to medium term goals to maintain the connections and networks developed under common European membership. The Framework guidance also notes that it’s intended to complement all relevant policies, strategies and programmes, including the Shared Statement and projects now being concluded under the INTERREG programme (a funding programme to promote and support cooperation over land and maritime borders in and out of the EU).<sup>25</sup>

## **Awareness and involvement**

**32.** We heard from key stakeholders who had different levels of awareness of the strategies described above. Most witnesses focused on the Shared Statement, and involvement in its delivery. Those who work closely with the governments to deliver the Shared Statement spoke highly of the support provided and were positive about their experiences.

**33.** Amgueddfa Cymru told us that its role at the Ireland-Wales Forum has facilitated its collaboration and strengthened its relationship with National Museum Ireland and Irish Museums Associations.<sup>26</sup> Wales Arts International described the support it receives from both governments as, “...beneficial to the arts sector...” in developing Wales-Ireland relations and it welcomes the approach offered by a dedicated joint strategy.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Welsh Government: [Ireland-Wales Forum meeting: 22 October 2021](#)

<sup>23</sup> Welsh Government: [Ireland-Wales Forum meeting: 14 October 2022](#)

<sup>24</sup> Welsh Government: [The Irish Sea Framework: guidance](#) - 21 February 2023

<sup>25</sup> Welsh Government: [The Irish Sea Framework: guidance](#) - 21 February 2023

<sup>26</sup> [Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee - 22 March 2023, paragraph 179](#)

<sup>27</sup> Consultation response: [WIR01 Wales Arts International](#) [PDF 696KB]

**34.** However, some stakeholders, including Pembrokeshire County Council<sup>28</sup> and the Welsh Language Commissioner<sup>29</sup> told us that they were not involved in the development and implementation of the Shared Statement.

**35.** Pembrokeshire County Council noted that although the Shared Statement provides a “...strong foundation...” at a national level, it “...fails to offer any real support to Welsh organisations wishing to further Welsh-Irish relations”. It added that some of the commitments set out in the Shared Statement lack substance because local authorities were not able to offer the support implied.<sup>30</sup>

**36.** The Welsh Language Commissioner said, “...that there is scope to cast the net much wider and involve other key stakeholders, including the independent language commissioners of both countries...” in the development of the Shared Statement. The Welsh Language Commissioner identified several priority areas that could be developed further, including ensuring that language, and language planning, is considered as, “...a core part of the Education and Research priority area...” in order to strengthen academic foundations in both countries.<sup>31</sup>

**37.** In writing, following our evidence session, the First Minister told us, “...you can be assured that should we develop a further agreement...we will engage and involve stakeholders on their priorities as we have done in delivering the plan [the current Shared Statement]”.<sup>32</sup>

## **Progress and reporting**

**38.** In written evidence, the Consul General described progress towards implementation of the Shared Statement as, “...strong and dynamic...”. She said,

*“As of late 2022, almost 80 per cent of the commitments made have been either fully completed (10 per cent) or well advanced (70 per cent). Early progress has been made on the remaining 20 per cent of actions.”<sup>33</sup>*

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<sup>28</sup> Consultation response: [WIR05.Pembrokeshire County Council](#) [PDF 312KB]

<sup>29</sup> [Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee - 30 March 2023, paragraph 55](#)

<sup>30</sup> Consultation response: [WIR05.Pembrokeshire County Council](#) [PDF 312KB]

<sup>31</sup> Consultation response [WIR06.Welsh Language Commissioner](#) [PDF 601KB]

<sup>32</sup> [Response from the First Minister: Wales-Ireland relations - 6 July 2023](#) [PDF 176KB]

<sup>33</sup> Consultation response: [WIR07.Consulate General of Ireland](#) [PDF 335KB]

**39.** The Welsh Government told us that that there had, “...been progress against all six areas of cooperation set out in the Statement...” and it cited examples of the work undertaken.<sup>34</sup>

**40.** The Welsh Government issues a written statement following each annual Ireland-Wales Forum providing a high-level summary of the discussions and a list of ministers in attendance. Although the First Minister told us in written evidence that the annual Ireland-Wales Forum is an opportunity to mark the progress against delivery of the aims and objectives of the Shared Statement<sup>35</sup>, the detail of this monitoring activity is not made publicly available.

**41.** We also received evidence suggesting that more officials and stakeholders attend the Ireland-Wales Forum than are documented in the written statements. On 23 May 2023, the Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd, Lesley Griffiths MS, told Plenary that the First Minister had invited the mayors of Greater Manchester and Liverpool to attend the Ireland-Wales Forum.<sup>36</sup>

**42.** The Welsh Government describes the Framework as a, “... coalition of the willing”. It said that stakeholders are encouraged to take forward actions voluntarily, such as running events, establishing networks or aligning investments<sup>37</sup>. Some stakeholders referred to the Framework, or parts thereof, in their evidence, but more information on its practical operation, impact and benefits are not publicly available.

**43.** Annual targets for delivery of the Shared Statement are set by the Welsh Government in Cardiff. Some stakeholders expressed the view that performance indicators for tangible outcomes would be beneficial in measuring progress against delivery of the Shared Statement. Both Amgueddfa Cymru and Arts Wales International confirmed to us that they report back on targets set for them by the Welsh Government<sup>38</sup>.

## **Bilateral engagement between Welsh and Irish Governments**

**44.** Witnesses told us about how both governments had proactively increased their political and official engagement in the absence of contact facilitated by formal EU structures. The First Minister and Consul General spoke of the benefits

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<sup>34</sup> [Evidence from the First Minister: Inquiry into Wales-Ireland relations](#) – 10 May 2023 [PDF 160KB]

<sup>35</sup> [Evidence from the First Minister: Inquiry into Wales-Ireland relations](#) – 10 May 2023 [PDF 160KB]

<sup>36</sup> [Record of Proceedings: Plenary - 23 May 2023, paragraph 332](#)

<sup>37</sup> Welsh Government: [The Irish Sea Framework: guidance](#) – 21 February 2023

<sup>38</sup> [Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee - 22 March 2023, paragraphs 230-231](#)

of developing informal and interpersonal relations and direct intergovernmental contact compared to indirect engagement via the UK Government.

**45.** The First Minister told us that the Ireland-Wales Forum helps commit to a regularity of engagement. He said that it provides an annual exchange where matters are discussed and reported upon, and that work arises from those discussions<sup>39</sup>. Similarly, the Consul General told us that:

*“We’ve had a range of exchanges at ministerial level, including the First Minister coming to Ireland last October. We’ve had co-operation across all areas of focus within the Shared Statement since I’ve been here, and I think progress is—it’s all going really well.”<sup>40</sup>*

**46.** During our inquiry, we also learnt about the secondment of a Welsh Government official to the Irish Government’s Department of Foreign Affairs with the purpose of improving diaspora support through sharing policy learning and best practice.

**47.** The secondment was highlighted by the First Minister, the Consul General and officials in evidence as good practice which they intend to take forward beyond 2025. The Consul General told us that it was:

*“... a great opportunity to look at our emigrant support programme, which is a funding programme we have for support to the Irish community abroad, and it funds a variety of different things. Some of the things it funds are kind of in the nature of social projects, organisations that support vulnerable members of the Irish community abroad, but some of the work it does is more to support Irish culture and Irish heritage and Irish communities, keeping that culture and heritage alive in other parts of the world, and, more broadly, our approach to our diaspora is very inclusive...”*

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<sup>39</sup> [Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee – 10 May 2023, paragraph 52](#)

<sup>40</sup> [Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee 30 March 2023, paragraph 113](#)



*... the Welsh official who is in the Irish abroad unit I think is getting a really good sense—I hope is getting a really good sense—of how our diaspora policy operates... he's seeing all of that from the inside.*<sup>41</sup>

**48.** The First Minister said that a report is being prepared on the secondment to draw lessons from the experience which will be used to carry learning forward in future.<sup>42</sup> A copy of this will be provided to the Committee when its ready.<sup>43</sup>

**49.** The First Minister also told us that there was a strong appetite for future collaboration between our governments, and there were further opportunities to connect officials across other policy areas on matters of shared interest, such as marine planning.<sup>44</sup>

**50.** The governments also meet at the British-Irish Council (BIC), an intergovernmental organisation established in 1999 as a result of the Good Friday Agreement. The BIC was created to further promote positive, practical relationships amongst its members, and to provide a forum for consultation and co-operation. The Council has eight member administrations, including the Irish and UK Governments, who meet regularly throughout the year to work on issues of common interest, including when the heads of administrations and ministers come together at biannual summits.

**51.** Of the BIC, the First Minister said that:

*“... when it's good, it's genuinely good, but it isn't good always.”*<sup>45</sup>

**52.** He added that:

*“... in difficult times, has provided a forum where the Irish Government and the UK Government have been able to come together and speak.*

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<sup>41</sup> [Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee - 30 March 2023, paragraphs 139-140](#)

<sup>42</sup> [Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee - 10 May 2023, paragraph 116](#)

<sup>43</sup> [Response from the First Minister: Wales-Ireland relations - 6 July 2023 \[PDF 176KB\]](#)

<sup>44</sup> [Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee - 10 May 2023, paragraphs 116-118](#)

<sup>45</sup> [Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee - 10 May 2023, paragraph 110](#)

*I'm very keen we continue to invest in it, and to do more with BIPA [the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly] alongside the BIC as well.*<sup>46</sup>

**53.** The First Minister told us that while formal intergovernmental contact is important, the non-governmental contact, such as activity related to business, arts and sport, was of equal importance.<sup>47</sup>

**54.** The Consul General told us of the importance of building connections across Wales, and not to take a, "...too Cardiff-centric view." She felt that it was part of her role to try and find, capture, and support those connections.<sup>48</sup>

### **A suitable blueprint?**

**55.** We asked witnesses whether the Shared Statement could be considered as a suitable blueprint for the Welsh Government's international relations and other priority relationships. Witnesses told us that whilst it could be such a blueprint, it is important to tailor approaches to each unique relationship and attach appropriate resource to it.

**56.** Chambers Wales, expressed the view that the Shared Statement could be used as a base model, however "...every country has its own kind of different context and specific sectors..."<sup>49</sup>

**57.** Universities Wales explained that its Global Wales programme adopted a targeted approach of 'system to system' development to respond to the specific requirements of partner countries and regions. Universities Wales said that the model provided by the Shared Statement could work, but that it needed to be sufficiently resourced to facilitate relationships and activity.<sup>50</sup>

**58.** Wales Arts International and Amgueddfa Cymru agreed that the learning from the Wales-Ireland relationship has had a positive effect on broader areas of international collaboration such as UNESCO, and the United Nations on the

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<sup>46</sup> Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee - 10 May 2023, paragraph 110

<sup>47</sup> Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee - 10 May 2023, paragraph 46-47

<sup>48</sup> Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee 30 March 2023, paragraph 15

<sup>49</sup> Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee - 22 March 2023, paragraph 116

<sup>50</sup> Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee - 22 March 2023, paragraph 111

International Decade of Indigenous Languages<sup>51</sup>. We were also told that Wales is world leading in its work with Ireland and there is much to learn from each other.

**59.** Urdd Gobaith Cymru said that the Shared Statement opens doors and enables partnerships to develop, but that it should be a living document to reflect that new partnerships are created and evolve naturally over time<sup>52</sup>.

**60.** National Museum Ireland described the bilateral work arising from the Shared Statement as “pushing boundaries”.<sup>53</sup> Amgueddfa Cymru told us that the Shared Statement had been of benefit in developing diplomatic ties and giving focus to discussions with ministers.<sup>54</sup> It also emphasised that there were opportunities to look at international relationships over a longer period of time. Amgueddfa Cymru told us:

*“It takes time to build partnerships that are partnerships with purpose, rather than partnerships just because you want partnerships, and partnerships that can lead to real impacts.”<sup>55</sup>*

**61.** University College Dublin (“UCD”) recommended that the Welsh and Irish governments should build on their work in education, research and innovation identified in the Ireland-Wales Shared Statement to enhance impact on citizens.<sup>56</sup>

**62.** We heard from the First Minister that the Welsh Government intends to sign a new Shared Statement with Germany’s Baden-Württemberg. In written evidence, the First Minister said:

*“The Shared Statement framework offers a model in which we can consider for use elsewhere, but international agreements should not be constrained by such an approach and other ways of working are more long-standing and may be more appropriate in different circumstances. Different places have different cultures and ways of working and the most important thing for me is not that we sign an*

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<sup>51</sup> [Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee – 22 March 2023, paragraph 247](#)

<sup>52</sup> [Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee – 22 March 2023, paragraphs 177 and 220](#)

<sup>53</sup> [Engagement with stakeholders in Ireland – October 2023 \[PDF 162KB\]](#)

<sup>54</sup> [Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee – 22 March 2023, paragraph 231](#)

<sup>55</sup> [Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee – 22 March 2023, paragraph 255](#)

<sup>56</sup> [Engagement with stakeholders in Ireland – October 2023 \[PDF 162KB\]](#)

*agreement or that our agreements follow the same template – it is the action, the collaboration, the sustainable networks that flow from these.*<sup>57</sup>

## **Our view**

**63.** We were encouraged to receive evidence of multiple examples of positive and effective cross-border cooperation between the two governments and various organisations. However, we have identified some key issues relating to the Welsh Government’s strategic approach to Wales-Ireland relations where there are opportunities for improvement to be made. We think these improvements would better reflect the special status of the relationship between Wales and Ireland. It would also increase the Welsh Government’s accountability and transparency, and assist the Senedd, stakeholders, and the public to better understand the Welsh Government’s activity relating to its relationship with Ireland.

### **Understanding of approach of existing strategies**

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**64.** Whilst there are many positive aspects of the Welsh Government’s existing work on Wales-Ireland relations, we found multiple strategies and plans which are not presented and co-ordinated in one place. This presented a barrier to our identification and full understanding of the Welsh Government’s approach. We believe this also fails to provide a single point of access for anyone seeking information about its approach to Wales-Ireland relations.

**65.** As such, we think that the Welsh Government is doing itself a disservice by not capturing and communicating this work in a coherent way. Presenting this in a clearer manner would assist us, and other stakeholders, in understanding the strategic direction of the Welsh Government’s efforts to support and increase levels of cooperation between Wales and Ireland.

**Recommendation 3.** The Welsh Government should increase the visibility of Wales-Ireland relations on its website by bringing together its strategies as they relate to Ireland in one place, to include the Irish Sea Framework, the International Strategy, the Shared Statement, and information about the role of the Dublin office, by the end of February 2024. This should be accompanied by clear explanations of how each strand relates to the others, and how this is coordinated.

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<sup>57</sup> [Response from the First Minister: Wales-Ireland relations](#) - 6 July 2023 [PDF 176KB]

**Recommendation 4.** The Welsh Government should clarify roles and responsibilities of the Welsh Government in Wales and its office in Dublin, including where responsibility for: coordinating Wales-Ireland strategies; setting clear objectives and key performance indicators lies.

### **Awareness and involvement**

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**66.** We found that awareness of the Shared Statement amongst stakeholders is mixed. For those who have been involved in the Shared Statement, it was clear that their work has a positive impact and many wanted to do more.

**67.** However, we did hear on occasion, that some key organisations were not involved in this work. To ensure that opportunities for collaboration are not lost, it is our view, that the Welsh Government urgently needs to improve awareness of its work and to promote the opportunities available across its Wales-Ireland strategies to relevant stakeholders in Wales.

**Recommendation 5.** The Welsh Government should involve relevant civil society expertise (including the Future Generations and Welsh Language Commissioners) in its future Wales-Ireland relations work and explain how this will be done in its response to the Committee's report.

**Recommendation 6.** The Welsh Government should provide more information about its activities to raise awareness of its Wales-Ireland strategies amongst Welsh stakeholders in its response to the Committee's report.

### **Monitoring of progress and reporting**

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**68.** We note that there are no specific reporting requirements for the Welsh Government in relation to Wales-Ireland relations, either to the Senedd or this Committee. There are also no performance indicators on activities associated with the Shared Statement. This presented a barrier to the Committee in determining progress towards delivering the Shared Statement, and in measuring its success. In the absence of regular monitoring, reporting and key metrics, there is nothing that can underpin and evidence the positive and beneficial work on Wales-Ireland relations that is undoubtedly taking place.

**69.** In addition, we found limited information available publicly on the Ireland-Wales Forum. For example, meeting agendas, minutes, and attendee details are not published.

**Recommendation 7.** The Welsh Government should produce an annual Wales-Ireland relations report which captures all its activity across its different strategies and any additional activity that falls outside of a strategy. This should demonstrate how Wales-Ireland activity across its different strategies is coordinated. The report should include performance indicators, evidence outcomes and reach, and evaluate progress.

**Recommendation 8.** The Ireland-Wales Forum should produce annual activity reports, which monitor progress, summarise its meetings and identify next steps. The reports should help to better identify areas for targeted future support and should be completed after the next Forum meeting in October 2023.

**Recommendation 9.** The Ireland-Wales Forum should improve transparency by publishing meeting agendas, minutes and attendance details from the next meeting onwards.

## **Bilateral engagement**

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**70.** We welcome the general approach taken by the governments to their bilateral engagement. It is clear that the work taking place throughout areas of public life by civil society and public bodies (such as Urdd Gobaith Cymru and Amgueddfa Cymru) helps foster a strong relationship.

**71.** Likewise, the intergovernmental work both the First Minister and the Consul General described is important. We think the regular engagement through the Ireland-Wales Forum, as well as other exchanges, provide essential regular dialogue between both governments. In the absence of the UK's membership of the EU, this engagement is more important than ever if the close relationship between Wales and Ireland is to endure.

**72.** We also welcome the First Minister's comments about the BIC when he said that, when it works, it works well. We believe the work of the BIC needs to be built upon in the absence of EU membership, and we would like to better understand the Welsh Government's view on how this engagement could be improved. In our view, this could go some way towards renewing and strengthening British-Irish relations, and will in turn, lead to closer working relationships and co-operation between its members.

**Recommendation 10.** The First Minister should provide further details of how the Welsh Government would like to see the BIC improved, and the Welsh Government should request that the UK Government considers these proposals.

## A suitable blueprint?

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**73.** We support the Shared Statement as a blueprint for the Welsh Government's approach to future international relations, providing that the issues outlined in this report are addressed. We also endorse stakeholder recommendations for a longer-term strategic focus on international relationships and recognise the First Minister's comments on the need for flexibility, as detailed in paragraph 62 above.

**Recommendation 11.** Where the Welsh Government adopts a similar approach for other priority international relationships, it should build in the findings of this report from the outset.



## 4. Opportunities and future ambitions

### Priority areas beyond 2025

**74.** The Shared Statement outlines a number of priority areas for the Welsh and Irish governments between 2021 and 2025. Whilst it is two years away, we are aware of a number of priority areas that are emerging for cooperation beyond 2025.

**75.** Stakeholders told us of their priorities for future Wales-Ireland cooperation which include:

- Life sciences, supported by CALIN;
- Health, supported by Pembrokeshire County Council and Ireland's Institute of Public Health;
- Climate change, supported by several stakeholders, including the CHERISH Project, National Museum Ireland and Ireland's Maritime Development Office (IMDO).
- Renewable energies, supported by Pembrokeshire County Council and Chambers Wales, who advised that it is "mission critical"<sup>58</sup> that any benefits, profit and generated energy remains in Ireland and Wales.

**76.** We were also aware of a number of further priority areas of cooperation which we discuss under subheadings below.

### Languages

**77.** One area of shared interest is languages, with both Welsh and Irish consistently cited by stakeholders as a key area of shared experience and learning that is unique to Wales-Ireland relations.

**78.** Urdd Gobaith Cymru provided us with many examples of the benefits of its Wales-Ireland cooperation, including that it has developed international pride in the status of minority languages amongst young people and has helped normalise bilingualism outside of the classroom. Its work has also created a model

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<sup>58</sup> [Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee - 22 March 2023, paragraph 145](#)

of joint working between the Urdd and Welsh Government's International Relations department.<sup>59</sup>

**79.** In addition, Urdd Gobaith Cymru described its co-production project with Coláiste Lurgan whereby young people from Wales and Ireland promote both languages by co-producing videos of popular songs in Irish and Welsh online. This included the first Welsh song to be played a million times on the music streaming service Spotify.<sup>60</sup> Coláiste Lurgan said it is envious of Wales and that the ownership that Welsh young people have of the Welsh language is “something to behold”.<sup>61</sup>

**80.** The Welsh Language Commissioner advised that links with Ireland can strengthen language policy in Wales and shared learning can mean mistakes are avoided. It works with counterparts in Ireland in two priority areas: first to defend and promote language rights; and second on standardisation, protection and promotion of place-names.<sup>62</sup>

**81.** The Commissioner explained the different regimes for place-names protection in Wales and Ireland. The Commissioner said that Ireland, “...has a tradition to envy...” because its Commissioner prescribes place-names in regulations, whereas recommendations of Wales' Commissioner have no statutory force. If Wales had the same system, the Commissioner believes it would be “transformative” and reduce uncertainty at local authority level with regards to official forms of place names. The Commissioner recommends that the Welsh Government scrutinises Ireland's approach as part of its Co-operation Agreement with Plaid Cymru (which recognises the needs to protect and promote Welsh place-names).

**82.** The Commissioner also advised us that they had been cooperating with their counterpart in Ireland since before Brexit, but this had not been under any official banner.<sup>63</sup>

**83.** The Consul General told us that:

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<sup>59</sup> Consultation response: [WIR03 Urdd Gobaith Cymru](#) [PDF 1MB]

<sup>60</sup> Consultation response: [WIR03 Urdd Gobaith Cymru](#) [PDF 1MB]

<sup>61</sup> [Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee - 30 March 2023, paragraphs 16 and 43](#)

<sup>62</sup> Consultation response: [WIR06 Welsh Language Commissioner](#) [PDF 601KB]

<sup>63</sup> Consultation response: [WIR06 Welsh Language Commissioner](#) [PDF 601KB]

*“... the engagement between the two language commissioners has been really useful, and you can see how they’ve learned from each other on language policy.”<sup>64</sup>*

**84.** She added that:

*“... it’s not a case of there being one thing that they need to work on together, but that that ongoing dialogue is really helpful for both sides, I hope, because there is a lot we can learn.”<sup>65</sup>*

**85.** In written evidence, the Welsh Government’s provided a list of future priority areas beyond 2025. However it did not specifically include languages<sup>66</sup>. The Shared Statement commits to undertaking annual consultations at government level on the design and implementation of language policy.<sup>67</sup>

## **Culture and heritage**

**86.** Witnesses emphasised the importance of Wales and Ireland’s shared culture and heritage and both countries were frequently named as the others’ closest international relation in this regard. A number of witnesses are closely involved in the delivery of structured Wales-Ireland cooperation and provided us with an invaluable understanding of the relationship between the two nations.

**87.** Bilateral relations with counterparts, particularly between Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum of Ireland is a good example of this. The two institutions signed their first Memorandum of Understanding in 2019, which was later renewed to mark the continued commitment as outlined in the Shared Statement. Amgueddfa Cymru told us that it would be, “...be good to build on the cooperation that has already been established within individual sectors (such as Arts, Museums and Libraries), to develop a wider co-operation across the cultural sector”.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> [Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee – 30 March 2023, paragraph 160](#)

<sup>65</sup> [Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee – 30 March 2023, paragraph 161](#)

<sup>66</sup> [Evidence from the First Minister: Inquiry into Wales-Ireland relations](#) – 10 May 2023 [PDF 160KB]

<sup>67</sup> Welsh Government: [Ireland-Wales shared statement and joint action plan 2021 to 2025](#) – 1 March 2021

<sup>68</sup> Consultation response: [WIR02 Amgueddfa Cymru](#) [PDF 2MB]

**88.** Wales Arts International told us that work was proceeding on developing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Arts Council of Ireland. They are also working with Culture Ireland, the body that promotes Ireland internationally. All this work leads to exchanges with regards to festivals and for specific purposes like participation at the National Eisteddfod.<sup>69</sup>

## Higher education and student mobility

**89.** We considered evidence from the higher education sector. Universities Wales told us that:

*"I would say that Ireland is an important market. It's not going to be, obviously, as important as our other close geographic neighbour in England but ... there are other reasons why working with and through Ireland could be important for us in the future. And of course, in relation to some of the work we have to do to support our language and our culture, there's a lot we can learn from each other... but it's clearly not our primary market."<sup>70</sup>*

**90.** On Brexit and student mobility, Universities Wales told us:

*"In relation to Erasmus, as you know, it's obviously been a significant loss for universities, and I think we've been very pleased that we've been able to set up the Taith programme here in Wales to help support those mobilities. Of course, it can't exactly replicate Erasmus."<sup>71</sup>*

**91.** Furthermore, we were told that because Irish nationals are treated the same as UK students for fees and funding purposes, Brexit has had a limited impact on the number of students coming from Ireland to Wales<sup>72</sup>. Wales Higher Education Brussels ("WHEB") explained to us that the data for the Welsh Government's international exchange programme, Taith, is not available yet so there is no clarity

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<sup>69</sup> Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee - 22 March 2023, paragraph 188

<sup>70</sup> Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee - 22 March 2023, paragraph 125

<sup>71</sup> Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee - 22 March 2023, paragraph 37

<sup>72</sup> Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee - 22 March 2023, paragraph 37

on outward mobility of students to Ireland. WHEB said that maintaining and building on student mobility, collaboration and exchange is key.<sup>73</sup>

## **Economic links and trade**

**92.** While trade does not fall within this Committee’s remit, it is clearly a central pillar in Wales-Ireland relations. Evidence we received revealed minimal focus on the economic and trade links in the Welsh Government’s approach to Wales-Ireland relations. This was in stark contrast to other policy areas we considered, such as culture and language.

**93.** Musician, film maker and broadcaster, Philip King, told us that “where culture leads, commerce follows”.<sup>74</sup>

**94.** Chambers Wales told us that there needs to be more of a push towards economic links with Ireland:

*“... from a business perspective, a decent portion of Welsh trade is with Ireland, but there’s a great opportunity for there to be more that’s done through the Celtic connection and through sectors that would benefit both Ireland and Wales—so, tourism, manufacturing, travel, that kind of thing.”<sup>75</sup>*

**95.** The Irish Maritime Development Office noted that upcoming developments will have important implications for Wales-Ireland trade. They told us of the use of digitisation in customs checks as well as the development of freeports.<sup>76</sup> Pembrokeshire County Council told us that the UK’s anticipated new trade border control model, the Target Operating Model (“TOM”), has the potential to increase trade friction which will have implications for Pembrokeshire’s ports. It told us that this may be an area where strengthened Wales-Ireland relations could help bring progress.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> [Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee – 22 March 2023, paragraph 39](#)

<sup>74</sup> [Engagement with stakeholders in Ireland](#) – October 2023 [PDF 162KB]

<sup>75</sup> [Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee – 22 March 2023, paragraph 34](#)

<sup>76</sup> [Engagement with stakeholders in Ireland](#) – October 2023 [PDF 162KB]

<sup>77</sup> Consultation response: [WIR05 Pembrokeshire County Council](#) [PDF 312KB]

## Welsh Government priorities

96. The First Minister's written evidence confirms that discussions are ongoing between the two countries to cooperate beyond 2025. He told us that:

*"Many of the ambitions for the Statement have been addressed and are either complete or in progress. In recent steering group meetings<sup>78</sup>, consideration has been given to revising or stretching the current goals to maximise their impact. As we reach the halfway point of the Statement, early consideration is now being given to a future or revised statement which both governments can agree and commit to delivering post-2025".<sup>79</sup>*

97. However, in writing following the meeting, the First Minister clarified, that despite the early consideration, discussions are yet to start with the Irish Government about renewing the Shared Statement beyond 2025.<sup>80</sup> The First Minister also assured us that, should there be another agreement, "...we will engage and involve stakeholders on their priorities as we have done in delivering the plan".<sup>81</sup>

98. In addition, the First Minister listed the following priority areas.<sup>82</sup>

- **educational links**, including increasing uptake to the Welsh Government's Taith programme in Ireland, joint research between universities and mitigating the loss of connections as a result of the end of EU funding;
- **economic**, including a focus on the renewable energy sector, opportunities in the Irish Sea, and on ensuring Wales-Ireland trade is as "frictionless as possible within the future proposed changes" to border controls;
- **political**, including the Ireland-Wales Forum and British-Irish Council. The First Minister says that the current level of Ministerial meetings "must continue" in future;

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<sup>78</sup> This is a steering group to monitor the delivery of the Shared Statement, comprising of officials from the Welsh and Irish Governments.

<sup>79</sup> [Evidence from the First Minister: Inquiry into Wales-Ireland relations](#) - 10 May 2023 [PDF 160KB]

<sup>80</sup> [Response from the First Minister: Wales-Ireland relations](#) - 6 July 2023 [PDF 176KB]

<sup>81</sup> [Response from the First Minister: Wales-Ireland relations](#) - 6 July 2023 [PDF 176KB]

<sup>82</sup> [Evidence from the First Minister: Inquiry into Wales-Ireland relations](#) - 10 May 2023 [PDF 160KB]

- **policy sharing**, including the secondment of a Welsh Government official to the Department of Foreign Affairs, particularly to learn about Ireland's approach to diaspora engagement, and that more similar arrangements are being considered, in addition to departmental information sharing.

**99.** The First Minister's evidence also noted that the two countries are:

*"... committed to prioritise actions that support climate adaptation and mitigation, green growth and the transition to net zero carbon, and a circular economy."*<sup>83</sup>

## **Joint-working across legislatures**

**100.** The Shared Statement states that both governments will, "...deepen parliamentary links by supporting Senedd Cymru and the Oireachtas to explore opportunities for exchanges on shared challenges such as legislating for language policy, equality and sustainability".<sup>84</sup>

**101.** A number of witnesses we spoke to supported strengthening links between the Senedd and the Oireachtas. These includes civil society organisations as well as government officials and parliamentary representatives.

**102.** During our visit to the Dáil, Members of Oireachtas committees told us that they would find deepening links between Senedd and Oireachtas committees beneficial. Members discussed potential ways forward, including sharing evidence, exchanging updates and maintaining regular contact.<sup>85</sup>

**103.** Another forum for joint-working across legislatures is the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly ("BIPA"). BIPA was originally established as the British-Irish Interparliamentary Body in February 1990 to act as a link between the Oireachtas and the UK Parliament. Devolved parliaments were included from 2001 along with the High Court of Tynwald and the States of Guernsey and Jersey. BIPA's name was adopted in 2008.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> [Evidence from the First Minister: Inquiry into Wales-Ireland relations](#) - 10 May 2023 [PDF 160KB]

<sup>84</sup> Welsh Government: [Ireland-Wales shared statement and joint action plan 2021 to 2025](#) - 1 March 2021

<sup>85</sup> [Engagement with stakeholders in Ireland](#) - October 2023 [PDF 162KB]

<sup>86</sup> British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly: [About The Assembly](#)



**104.** The Shared Statement does not reference BIPA.<sup>87</sup>

**105.** Nevertheless, the Consul General's written evidence points to BIPA as the main forum for Wales-Ireland parliamentary relations.<sup>88</sup> The First Minister invited us to share our view on closer institutional cooperation between the parliaments, the British-Irish Council and BIPA. He asked:

*"What would it look like? How would it operate? What would the institutional mechanisms be? How would they mesh with what is there already?"<sup>89</sup>*

**106.** We also took oral evidence from BIPA Co-Chairs, Karen Bradley MP and Brendan Smith TD. Karen Bradley MP told us:

*"I just can't make it clear enough that continued dialogue and conversations and meetings are vital for all of the nations that are represented at BIPA. It's far too easy to forget the implications of what you're talking about in your parliament on others."<sup>90</sup>*

**107.** Brendan Smith TD told us that:

*"[W]e need to intensify the parliamentary tier between all the legislatures ... Greater parliamentary engagement across these islands will be for the better of all our respective constituents."<sup>91</sup>*

**108.** Both BIPA Co-Chairs were supportive of deeper cooperation between the Senedd, Oireachtas, and BIPA.

**109.** We were also informed of considerations to increase the number of BIPA committees from the current four to six committees.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Welsh Government: [Ireland-Wales shared statement and joint action plan 2021 to 2025](#) - 1 March 2021

<sup>88</sup> Consultation response: [WIR07 Consulate General of Ireland](#) [PDF 335KB]

<sup>89</sup> [Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee - 10 May 2023, paragraph 122](#)

<sup>90</sup> [Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee - 3 May 2023, paragraph 220](#)

<sup>91</sup> [Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee - 3 May 2023, paragraph 183 and 222](#)

<sup>92</sup> [Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee - 3 May 2023, paragraph 143](#)

## **Our view**

**110.** There is no shortage of ideas on priority areas for Wales-Ireland cooperation beyond 2025. It is clear from the evidence we have considered that Brexit has renewed the focus of the relationships developed in these areas. However, there are significant questions over how relationships which are on a strong footing are resourced, which we address in the next chapter of this report.

**111.** Each work stream has its own merits and the relationships that underpin each project will be different. We think the Welsh Government should review the evidence we have gathered and use it to inform future decisions on priorities for Wales-Ireland cooperation post-2025. Indeed, the lessons we have learned through our evidence gathering should be taken forward by the Welsh Government and reapplied to its other priority international relationships in future.

**112.** The fact remains that, whatever form future cooperation might take, the importance of funding cannot be overstated. That resourcing must match ambition is a message we heard repeatedly during the course of this inquiry.

**113.** In addition, there is appetite for further engagement on Wales-Ireland relations from stakeholders; both from those who are already actively involved in the work of the Shared Statement, and those working on the periphery. We take confidence from the First Minister's assurances that the Welsh Government will engage and involve stakeholders on their priorities when developing cooperation from 2025 onwards.

**Recommendation 12.** The Welsh Government should review the evidence we have gathered and use it to inform future decisions on priorities for Wales-Ireland cooperation post-2025. These lessons should be taken forward by the Welsh Government and reapplied to its other priority international relationships in future.

**Recommendation 13.** The Welsh Government should outline how this Committee, the Senedd, Welsh Government sponsored-bodies and other stakeholders will be involved in Wales-Ireland cooperation beyond 2025.

## **Languages**

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**114.** We think the shared experience of Wales and Ireland with regards to our indigenous languages should be celebrated and explored further. From the evidence we heard, it is clear that sharing of this experience is a genuine two-way affair. It was heartening to hear of the vital work that is taking place to support and normalise bilingualism in our indigenous language communities. We

applaud the efforts being made by Urdd Gobaith Cymru and TG Lurgan in this regard.

**115.** The opportunities outlined by the Welsh Language Commissioner, including on the protection of place names, is equally important. We look forward to hearing the outcomes from the International Association of Language Commissioners international conference hosted in Cardiff in June 2024, and will consider the international elements of the Welsh Government's language policy work in future.

### **Culture and heritage**

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**116.** During our visit to Dublin, Philip King told us that the "...soul of any nature is in its culture". It is clear to us that culture and heritage has a strong place as the soul of joint working between our two nations. The examples we have seen demonstrate a high degree of cooperation and joint initiatives showcasing the benefits and strength of Wales-Ireland cooperation. We very much hope to see these links mature further over the coming years.

### **Trade and economic links**

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**117.** Our impression was that the level of engagement, notably on trade, commerce and higher education, was stronger in Ireland than in Wales. This could be attributed to the disparity in engagement by the two governments.

**118.** Given the importance of trading relations between the two nations, we think there are some instances where stakeholders should be more involved with the Welsh Government's work.

**119.** There are a number of differing factors which arise post-Brexit which we think can have significant impact on trading relations. This includes adjusting to the new requirements for moving goods within the UK's border operating model, the Windsor Framework, and freeport status for Welsh ports.

**Recommendation 14.** As international relations policy appears indivisible from trade in respect of Wales-Ireland relations, the Welsh Government should clarify how they are coordinated across the work of government.

### **Senedd-Oireachtas relations**

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**120.** We think there is significant value in deepening parliamentary links between the Senedd and the Oireachtas, as well as through BIPA. We welcome the support

of witnesses to this inquiry for the Senedd and Oireachtas to work closer together, include undertaking joint working where possible.

**121.** As a Committee, we have the desire and ambition to see this Committee lead the way in shaping this type of work for Wales. As a first step, we will review our ways of working to consider how we can include the work of counterpart committees in the Houses of Oireachtas in our work, and vice versa. Such work could include, but should not be limited to:

- Working on language policy and international relations.
- Exploring formalising joint work with our counterpart committees.
- Share our reports, including a copy of this report, and maintain regular contact.

**122.** In addition, we commit to reviewing how this Committee can lead and champion Wales-Ireland parliamentary work across the Senedd itself. This will include consideration of how the Welsh and Irish governments could support the Senedd's joint working with the Oireachtas in the future.

**123.** Since Brexit, the role of BIPA has taken on a renewed significance as the main forum for Wales-Ireland parliamentary relations. We agree with what the BIPA Co-Chairs told us, in that efforts must be redoubled to preserve these parliamentary links post-Brexit.

**124.** We think consideration must be given to update the Senedd on the work of BIPA to maximise opportunities for the involvement and understanding of Members. This could include Senedd BIPA representatives reporting back to the Senedd on their work through laid reports, as is done by the Senedd representatives who attend the UK-EU Parliamentary Partnership Assembly ("PPA"). We will also consider how we can formalise relationships between Senedd BIPA representatives and this Committee. As part of this, we will share this Wales-Ireland relations inquiry report with BIPA, and note BIPA reports at our future Committee meetings.

**125.** Finally, with potential for BIPA to increase the number of committees it has, and given the importance of this forum, consideration should be given to how the Senedd Commission prepares for it. We would like to better understand the Senedd Commission's thoughts on this matter. As such we would like it to report back to us with an outline of its thoughts on the preparations for the increase BIPA in the number of BIPA committees as well considerations on increasing the

number of Senedd representatives attending BIPA, and filling an existing vacant seat.

**Recommendation 15.** The Senedd Commission should provide the Committee with its views on the potential increase in the number of BIPA committees, as well as its considerations on increasing the number of Senedd representatives and filling the vacant seat.

## 5. Resources

**126.** Resourcing future work on Wales-Ireland relations is going to be challenging, particularly as EU funding in Wales draws to a close. The evidence we received showed clear resource and capacity issues for the future. These challenges are acknowledged by the First Minister:

*“the significant and key challenge to the delivery of the Statement remains around funding. There have been strong, tangible collaborative projects and programmes delivered through Interreg funding which will be withdrawn in 2023 [...] with no funding alternative in place.”<sup>93</sup>*

### End of EU funding in Wales

**127.** A number of witnesses spoke of the impact of the end of EU funding.

**128.** The UK Government did not pursue UK participation in the EU’s 2021-2027 INTERREG programmes post-Brexit, with the exception of the UK-Ireland PEACE Plus programme. The Welsh Government says this decision “...poses a considerable threat to the sustainability of many networks and projects in the Irish Sea space...” and “...severely dilutes the potential for new innovative co-operation projects to emerge.”<sup>94</sup> The Consul General also described the end of INTERREG funding as “challenging”<sup>95</sup>.

**129.** We were warned of risks to continued cooperation and, “...a significant risk of a post-funding hiatus...”<sup>96</sup> due to funding uncertainty. UCD told us that UK association to Horizon Europe is key for the higher education and research sectors<sup>97</sup> - a view which was shared by the higher education sector in Wales.<sup>98</sup>

**130.** We also heard concerns from several INTERREG programme projects, including those carrying out life sciences and climate change research, and those

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<sup>93</sup> [Evidence from the First Minister: Inquiry into Wales-Ireland relations](#) - 10 May 2023 [PDF 160KB]

<sup>94</sup> Welsh Government: [The Irish Sea Framework: guidance](#) - 21 February 2023

<sup>95</sup> [Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee - 30 March 2023, paragraph 165](#)

<sup>96</sup> Consultation response: [WIRO8.CALIN](#) [PDF 389KB]

<sup>97</sup> [Engagement with stakeholders in Ireland](#) - October 2023 [PDF 162KB]

<sup>98</sup> [Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee - 22 March 2023, paragraphs 42 and 158](#)

working in the culture, heritage, and tourism sectors. CALIN told us that it is seeking to, “...develop a sustainable way forward”<sup>99</sup>. WHEB told us that:

*“The Government has been active and doing as much as they can... It doesn’t take INTERREG’s place at all in terms of the investment that can be put into it. So, there will be a big question about that funding in the future.”<sup>100</sup>*

**131.** In written evidence to our inquiry, the First Minister told us that there are ongoing discussions to support future Wales-Ireland collaboration but that the size of this funding would be on a much-reduced scale.<sup>101</sup>

## Post-Brexit funding

**132.** Agile Cymru, launched in February 2023, is the Welsh Government’s £150,000 initiative for Welsh organisations to build partnerships and economic cooperation across the Irish Sea and EU regions. It aims to deliver cross-border and international economic co-operation across shared interests and includes grant schemes to support activity across themes and sectors.<sup>102</sup>

**133.** Stakeholders told us that Agile Cymru is focused on establishing new links rather than preserving existing ones. Others, including WHEB, told us that Agile Cymru is welcome, but it cannot replace EU funding in terms of the amount of financial support and sectoral coverage<sup>103</sup>. In comparison, the CHERISH Project alone received €4.9 million of INTERREG funding under the pre-Brexit Ireland-Wales 2014-2020 programme<sup>104</sup>. UCD told the Committee it received €46 million from Horizon Europe programmes to date (April 2023)<sup>105</sup>.

**134.** In addition, some told us that Agile Cymru is too focused on academia and business. This means heritage organisations<sup>106</sup> and museums miss out<sup>107</sup>. It was

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<sup>99</sup> Consultation response: [WIR08 CALIN](#) [PDF 389KB]

<sup>100</sup> [Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee – 22 March 2023, paragraph 42](#)

<sup>101</sup> [Evidence from the First Minister: Inquiry into Wales-Ireland relations](#) – 10 May 2023 [PDF 160KB]

<sup>102</sup> Welsh Government: [Agile Cymru](#) – 13 September 2023

<sup>103</sup> [Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee – 22 March 2023, paragraph 42](#)

<sup>104</sup> [Evidence from the Cherish Project: Inquiry into Wales-Ireland relations](#) – 3 May 2023 [PDF 455KB]

<sup>105</sup> [Engagement with stakeholders in Ireland](#) – October 2023 [PDF 162KB]

<sup>106</sup> [Evidence from the Cherish Project: Inquiry into Wales-Ireland relations](#) – 3 May 2023 [PDF 455KB]

<sup>107</sup> [Engagement with stakeholders in Ireland](#) – October 2023 [PDF 162KB]

argued by the CHERISH Project that heritage organisations are better placed to influence, protect and promote<sup>108</sup>.

## Horizon

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**135.** Many witnesses, particularly those from the higher education sector, told us that UK association to Horizon is key to future Wales-Ireland cooperation. The First Minister said in his written evidence that association will not be secured in “the near term”, which stakeholders warn will lead to a funding gap.<sup>109</sup>

**136.** Universities Wales were clear that:

*“... the thing that’s going to make the most difference will be the Horizon association, and there’s no getting away from that. That’s the thing that will be absolutely most valuable to us.”<sup>110</sup>*

**137.** We were told that withdrawal from [Welsh-Irish] activity was taking place.<sup>111</sup> We were also told that 85 per cent of Welsh-Irish research projects at UCD were funded through European Programmes, including Interreg and EU Research and Innovation Programmes, and that these collaborations, built up over time, were at risk if new funding sources weren't available to sustain them into the future.<sup>112</sup> The CHERISH Project told us that that they are still involved as a partner in some bids to Horizon, but that:

*“... anecdotally, we’ve been told that if the UK is involved in a Horizon project it won’t get funding. So, we’re almost a liability to those organisations...I don’t know whether that’s true or not, I really don’t, but we have not succeeded so far in achieving the funding for a couple of climate change and coastal heritage projects that we’ve gone for where we thought we had the expertise to succeed.”<sup>113</sup>*

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<sup>108</sup> [Evidence from the Cherish Project: Inquiry into Wales-Ireland relations](#) – 3 May 2023 [PDF 455KB]

<sup>109</sup> [Evidence from the First Minister: Inquiry into Wales-Ireland relations](#) – 10 May 2023 [PDF 160KB]

<sup>110</sup> [Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee – 22 March 2023, paragraph 158](#)

<sup>111</sup> [Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee – 22 March 2023, paragraph 158](#)

<sup>112</sup> [Engagement with stakeholders in Ireland](#) – October 2023 [PDF 162KB]

<sup>113</sup> [Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee – 3 May 2023, paragraph 41](#)



**138.** In writing following our evidence sessions, the First Minister told us that, following the conclusion of the Windsor Framework:

*"It is now encouraging that the political blockages appear to have been put to one side and that discussions are underway with a view to finalising association. However, it is impossible to predict how long the negotiations will take and whether they will conclude with association... In case association is not secured in the short term, thought will have to turn to making use of the budget allocated to Horizon Europe this financial year. We see association as a win-win and all sides need to keep their eye on the long term, not scoring short term financial gains."*<sup>114</sup>

**139.** On 7 September 2023, the UK Government and the EU announced that they had reached an agreement on the association of the UK to Horizon.<sup>115</sup> This was announced following the conclusion of our deliberations on the evidence we had received.

## PEACE Plus

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**140.** Some witnesses suggested to us that the PEACE Plus programme could offer opportunities for post-Brexit Wales-Ireland cooperation and that Wales's involvement should be explored.

**141.** Wales Arts International told us that there is an aspiration to work jointly on peace with counterparts in Ireland<sup>116</sup>. Urdd Gobaith Cymru told us their partnership work is without borders, and though the desire exists to work on this further, it might have to come down to resources<sup>117</sup>.

**142.** We also recently considered the financing agreement between the UK, Ireland and the European Commission for PEACE Plus until 2027<sup>118</sup>. We asked the First Minister about this following our evidence session with him. He told us that:

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<sup>114</sup> [Response from the First Minister: Wales-Ireland relations](#) - 6 July 2023 [PDF 176KB]

<sup>115</sup> UK Government: [Joint Statement by the European Commission and the UK Government on the UK's association to Horizon Europe and Copernicus](#) - 7 September 2023

<sup>116</sup> [Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee - 22 March 2023, paragraph 308](#)

<sup>117</sup> [Record of Proceedings: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee - 22 March 2023, paragraph 310](#)

<sup>118</sup> UK Government: [UK/Ireland/EC: Financing Agreement on the PEACE PLUS Programme 2021-2027 \[MS No.2/2023\]](#) - March 2023

*“The Programme’s primary aim is (of course), to support peace and prosperity in Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland, however there is sufficient flexibility within the Programme to enable stakeholders outside the immediate eligible area to join North-South projects where there is demonstrable added value in doing so... Partners in Wales are being kept informed of potential opportunities to engage with PEACE Plus and provided with advice, guidance and support through Agile Cymru.”<sup>119</sup>*

## **Our view**

**143.** Given the weight of evidence provided to us that shows how dependent many initiatives, projects and relationships are on funding, we can only conclude that it is crucial to the future of Wales-Ireland relations post-Brexit. Regrettably, some projects will cease when the cross-border funding comes to an end. Given this, we believe it is imperative that both the Welsh and Irish governments urgently consider how best to support ongoing and future Wales-Ireland relations.

**144.** We were assured to hear comments that told us that, “...while some [EU-funded] projects have ended, interest in collaboration opportunities have not”.<sup>120</sup>. Nevertheless, we think there is a real risk to Welsh stakeholders, expertise, and research without future funding and resource becoming available – both to preserve as many gains as possible and to advance the ambitions of both governments for cooperation in new areas.

**145.** We agree with many of the inquiry’s witnesses that governments can and should play a crucial role in the future landscape for Wales-Ireland cooperation but we are concerned that, at the same time, the First Minister has said that post-EU funding will be at a much-reduced scale. As such, we call on both the Welsh and Irish governments to commit funding to their shared ambitions beyond 2025. Such a move would provide certainty to stakeholders on both sides of the Irish Sea.

**146.** Such clarity should also be applied to existing Welsh Government funding initiatives such as Agile Cymru, where available information and clarity is lacking. We think the Welsh Government should be clear and transparent that this funding is for developing new links rather than preserving current ones.

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<sup>119</sup> [Response from the First Minister: Wales-Ireland relations](#) - 6 July 2023 [PDF 176KB]

<sup>120</sup> [Engagement with stakeholders in Ireland](#) - October 2023 [PDF 162KB]

**Recommendation 16.** The Welsh and Irish governments should commit funding to Wales-Ireland relations proportionate to their ambition beyond 2025 without delay, to provide certainty to stakeholders and to ensure that opportunity costs are minimised.

**Recommendation 17.** The Welsh Government should provide more information on Agile Cymru, including its focus on developing new links rather than preserving existing ones and the involvement of stakeholders.

**147.** Given that INTERREG projects are scheduled to finish this summer, we will give consideration to reviewing the final reports of these projects, as suggested by witnesses from the CHERISH Project. In doing this, we hope to be able to ascertain their impact on Wales-Ireland relations.

## Annex 1: List of oral evidence sessions

The following witnesses provided oral evidence to the committee on the dates noted below. Transcripts of all oral evidence sessions can be viewed on the [Committee's website](#).

| Date          | Name and Organisation   |
|---------------|---|
| 22 March 2023 | <p><b>Oliver Carpenter, Policy Manager</b><br/>Chambers Wales</p> <p><b>Berwyn Davies, Head of Office,</b><br/>Welsh Higher Education Brussels</p> <p><b>Amanda Wilkinson, Chair,</b><br/>Universities Wales</p> <p><b>Eluned Hâf, Head,</b><br/>Wales Arts International</p> <p><b>Mali Thomas, Director of Communications and International Relations,</b><br/>Urdd Gobaith Cymru</p>   |
| 30 March 2023 | <p><b>Mícheál Ó Foighil, Bainisteoir Lurgan,</b><br/>Coláiste Lurgan</p> <p><b>Lowri W. Williams, Strategic Director,</b><br/>Welsh Language Commissioner</p> <p><b>Denise McQuade,</b><br/>Consul General of Ireland in Cardiff</p> <p><b>Gwyn Evans, External Funding Manager,</b><br/>Pembrokeshire County Council</p> <p><b>Steven Conlan, Professor of Molecular and Cellular Biology,</b><br/>Swansea University Medical School</p> |
| 3 May 2023    | <p><b>Christopher Catling, Chief Executive,</b><br/>Cherish Project</p> <p><b>Clare Lancaster, Project Manager,</b><br/>Cherish Project</p> <p><b>Rt Hon Karen Bradley MP, Co-Chair,</b><br/>British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly</p> <p><b>Brendan Smith TD, Co-Chair,</b><br/>British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly</p>  |

| Date               | Name and Organisation   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>10 May 2023</b> | <b>Mark Drakeford MS, First Minister for Wales</b><br>Welsh Government<br><b>Andrew Gwatkin, Director, International Relations &amp; Trade</b><br>Welsh Government<br><b>Paula Walsh - Deputy Director, International Relations</b><br>Welsh Government |

## Annex 2: List of written evidence

The following people and organisations provided written evidence to the Committee. All Consultation responses and additional written information can be viewed on the [Committee's website](#).

| Reference    | Organisation   |
|--------------|--|
| <b>WIR01</b> | Arts Council of Wales & Wales Arts International Wales               |
| <b>WIR02</b> | Museum Wales   |
| <b>WIR03</b> | Urdd Gobaith Cymru   |
| <b>WIR04</b> | Professor Elizabeth Treasure, Vice-Chancellor Aberystwyth University |
| <b>WIR05</b> | Pembrokeshire County Council   |
| <b>WIR06</b> | Welsh Language Commissioner  |
| <b>WIR07</b> | Consul General of Ireland  |
| <b>WIR08</b> | CALIN  |
| <b>WIR09</b> | CUPHAT   |
| <b>WIR10</b> | Universities Wales   |
| <b>WIR11</b> | National Library of Wales  |
| <b>WIR12</b> | Institute of Public Health   |

### Additional Information

| Title  | Date         |
|--|--------------|
| <a href="#">Response from the First Minister</a> [PDF 176KB]   | 6 July 2023  |
| <a href="#">Letter to Trinity College Dublin</a> [PDF 259KB]   | 29 June 2023 |
| <a href="#">Evidence from Trinity College Dublin: The language communities as active partners in technology provisions: the Irish ABAIR experience</a> [PDF 283KB] | 29 June 2023 |

| Title   | Date          |
|---|---------------|
| <b>Evidence from Trinity College Dublin: Digital Plan for the Irish Language Speech and Language Technologies 2023-2027</b> [PDF 6MB] | 29 June 2023  |
| <b>Letter to the First Minister: Ministerial evidence session follow-up</b> [PDF 277KB]   | 7 June 2023   |
| <b>Letter from the First Minister</b> [PDF 161KB]   | 24 May 2023   |
| <b>Evidence from the First Minister</b> [PDF 160KB]   | 10 May 2023   |
| <b>Evidence from the Cherish Project</b> [PDF 455KB]  | 3 May 2023    |
| <b>Additional evidence from the Institute for Public Health</b> [PDF 183KB]   | 3 May 2023    |
| <b>Evidence from Pembrokeshire County Council</b> [PDF 312KB]   | 30 March 2023 |
| <b>Evidence from CALIN</b> [PDF 389KB]  | 30 March 2023 |
| <b>Evidence from the Welsh Language Commissioner</b> [PDF 601KB]  | 30 March 2023 |
| <b>Evidence from the Consulate General of Ireland</b> [PDF 335KB]   | 30 March 2023 |
| <b>Evidence from the Arts Council of Wales &amp; Wales Arts International Wales</b> [PDF 696KB]                                       | 22 March 2023 |
| <b>Evidence from Urdd Gobaith Cymru</b> [PDF 1MB]   | 22 March 2023 |
| <b>Evidence from National Museum Wales</b> [PDF 2MB]  | 22 March 2023 |
| <b>Evidence from the National Library of Wales (Internally translated)</b> [PDF 230KB]  | 22 March 2023 |
| <b>Evidence from Universities Wales &amp; Welsh Higher Education Brussels</b> [PDF 399KB]   | 22 March 2023 |