

Review into support for Publishing and Literature in Wales

The wide ranging review, which was commissioned by Ken Skates in September 2015, and Chaired by Professor Medwin Hughes considered the main aims of the Welsh Government in supporting publishing and literature in Wales, and looked at whether these aims remain fit for the 21st Century.

The review also considered the current support for publishing and literature in Wales, the relationships between those bodies responsible for delivering it, the impact of digital developments on the publishing industry and the administration arrangements for the Welsh Government's support of a Welsh language, daily online news service.

Speaking in the Senedd, the Economy Secretary welcomed the contribution of partner organisations and the public into the review and said it demonstrated the importance that was attached to Wales' rich literary tradition and vibrant publishing industry.

Ken Skates said:

"I have now received the report of the independent review into Welsh Government support for publishing and literature in Wales which summarises the range of evidence that was received from key partner organisations, the industry and the public.

"The panel recognised significant good practice and effective support for publishing and literature that should be continued and built upon for the future.

"It identified areas where support needs to evolve to meet the changing needs of the digital age, and it also found clear evidence of real problems in some areas, related to strategic planning, priority setting, governance, risk management, spending and in ensuring that activities are effective in delivering the outcomes we need.

"The report that I am publishing today sets out a series of recommendations. Some of these are for the Welsh Government, others are for the industry and the key delivery organisations.

"Given the significant weight and compelling nature of the evidence received, I am minded to accept the main recommendations and the Welsh Government will now work with the relevant organisations to implement them."

In its report the panel makes a strong case for the Welsh Government to continue to provide appropriate financial support for Wales' bi-lingual

literary tradition, so it can enable it to thrive in the 21st century, ensure its global reach and support access and participation across Wales.

It makes the case for a strong, innovative publishing industry that provides high-quality jobs, competes internationally and allows professional writers of all backgrounds to develop career pathways in Wales.

The report includes a series of recommendations which the Welsh Government will respond formally to in due course.

One recommendation is that the Welsh Government should seek agreement from the Welsh Books Council to take on some of Literature Wales' current functions, including Book of the Year (aiming to increase its commercial impact), bursaries, literary events and Writers on Tour and provision for children and young people.

The Economy Secretary added:

“Some of these recommended changes are extensive but they are in response to specific needs in a specific area of activity. They are in no way a reflection of the wider good work of the Arts Council or Literature Wales including the excellent delivery of major events and activities linked to our themed years, which will remain unchanged.

“I am persuaded that these steps are needed to create a support structure for publishing and literature which is more effective and fit for the future.