

Kirsty Williams AM

Minister for Education

Welsh Government

27 September 2019

Dear Kirsty,

Music Education Feasibility Study

The Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee published its report '[Hitting the right note: funding for and access to music education](#)' in June 2018. One of the recommendations for the Welsh Government related to the provision of music services in schools. It read:

'The Welsh Government should transfer responsibility for the delivery of music services to an arms-length, national body with a distinct regional delivery mechanism and footprint. The national body should be core funded by the Welsh Government and should be made responsible for ensuring that both pupils and staff working within the music education sector, regardless of their location or social background, are afforded equitable opportunities. The Welsh Government should ensure the responsible body is provided with any additional funding necessary in order to maintain equality of access on an all Wales level.'

In response to this recommendation you wrote:

This recommendation is agreed in principle, subject to the outcome of a feasibility study to identify and assess options for delivery of music services, including the suitability of a single organisation to lead on this area; and availability of budget to implement feasibility findings. In the first instance, we propose undertaking an initial consultation exercise to seek the views of stakeholders and partners on this matter, but the final decision will be with local authorities.


The budget implications for local authorities and other stakeholders in relation to implementation of this recommendation would need to be considered in the light of the findings of the feasibility study.

We will report back to the Committee on progress with this feasibility exercise, within six months.

I understand that this feasibility study has been completed and you are currently considering it. I would be grateful if you could attend our meeting on 14 November from 11.00 – 12.00 to discuss the findings of the study and how you will be implementing them. Please can you provide the Committee with a copy of the feasibility report, and your response to it, by 30 October in order for us to consider it in advance of the session?

I was encouraged by your positive response to our report and I look forward to discussing the progress on delivering access to music education.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Bethan Sayed." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bethan Sayed

Chair of the Committee



Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref MA/KW/5247/19
Bethan Sayed
Chair, Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee
National Assembly for Wales

23 October 2019

Dear Bethan,

Music Education Feasibility Study

Thank you for your letter of 27 September inviting me to attend the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee meeting on 14 November to provide an update on the music education feasibility study.

As you are aware, following the Committee's report, my officials have taken forward work in this important area in response to your recommendations.

I agreed to commission a feasibility study to identify and assess options for the future delivery of music education services. In the first instance, I proposed to undertake a consultation exercise to seek the views of stakeholders and partners on this matter. My officials carried out this exercise and following consideration of the information received, I agreed to procure an independent contractor to carry out the feasibility study.

The key objectives of the feasibility study were to:

- review existing evidence and generate new evidence to identify existing methods of delivery of music education services across Wales;
- identify best practice in existing methods of delivery of music education services across Wales;
- consider alternative models of music services and identify the needs and demands for such services, recommending, as appropriate, the approaches needed to support such alternative models;
- review existing evidence and generate new evidence to consider the feasibility of options for delivery of music education services, including:
considering whether responsibility for delivery should be transferred to a single national 'arms-length' body, and presenting, as appropriate, options on the form and funding mechanisms for such a body;

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

- identifying and considering what other options for delivery of music services across Wales could be feasible and deliverable.
- consider whether a National Plan for Music Education should be prepared, and if so, identify and recommend the content of any national plan for music services education.

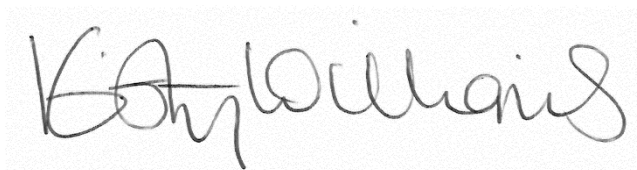
We have received the draft report from the independent contractor who carried out the feasibility study. The draft report has highlighted some issues with collating evidence and my officials are working with the contractor to resolve these issues and ensure we have a full evidence base to consider our options. It is important that all stakeholders have had an opportunity to engage. We look forward to receiving the final report shortly.

I continue to recognise the current pressures facing music services, but as I said previously, and I am sure you agree, it would be remiss of us to not explore this issue properly and thoroughly. My officials are currently in the process of issuing the additional funding to local authorities to support music service provision across Wales during 2019-20.

The final report from the feasibility study, although expected very shortly, is unlikely to be available in time to consider for the meeting on the 14 November. Therefore I regret to decline your invitation at this time.

However, I will ensure a copy of the report and my response is sent to you as soon as it is available and I would be happy to meet with you and the Committee to discuss in due course.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams', written in a cursive style.

Kirsty Williams AC/AM
Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education