

Vaughan Gething AS/MS
Gweinidog yr Economi
Minister for Economy

Dawn Bowden AS/MS
Dirprwy Weinidog y Celfyddydau a Chwaraeon, a'r Prif Chwip
Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport, and Chief Whip

Ein cyf/Our ref MA-VG-03424-22



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Delyth Jewell AS
Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor Diwylliant, Cyfathrebu a'r Gymraeg,
Y Pwyllgor Chwaraeon a Chysylltiadau Rhyngwladol

25 January 2023

Dear Delyth,

Scrutiny of Welsh Government draft Budget 2023-24: Culture, Communications and Sport

Thank you for your letter of 19 January which seeks a response to questions not reached in the evidence session held on 18 January on the 2023-24 draft Budget. This letter provides the information you have sought under the same relevant subheadings.

Creative Wales

- 1. Creative Wales launched a new funding production model in May 2022. How has any assessment of its performance so far influenced allocations for 2023-24?*

As the fund was only launched in May of this year, we have not reviewed its performance yet. Under our new production funding, we undertake a robust Expression of Interest process where an initial assessment is made as to the value of the production to Wales, both economically and culturally, and only invite applications from the strongest applicants.

This has led to a good number of productions being supported recently which will be allocated from the 23/24 budget. Work is underway to appoint a contractor to conduct an economic impact assessment of funded productions. Its aim is to provide Creative Wales with a valuable evidence base on the legacy and benefits of the productions it funds across genres and project type. The impact assessment will also aim to assess wider cultural and well-being benefits to Wales and help to produce a sound basis on which to take future funding decisions.

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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.

2. How will you assess performance of the funding agreement with Ffilm Cymru launched in July 2022?

As the new fund was only launched in July of last year we have not undertaken a review yet, but will do so at the end of the pilot period. Robust monitoring procedures are in place and Ffilm Cymru provide quarterly reports to Creative Wales. Both Creative Wales and Ffilm Cymru are happy with progress of the fund, with 5 films being approved for funding to date and a very strong pipeline building up.

3. When the Creative Skills Action Plan was launched in September 2022, it was supported by a “£1 million fund”. Evidence for this session suggests it has shrunk to £800,000. Is this correct? If so, why?

Following approval of the 17 projects receiving a total of £1,578,889 for the period 2022-2024, officials are working on a communications plan to announce the support. The projects, which deliver against the Creative Skills Action Plan’s 10 identified priorities for the screen, digital and music sectors, will focus on activities including business and leadership training, entry level and upskilling, wellbeing of the workforce and improving diversity and inclusion in each sector. £800k was set aside as part of the open, competitive call to the sector. £200k has been reserved for partnership projects, for example co-funded projects with PSBs or other national funders, such as the Culture Connect Wales project.

Swimming Pools

4. Are you able to provide an update on the meeting you had with Swim Wales on Wednesday 18 January 2023?

The purpose of the meeting with Swim Wales was to discuss the decline in school swimming in Wales and the Welsh Government’s response to the recommendations of the Petitions Committee report: ‘Mark Allen’s Law - Water safety and drowning prevention’.

I explained while responsibility for school swimming and water safety rests with other Ministers, they were both important cross-government issues and that I was aware that the Minister for Climate Change is pursuing joint action following the Committee’s report. I agreed to discuss the concerns about the decline in school swimming with the Minister for Education and Welsh Language. I explained my officials were already engaged in discussions with other policy teams about how to address the Mark Allen’s Law report recommendations and would represent the interests of Swim Wales in those discussions.

We also discussed the vulnerability of swimming pools due to the energy crisis. Swim Wales acknowledged the issues around the UK Government’s new Energy Bill Discount Scheme were not a matter for the Welsh Government but were grateful for our support in calling for pools to be categorised as ‘intensive’ energy users. We hope the swell of support from the sport and leisure sector, and politicians in Wales and across the UK, will persuade the UK Government to reconsider its position given the importance of these facilities to people’s health and wellbeing.

5. Are you able to outline what discussions you have had with the UK Government regarding allowing swimming pools to access help and relief through the Energy Bill Relief Scheme for businesses and other non-domestic customers?

We were disappointed to hear swimming pools had been excluded from the UK Government’s list of intensive energy businesses eligible for the highest level of support for the new Energy Bill Discount Scheme. The Welsh Government included representations

about swimming pools in its response to the consultation on the Energy Bill Relief Scheme and is continuing to discuss these issues and to make representations to the UK Government. Officials also met with sector representatives, including Sport Wales, the Welsh Sports Association and Swim Wales, on 20 January to gather further evidence to make the strongest possible case to the UK Government for leisure centres and swimming pools to be afforded that support.

We would also like to take this opportunity to clarify comments made by the Deputy Minister for Arts, Sport & Chief Whip to the Committee in relation to awards made from the Be Active Fund. Although clubs and organisations in the Merthyr Tydfil local authority area have benefitted significantly from Sport Wales funding, it is not the local authority that has received the most amount of funding through the Be Active Fund, further information can be found at <https://www.sport.wales/grants-and-funding/beactivewalesfund/>

We hope that you will find this information helpful.

Yours sincerely,



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