



Ein cyf/Our ref: MA/VG/3064/24

Delyth Jewell AS/MS  
Chair of the Culture, Communications and Welsh Language Committee,  
Sports and International Relations Committee

04 April 2024

Dear Delyth,

Thank you for your correspondence of 13 March in relation to the final budget 2024-25 for the Economy Main Expenditure Group which was published in December. As Culture is now within my Portfolio, I am responding to you. Please find enclosed the further information as requested to inform your ongoing budget scrutiny.

## Culture Strategy

Welsh Government, working with the Plaid Cymru Designated Member, remain committed to the publication of the Culture Strategy, which is a Programme for Government and Co-Operation Agreement. However, we recognise the strategy needs to be considered within the context of the current financial challenges and its impacts on our sectors. It was agreed we should pause and reflect on the impacts of the budget proposals on the sector, and the draft Strategy has been refined and streamlined accordingly over the last few months.

On 19 March the former Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport & Tourism issued a statement setting out the next steps for the Culture Strategy<sup>1</sup>. We are preparing to launch a public consultation on the Strategy in May, which will run for eight weeks. We encourage everyone with an interest in the future of culture in Wales to read the Strategy and participate in the consultation. We strongly believe this is the right Strategy for the current financial climate. It provides strategic direction for our cultural sectors, and clearly states our long-term ambitions, while setting out the flexible and scalable priorities we will focus on to achieve them.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-next-steps-culture-strategy-wales>

## **Prioritising Spending to Safeguard the National Collections.**

We are fully aware of the challenges Amgueddfa Cymru and the National Library of Wales face in maintaining aging buildings, challenges that are shared by institutions across the UK. We are in regular discussions with our national institutions, helping to respond to the challenges they face for example, in 2023-24, Amgueddfa Cymru received £2m to tackle long-term maintenance issues and help fund the redevelopment of the National Slate Museum. In 2022-23, the National Library received £500,000 for a new fire system to ensure the safety of its collections and received £250,000 in 2023-24 for priority maintenance work.

The former Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport & Tourism recently met with the Chief Executives and Chairs of Amgueddfa Cymru, and the National Library. She was reassured the national collections are currently safe. However, despite Amgueddfa Cymru receiving £5m a year in capital funding through grant in aid, significant investment is needed to address maintenance issues at the National Museum Cardiff. Amgueddfa Cymru is working with us to develop a plan so we can identify the financial support available over the next five years. Given the importance of the collections and the potential size of the work required, this may need to be tackled by co-operation across Government, rather than a single department.

## **Welsh Government Redundancies in Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs)**

In preparing the 2024-25 Budget, Ministers have made the most stark and painful budget choices in the devolution era. We recently agreed with the Plaid Cymru Designated Member our immediate and short-term focus must be on supporting jobs. Cooperation Agreement funding has already been used for this purpose. Additionally, we have agreed funding allocated to delivering the Culture Strategy next financial year is re-purposed to mitigate against the impact of job losses at Amgueddfa Cymru, the National Library, the Arts Council of Wales and the wider arts sector. Since the draft budget was published, we have also found additional funding for Cadw and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales.

## **Further Consequential Funding**

Our national collections are an integral part of our heritage. We will continue to play our part in ensuring they are safe for future generations. This includes continuing to prioritise funding to our arm's length bodies to protect the national collections.

Yours sincerely,



**Lesley Griffiths AS/MS**  
**Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Ddiwylliant a Chyfiawnder Cymdeithasol**  
**Cabinet Secretary for Culture & Social Justice**