

Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas

Deputy Minister for Culture, Tourism and Sport

Welsh Government

5 December 2019

Dear Dafydd,

Update on the arts and creative industries portfolio

I would like to update the members of the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee on issues within your portfolio in advance of the budget scrutiny session in January.

I would be grateful if you could provide me with an update on the following issues.

Creative Wales

I understand that the Director has been appointed. Please can you provide more information on the successful candidate? Please can you provide us with any information you have on the appointments of the Chair and Board members?

Please can you let us know why the planned launch in November was postponed and the new date for the launch event?

National Contemporary Art Gallery for Wales

I would like to follow up on the question I asked of the First Minister on 25 October. Please can you provide an update on the work to progress the proposals for a National Contemporary Art Gallery for Wales and the work of the Steering Group?

When do you anticipate being able to make a decision on suitable venues for the gallery?

Skills investment in the film industry in Wales and update on Pinewood Studios management

In our report on the film and major television industry in Wales, published in May, we committed to following up on our recommendations. These included recommendations about the profitability of Pinewood studios in Wentloog.

Please can you let us know what progress has been made on finding a permanent management company for the Pinewood studios in Wentloog? Does the Welsh Government have a timetable for finding new management to take over from Wolf Studios Wales?

Skills development is often cited as the biggest factor limiting growth of the screen industry in Wales, as we highlighted in our report. I would be grateful if you could explain how the Welsh Government is working with the industry in this area.

I understand that Wolf Studios Wales have approached the Welsh Government to request match funding on their investment in skills development but were not successful.

Please can you provide more information on this? It is obviously frustrating for the company that the Welsh Government is unable to invest in skills development after the very positive response you gave to our report .

Survey of music venues in Wales

I understand that Landsker Business Solutions was contracted to carry out a survey of live music venues in Wales. During our inquiry into live music we have heard from our stakeholders that many of them were not aware of the exercise. We have also had a complaint that some venues have received a follow up email without receiving an initial email asking for information.

Please can the Committee be provided with the following information:

- The number of venues contacted;
- The names of those contacted;

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Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee

- The number of venues which responded;
- when the mapping exercise was carried out and
- how the activity was publicised?

Please can you reply to this letter by **16 December** in order for me to brief our Members in advance of the session in January?

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bethan Sayed." The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Bethan Sayed

Chair of the Committee



Ein cyf/Our ref MA/DET/5884/19

Bethan Sayed AM
Chair
Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

06 January 2020

CULTURE, WELSH LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE - UPDATE ON THE ARTS AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES PORTFOLIO

Thank you for your letter of 5 December requesting an update on the Arts and Creative Industries portfolio before the budget scrutiny session in January 2020.

I will answer your questions in the order in which you have raised them in your letter.

Creative Wales

Gerwyn Evans has been appointed as Deputy Director, Creative Wales following an extensive recruitment exercise across the civil service, to lead the Creative Wales team. Gerwyn, formerly Head of Tourism Development in Welsh Government (WG), brings with him over 18 years' experience of policy development and strategic delivery.

The intention is to publicise and formally seek nominees for a Chair and a small number of members for the Creative Wales Board alongside the launch. The Board will comprise an external Chair, a small number of external members, Director, Culture, Sport and Tourism, WG and Deputy Director, Creative Wales, WG.

We will be seeking applications for a Chair and Members with experience of the commercial creative industries in Wales, insight into the issues facing the industry and ideas for growing the sector. In appointing individuals to the Board, consideration will be given to ensuring broad and diverse membership, representative of the sector in Wales.

The Creative Wales launch, originally scheduled for November 2019, was postponed as a result of the pre-election period. This is in line with the Welsh Government's position on other key announcements, including the International Strategy, which has also been postponed until the New Year. The intention is now to launch Creative Wales at 6:15pm on 29 January 2020 at the Creative and Cultural Skills Wales Awards ceremony at the Cardiff

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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.

& Vale College, City Centre Campus, Dumballs Road, Cardiff, CF10 5FE. I would very much like you to be present as Chair of the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee, and as such, extend this formal invitation to you to attend the launch event.

National Contemporary Art Gallery for Wales

The Contemporary Art Steering Group is now developing a business plan that will outline investment to deliver a distributed contemporary art offer across Wales. As you will be aware, this was a key recommendation in the feasibility report published in July 2018: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-08/national-contemporary-art-gallery-wales-preliminary-feasibility-study-and-options-appraisal.pdf>. It will ensure everyone in Wales has access to our national contemporary art collections and will include investment in our existing excellent network of art galleries and museums. This will deliver an innovative and inclusive approach to contemporary art in Wales. I will provide a fuller update shortly, including on funding to take forward the next stage of this work.

Skills investment in the film industry in Wales and update on Pinewood Studios management

At the end of October we announced that Welsh Government and Pinewood would be parting ways on the studio facility in Wentloog at the end of March. We are currently considering future options for the site from April onwards and will provide a further update to the Committee when a decision has been made.

Since April 2019 the studio has been at full occupancy, with Bad Wolf being the majority tenant alongside the smaller media hub companies. Accordingly, the studio is due to make an operational profit of around £200k this financial year (this sum may vary following adjustments on variable costs such as utilities and back billing for certain charges).

We recognise that in order to maintain and promote further growth in the screen industry in Wales, we must prioritise support for developing industry skills and improving the talent pathway. A key pillar of activity for Creative Wales will be supporting skills development and progression, including establishing a strong entry route and pathway for future talent.

We will be working with our partners and key stakeholders to develop a range of actions, to invest in skills development and ensure a vibrant and sustainable future for the industry in Wales. We are establishing a skills stakeholder group. This will meet for the first time on 15th January 2020, and will provide an opportunity for the industry to inform our future skills strategy.

No formal application for skills funding has been received from Wolf Studios Wales. We are in discussion with Wales Screen Alliance, and a number of our other stakeholders, on initiatives to address skills issues in the short, medium and longer term from across the creative industries sector. Our intention is to consider proposals in a holistic way, to maximise the funding available and to ensure projects complement and build on existing provision internally and externally. Our aim is to support projects that meet needs across a range of sectors, including music and creative digital.

Funding will be targeted at gaps in support with the aim of realising the greatest benefit for the whole of the creative industries in Wales, working inside and outside of Government to shape activity in line with the needs of the sector.

Survey of Music Venues in Wales

The following response to these questions was provided to the Committee in early December 2019:

The research study to map grassroots music venues in Wales was formally commissioned by Welsh Government in April 2019. The purpose of the study is to provide Welsh Government with accurate evidence of the complex issues that exist for grassroots music venues, in order for Welsh Government (Creative Wales) to develop appropriate initiatives to support them.

Following a four week open tender public procurement process advertised via Sell2Wales, the research study to map grassroots music venues in Wales was awarded to Landsker Business Solutions in June 2019. Landsker Business Solutions formally began the research over the summer period. They are continuing to engage with grassroots music venues in order to gather the data required to produce their final report and the associated map of grassroots music venues in Wales. As this work is ongoing we are not yet able to confirm the total number of venues contacted and who they are.

The mapping exercise (data gathering) is expected to conclude by the end of the year.

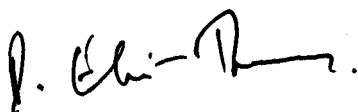
A [press release](#) was issued to publicise the research study on 27 July 2019. Additional publicity about the study was shared via relevant social media channels belonging to Welsh Government and our partners. Key stakeholders within the music industry were also informed, in order for introductions to be made between them and Landsker Business Solutions to aid the research study.

On delivery of the final report, Welsh Government officials will arrange to meet with representatives of Music Venues Trust to discuss the report's findings. Advice will then be provided to Ministers about the report and any recommendations made within it.

The mapping exercise has now been completed, and officials will be reviewing the report. We note the concerns raised that some venue owners do not appear to have been approached. Supporting and growing the music industry, including grassroots venues, is a key priority for Creative Wales, and this research will be an important component of our evidence base. We will be considering the robustness and completeness of the exercise as part of our review. We will update the Committee on our findings, and any action we are taking should there be an issue with the way in which the exercise has been carried out.

I trust you will find this response useful.

Yours sincerely,



Yr Arglwydd Elis-Thomas AC/AM
Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism