

Culture Committee CC 18-02 p4

Date: 20 November 2002

Time: 9.00 – 12.00 noon

Venue: Committee Room 1, National Assembly for Wales

Final Budget

I have already reported my final budget proposals to you. I was pleased with the budget settlement for culture, and with the establishment of the new Culture Fund "Investing in our Creative Future."

The new fund amalgamates the programme and capital budgets of the cultural Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies to create a single new fund. The fund starts at £46.8 million in 2003/04 and rises to £62.3 million in 2005/06. This means an additional £45.5 million for culture over original baselines during the three year period. And this increase does not include additional funding for the Welsh Books Council, nor funding to deliver the programmes for hosting the Ryder Cup in 2010. Taken together the overall increase is £56.3 million over the three years.

In my detailed report to Committee on 23 October I said that I could now make real progress on my priorities as identified in the culture strategy "Creative Future: Cymru Greadigol." I also said that I had taken account of the Committee's priorities.

I said that my first priority over the period will be the Welsh Language. Following the publication of "Dyfodol Dwyieithog: Bilingual Future" I am planning to invest over £16 million of new money, from the Culture Fund, on development of the Welsh language over the next three years. This is a major increase and will ensure that we make real progress on our policies.

The Chair of the Committee wrote to me on 25 October confirming the main points made in Committee. He also asked about the use of End Year Flexibility and how that will affect the overall budget position. The Finance Minister specifically referred to EYF in her final budget speech when she said that another example of a project in this category is Clwyd Theatr Cymru. We are in discussion with Flintshire and the Arts Council of Wales to find a mechanism for releasing the theatre from its debt to the local authority. This is also only the first step - ACW, Flintshire and CTC will be engaged in longer term discussions on the programme, capacity and sustainability of CTC for the future.

Other significant Culture projects that do not feature in the Budget but are effectively covered by new or existing EYF include the capital costs for the construction of the Wales Millennium Centre and a grant to the Swansea Waterfront Museum, which has now secured funding from the Heritage

Lottery Fund. We are also working closely with the trustees on the next phase of the National Botanic Garden; with the partnership promoting Cardiff's Capital of Culture bid for 2008; and with the Sports Council - in the context of their Quinquennial Review - on plans for the refurbishment of the Welsh Institute of Sport. The Finance Minister has said that, depending on developments, she may return to these in the supplementary budget next spring.

Wales Millennium Centre

In accordance with Standing Orders, I wish to inform the Committee that the Finance Minister has agreed to transfer £10m from End Year Flexibility into the Culture Main Expenditure Group, thus creating a budget for payments relating to the construction of the Wales Millennium Centre.

It is anticipated that payments in 2002-03 will amount to around £15 - 16m and a further transfer from EYF will take place during the January review of expenditure. I will report further on EYF as decisions are made.

Cardiff 2008

I was delighted that the Cardiff bid to be European Capital of Culture in 2008 made the shortlist. The Assembly is fully behind the bid. The other cities on the shortlist are Newcastle/Gateshead, Liverpool, Birmingham, Bristol and Oxford.

The Welsh Assembly Government has backed the bid with more than £1million to support the process (£500k last year and up to £ 683k this year). Cardiff is the only city on the shortlist to have a whole country behind it, and that is a strong feature of the bid.

We have already been in contact with DCMS, and met with Cardiff 2008 to discuss the next steps, and action required from now until the winner is announced next spring. There will be much for Cardiff 2008 to do, and DCMS will be writing within the next week or so to all the shortlisted cities outlining the process and what will be required of them.

I am convinced of the wider benefits of cultural developments, and the Capital of Culture designation – in terms of the economic benefit , tourism potential and raising the profile of Cardiff and Wales throughout Europe and the world.

European Year of Disability

In recognition of the European Year of Disability in 2003 I have asked the Arts Council of Wales to operate a scheme that will support projects during and after this year-long event. The Arts Council has been awarded almost £300,000 over three years to support activity both by and for disabled people to participate in the arts as practitioners, audience members and participants. Last year the Assembly Government provided additional funding to the Arts Council of Wales to run a similar scheme – the Cultural Diversity Funding Scheme.

Artes Mundi Launch

I was very pleased to launch officially the Artes Mundi Prize on 23 October. This is a major new international visual arts prize initiated and developed in Wales, which at £40,000 makes it the largest single visual arts prize in the world. The first prize will be awarded in March 2004 and thereafter every two years - thus creating a significant biennial event that adds to cultural activity in Wales and will also be a major part of the celebrations should Cardiff's bid to be the European Capital of Culture in 2008 succeed.

Cymru 'n Creu

The sixth meeting of Cymru 'n Creu was held on 24 October at the WDA offices at Penllergaer. The meeting looked at progress on the action plans in Creative Future:Cymru Greadigol. For the next meeting in February 2003 a detailed report will be developed showing how Creative Future is being implemented and identifying achievements, milestones and any barriers to progress.

Dr Kevin Fitzpatrick - Commissioner (Wales) for the Disability Rights Commission - made a presentation to the group on the Disability Discrimination Act.

Engage

I was pleased to speak at the launch of the "engage" publication 'Opt for Art' at the National Museum on 6th November. Engage, founded in 1988, is the lead membership body in the UK and internationally working to support broadening access to the visual arts and crafts.

Engage Cymru is steered by a Wales Development Group including Oriel Mostyn, Aberystwyth Arts Centre, Oriel 31 and Ffotogallery. Engage is doing important work bringing art into everyday lives across Wales – encouraging more people to enjoy what's in our galleries and to appreciate the work of artists. The publication 'Opt for Art' has been produced following a recent project across Wales between 1995 and 2000 which aimed to influence Key Stage 3 pupils to consider art as a GCSE option and to create links between schools, galleries and artists.

Sports Reception

On behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government the First Minister and I jointly hosted a reception on 7 November to honour the Wales 2002 Commonwealth Games team and the Glamorgan County Cricket Club. We also took the opportunity to formally present the weightlifter, David Morgan, with the 2 gold medals he was awarded due to the disqualification of a fellow competitor. The event was well received and regarded as an appropriate tribute to the respective successes of both teams and the marvellous achievement of our greatest Commonwealth Games athlete.

The Football Forum

In response to the recommendations of the Football Forum, I was delighted to announce, on 12th

November, a significant package of funding for the development of football in Wales.

In addition to the £220k allocated annually via the Sports Council for Wales, the Football Association of Wales Trust will receive almost £1.3 million from the Welsh Assembly Government over the next 3 years. The additional funding will help provide and improve opportunities for young people to become involved in football and will provide specific opportunities for girls.

SCW Car Scheme

The case due to be brought against the Sports Council for Wales about its car scheme was withdrawn from the scheduled tribunal hearing. The Sports Council for Wales will continue to work with its staff in implementing alternative arrangements for business travel.

Review of Lottery Funding

The public consultation ended on 30 October. DCMS have received well over 400 responses. They are still being recorded. So far, there have been 17 from Wales. The responses are currently being analysed and a summary will be placed in the Library in due course.

We have been using the Review to take forward the Assembly's commitment that all main Lottery funding streams should have a distinctive Welsh direction and the Committee at its last meeting expressed its support for greater devolution of Lottery distribution powers to the Assembly. I will shortly be writing to Tessa Jowell setting out our position.

National Botanic Garden Of Wales

Following the submission of a request for short term funding by the National Botanic Garden of Wales, I announced a grant of £360k.

The Garden are seeking longer term funding to develop the infrastructure of the Garden; to support new major capital investments; and to help the NBGW to improve both their tourism facilities and their science and education capacity.

Before considering any further funding, I need to fully understand the current financial situation and future requirements of the Garden. For this reason the Assembly has appointed KPMG to undertake a full review of the Garden. They will be reporting back to the Assembly by the end of November.

CyMAL: Museums Archives and Libraries Wales

I met the Chairs of the Library and Information Services Council (Wales) and Archives Council Wales, and the Deputy Chair of the Council of Museums in Wales, on 5 November. We discussed the establishment of CyMAL from 1 April 2004. We had a wide ranging discussion on issues such as staffing, role and functions, and funding. We also talked about co-operation with other organisations within and outside Wales, including the National Library of Wales and the National Museums &

Galleries of Wales, local authorities and the independent/voluntary sector.

New Museum Director-General

The National Museums & Galleries of Wales have appointed Michael Houlihan as their new Director-General. Mr Houlihan is currently Chief Executive of the Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland and will take up post in the spring. I look forward to working with him and the Museum's President, Paul Loveluck, on the many exciting projects being undertaken by the National Museum.

Nantgarw

I recently met the President of the National Museums & Galleries of Wales to publicise the Assembly's investment in their Collections Centre at Nantgarw.

This funding, which will amount to £3.5 million over the next 3 years, will enable the National Museum to expand its Collections Centre. The project will mean that the Museum will more than double the curatorial and storage space available at the Centre and ensure that NMGW's staff will have the space and facilities they need to store and conserve the national collections in their care.

Retirement of Jane Peirson Jones

Jane Peirson Jones, Director of the Council of Museums in Wales, retired from her post on grounds of ill health at the end of October. Ms Peirson Jones had been away from work for some time and I have written to her to express my thanks for her contribution to raising the profile of local museums in Wales.

As the Council will disappear in April 2004 as CyMAL comes into being, the post of Director is being advertised internally.

Culturenet Cymru

I have given the go-ahead for a consortium of cultural and other organisations to deliver Culturenet Cymru - an all-Wales, bilingual, cultural ICT network –previously known under the working title of 'Culture Cymru Online'.

The Cymru'n Creu Forum established an ICT Working Group last year, chaired by Andrew Green of the National Library, to develop this initiative. I have now agreed the strategic and action plan drawn up by the Working Group, and have allocated £1.5 million to support the initiative over a three year period.

Culturenet Cymru is likely to consist of two elements: a central staff unit of experts to plan and co-ordinate activities; and specific services or projects commissioned from, or contracted out to, other organisations. Key aims of the initiative are to give Cymru'n Creu members the ability to offer online services and to create and retain high-quality digital cultural material for use anywhere, any time, by

learners in formal or informal contexts. It also aims to accelerate growth in online cultural activity throughout Wales and improve knowledge and appreciation of Welsh culture outside Wales. Culturenet Cymru will be located within Cymru Ar-lein, which will maximise its visibility and importance.

The plan is for Culturenet Cymru to be delivered by a not-for-profit company owned by Cymru'n Creu ASPBs; the Working Group is currently working on the practical arrangements.

Welsh Animation Industry Screenings

I attended a screening of 50 animated films commissioned by S4C on 28 October in the UGC cinema in Cardiff. Three of them will be shown at the London Film Festival in November. I had the opportunity to address the animators present.

Welsh Books Council

On 2nd November, I announced that the Welsh Books Council would receive an additional £1.3m over the next three years. This will enable the Council to continue to implement the recommendations of the Task & Finish Group on Publishing, including implementing a new system of commissioning authors and providing editorial support to publishing houses. This additional funding provides an important boost to Welsh language publishing, and will help to develop the infrastructure of the publishing industry in Wales.

Tir na n-Og Awards for Welsh Children's Literature

I attended the Children's Books Conference in Aberystwyth on 2 November to present the Tir na n-Og Awards for Children's Literature. The Conference is an annual event arranged by the Welsh Books Council. The Awards are presented to honour the work of authors and designers of books for children and teenagers. There are three categories: best Welsh-language fiction, won by Shoned Wyn Jones for *Gwirioni*; best non-fiction, won by Non ap Emlyn and Marian Delyth for *Poeth!*; and best English-language work, won by Malachy Doyle for *Georgie*.

Welsh Language Board

On 29th October, I announced that Rhodri Williams had accepted an invitation to serve another term as Chair of the Welsh Language Board. His new term of office will run for three years from 1 May 2003 to 30 April 2006. This early announcement will help with the Board's long-term planning, and provide continuity and stability at a time of great opportunity for the language.

Friesland Delegation

On Thursday, 7th November, I met a delegation from Friesland, in the Netherlands, to discuss and compare the support given to the indigenous languages of our respective countries. The delegation, led by the Friesian Culture Minister Dr van Mulder, were particularly interested in the Committee's

review of the Welsh language and the various measures undertaken to support and promote the Welsh language.

Film

The next fortnight sees a hive of film-related activity. The 14th International Welsh Film Festival is being held in Cardiff between 21-27th November. Tying in with these events, Sgrin have organised the Focus on Interactive Media (18-19th November) and Focus on Film Conferences (20-21st November), both of which I will be attending. On 20th November, I will be officially launching the Wales Screen Commission, which will deliver a co-ordinated location service for Wales.

Minister's Visits From 23 October – 20 November 2002

October

Attend Performance of Oklahoma, Cardiff

National Youth Musical

Attend Cymru'n Creu Meeting Penllergaer Nr Swansea

Speak at Welsh Animation's Industry UGC, Cardiff

Screening

Keynote Address Wales Council for Llandudno

the Blind Conference

November

Attend Welsh Schools Football Jenner Park, Barry

Association: Wales Vs England

Present Tir na Nóg Awards with Book Aberystwyth Council.

Keynote Address Voluntary Arts Wales Craig Y Nos Castle

Conference Upper Swansea Valley

Attend Gala Final of BBC 2 Voice New Theatre, Cardiff of Musical Theatre

Attend Wales Vs New Zealand Rugby Cardiff League

Visit NMGW with Paul Loveluck NMGW, Cathays

Address Opt for Art Launch NMGW, Cathays

Attend Dinner and Presentation on BBC 2W Llandaff

Attend Evening Reception for Commonwealth Assembly Building

Games Medal winners

Attend Children's Football lesson St Helen's Primary School, Swansea

Attend Dinner with New Opportunities Fund Jury's,Hotel Cardiff

Attend Reception for Arts and Business Clwyd Theatre Cymru, Mold

Award Winners.

Attend Performance of Romeo and (CTC) Mold

Juliet.

Attend Motor Sport Assoc. Buffet for Hilton Hotel, Cardiff

Network Q Rally

Attend Network Q Rally Reception NMGW, Cathays

Attend Screen Gems Premiere Coal Exchange, Cardiff

and Reception

Attend General Council Duke of St David's Hall, Cardiff

Edinburgh Concert 'Pied Viper'

Attend New Zealand High Commission City Hall, Cardiff

Reception

Launch the Wales Screen Commission Coal Exchange, Cardiff

