

## **Culture Committee CC 03-03 p1**

**Date: 5 February 2003**

**Time: 9.00 – 12.30**

**Venue: National Assembly for Wales**

**Item 2:** "A Culture in Common" – implementing the Committee's recommendations. Progress report by the Minister on the Culture Strategy – "Creative Future".

### **Purpose**

1. To report to the Committee on progress with the Assembly Government's culture strategy, *Creative Future : Cymru Greadigol*. The strategy was developed in response to the recommendations of the report, *A Culture in Common*, produced by the former Post-16 Education and Training Committee in October 2000.

### **Recommendation**

2. That the Committee notes and comments on the Minister's report on progress over the first year of the strategy.

### **Background**

3. *Creative Future: Cymru Greadigol* was launched by the Minister for Culture in February 2002. It set out a ten-year strategy to give cultural issues a much higher profile in Wales. The task the Assembly Government set itself was to encourage activities and strategies which would enrich the lives of people in Wales and would help release the energies, talents and creative potential of individuals.
4. Creative Future contains eight detailed action plans. They set out in a practical way the Welsh Assembly Government's priorities for culture. The action points will evolve over time – some will quickly come to fruition, others will change, some will disappear as circumstances alter and new ones will emerge. The strategy is organic and designed to be flexible in meeting need and adapting to the real world.

## Report

5. The past year has been the first in a ten-year strategy which seeks to affect a transformation in people's appreciation of and participation in the cultural life of Wales. Activity over the year has included work on discrete projects, both short and long term, together with development work in areas where more investigation is needed, because of either the scale of an idea or its innovative nature.
6. An impressive start has been made – examples of real achievements include:
  - Free museums
  - The Artes Mundi prize – the largest single arts prize in the world – was launched in July
  - Wales' first ever presence at the Venice Biennale
  - The Cymru 'n Creu subgroup on ICT is taking forward practical work to develop the context of Culture Cymru ar Lein.
  - The Gathering the Jewels project is scheduled for completion by April 2003
  - The Music Development Fund was extended for a year and is now being reviewed
  - The Assembly Government is developing a new major events strategy and undertaking a review of broadcasting
  - The Assembly Government has supported the Cardiff 2008 bid in partnership with Cardiff County with almost £1.4m
  - The WTB has established its Destination Management System and is finalising its Cultural Tourism Strategy
  - The Arts Council is establishing a youth arts fund
  - The Arts Council has established its new arts database on the web
  - The WDA has agreed a further three year funding package with the Welsh Music Foundation
  - I have announced new funds for Welsh language theatre, for theatre in education and for arts activity for the year of disability
  - We have provided £560,000 to remove Clwyd Theatr Cymru's debt to Flintshire County Council
  - The Arts Council has increased its funding to all its revenue clients by 15%
  - I was pleased to announce a further £650,000 this year for the development of sport – Sportmatch, Playing for Wales and golf development
  - In November I launched Iaith Pawb, the national action plan for a bilingual Wales, which includes over £28 million over 3 years for new initiatives in support of the Welsh language.
1. These line up alongside flagship projects like the Wales Millennium Centre, the Swansea Waterfront Museum, the Welsh National Opera and the Royal Welsh College.

## *Development work*

2. Five key commitments were outlined in the opening section of *Creative Future*. Significant progress has been made over the past year in taking these forward:
3. Firstly, cultural issues are firmly established as an **important cross-cutting theme** for the Assembly Government. Cultural issues permeate the development of policy in all areas of the Assembly Government. The Arts have an enhanced role in schools, the sustainable communities strategy emphasises the social and other benefits of community cultural activities and the cultural tourism and major events strategies are important components of economic development.
4. Secondly, **Local Government** are firmly established as key partners in delivering the culture strategy. All local authorities are actively involved in supporting and promoting cultural activities and most authorities have started work or have published their own local culture strategies - so important for engaging local people.
5. Thirdly, the **Arts Council of Wales** is now on a much sounder footing. The culture budget for 2002-03 saw an increase of 11%, the largest for any portfolio in the Assembly Government. A significant proportion of that increase went to the Arts Council, enabling them to support more organisations, complete their internal reorganisation and produce a five year arts development strategy. The Arts Council has also reviewed its funding mechanisms and now operates a much simplified grant application process.
6. Fourthly, **Cymru'n Creu** is charged with monitoring and facilitating progress on Creative Future and in so doing provides an effective mechanism for co-ordinating planning and activity across all cultural bodies. It is chaired by the Minister for Culture and brings together the strategic national bodies, such as the Arts Council, the Sports Council and the National Museums and Galleries of Wales, the Welsh Local Government Association and the business development perspective of the WDA and the Tourist Board as well as the broadcasters.
7. Fifthly, *Creative Future* commits the Assembly Government **to extracting cultural value** from the wide range of public and private expenditure. This links closely with the policy of mainstreaming and raising the profile of cultural issues across the Assembly Government's responsibilities. Cultural development is a key component of the community strategy, of efforts to improve the international perception of Wales and of the recently announced policies promoting the Welsh language.
8. The establishment of the Culture Fund has also been a key development over the last year. It brings together within one Assembly Government funding regime all the programme expenditure within the Culture Minister's portfolio. This will enable the Assembly Government to respond strategically to priorities in the culture strategy and target funding to need, whilst retaining the ability to respond more flexibly to in-year pressures. This year has seen the culture budgets grow from an original baseline of £75 million so that they now approach £100 million.

## **Compliance**

9. This report is before the Committee in recognition of the committee's role in reviewing the implementation of policies.

## **Action**

10. For the Committee to note and to offer comments.
11. The next meeting of Cymru'n Creu will be held on 13 February, at which members will present further reports on progress. At that meeting, Cymru'n Creu will be asked to agree a detailed matrix of Creative Future actions, including milestones, showing progress and identifying any obstacles. I propose to share that matrix with the Committee in March.

## **Contact point**

Arts, Sport and Lottery Division.