

Agenda – Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee

Meeting Venue: Committee Room 3 –
Senedd

Meeting date: 3 May 2023

Meeting time: 09.30

For further information contact:

Lleu Williams

Committee Clerk

0300 200 6565

SeneddCulture@senedd.wales

Pre-meeting registration

(09.15 – 09.30)

1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

(09.30)

2 Papers to note

(9.30)

2.1 Safeguarding the national collections

(Pages 1 – 2)

Attached Documents:

Letter to the Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport, and Chief Whip:

Safeguarding the national collections – 28 March 2023

2.2 Impact of increasing costs

(Pages 3 – 4)

Attached Documents:

Letter to the Minister for Finance and Local Government and Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport, and Chief Whip – Additional funding for swimming pools

– 4 April 2023



Senedd Cymru
Welsh Parliament

2.3 Welsh Government international relations

(Pages 5 – 7)

Attached Documents:

Welsh Government international visits – March 2023

2.4 Wales–Ireland relations

(Pages 8 – 12)

Attached Documents:

Additional evidence from the Institute for Public Health

3 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 (vi) and (ix) to resolve to exclude the public from items 4 and 5 of the meeting

(09.30)

4 Wales–Ireland relations: discussion on the evidence gathered from the Committee Visit to Dublin

(09.30 – 09.50)

5 Inquiry into the legislative framework that supports Welsh–Medium Education Provision: Consideration of the draft report

(09.50 – 10.00)

(Pages 13 – 66)

Attached Documents:

Draft report on the Inquiry into the legislative framework that supports Welsh–Medium Education Provision

6 Wales–Ireland relations: evidence session with the Cherish Project

(10.00 – 10.30)

(Pages 67 – 78)

- Christopher Catling, Chief Executive, Cherish Project
- Clare Lancaster, Project Manager, Cherish Project

Attached Documents:

Research brief: Inquiry into Wales–Ireland relations

Evidence from the Cherish Project: Inquiry into Wales–Ireland relations

Break

(10.30 – 10.40)

7 Wales–Ireland relations: evidence session with Members of the British–Irish Parliamentary Assembly

(10.40 – 11.40)

- Rt Hon Karen Bradley MP, Co–Chair, British–Irish Parliamentary Assembly
- Brendan Smith TD, Co–Chair, British–Irish Parliamentary Assembly

8 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 (vi) and (ix) to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of this meeting

(11.40)

9 Wales–Ireland relations: consideration of evidence

(11.40 – 12.00)

10 Consideration of correspondence from the Finance Committee: Welsh Government Draft Budget 2023–24

(12.00 – 12.05)

(Pages 79 – 80)

Attached Documents:

Letter from the Finance Committee: Evidence provided by the Welsh Government – 8 March 2023

11 Consideration of correspondence from the Finance Committee: Welsh Government Draft Budget 2024–25

(12.05 – 12.10)

(Pages 81 – 83)

Attached Documents:

Letter from the Finance Committee: Welsh Government Draft Budget 2024–25: Engagement – 19 April 2023

12 Allegations surrounding the Welsh Rugby Union: Consideration of the draft report on the Committee's initial findings

(12:10 – 12:30)

(Pages 84 – 111)

Attached Documents:

Draft report on the Committee's initial findings on the allegations surrounding the Welsh Rugby Union

Dawn Bowden MS
Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport, and Chief
Whip
Welsh Government

28 March 2023

Safeguarding the national collections at Amgueddfa Cymru

Dear Dawn,

I am writing to you following our consideration of correspondence received from Amgueddfa Cymru (dated 22 February 2022) following scrutiny of the Welsh Government's Draft Budget for 2023-24.

Amgueddfa Cymru told us that:

"While we feel that the settlement for Amgueddfa Cymru is reasonable over the next two years, the longer term outlook is more uncertain and certainly poses challenges. Therefore, we cannot provide you with the assurances that you seek. There are significant structural issues within Amgueddfa Cymru's buildings that means there is an ongoing risk to National Collections."

Amgueddfa Cymru highlights that the maintenance backlog across all their sites is at least £65million, with over a quarter of items requiring maintenance (£15million) deemed *"as critical that are in need of urgent repair."* In addition, at least £25million is also required for mechanical, electrical and plumbing work at the Cathays Park site. This is total cost of £90million worth of work required over the coming decade.

We note these concerns alongside those raised previously by the National Library who told the Committee that there is a *"very serious risk to the collections which we deem to be totally unacceptable without additional funding"*.¹

The Committee has repeatedly raised concerns about this matter with you. As outlined in the draft budget reports for 2022/23 and 2023/24, the Committee is of the view that there is potentially a serious threat to some important collections. Both these institutions are of significant cultural value for our nation

and consideration must be given to how these institutions are provided with funding to safeguard our national collections for future generations..

What assurances can you give the Committee that the future of national collections housed at both Amgueddfa Cymru and the National Library of Wales are safe? Further, can you outline what plans you have in place to provide the necessary support to enable both institutions to carry out the capital work required over the coming years to safeguard these treasures?

I look forward to receiving your response in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Delyth Jewell MS
Committee Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

**Culture, Communications, Welsh Language,
Sport, and International Relations Committee**

4 April 2023

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Rebecca Evans MS
Minister for Finance and Local Government
Welsh Government

Dawn Bowden MS
Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport, and Chief Whip
Welsh Government

Additional funding for swimming pools

Dear Rebecca and Dawn,

Our committee has raised concerns with you in the past about the impact of increasing costs on sports facilities, especially swimming pools, and we write again to express our increasing concern.

In the Spring Budget, the Chancellor announced £63 million of funding for swimming pools in England. We would like to know:

- Whether this funding will trigger a Barnett Consequential for the Welsh Government, and if so, of how much.
- Whether the Welsh Government will consider using any additional funding it receives as a consequential of this announcement to support swimming pools.

As a committee, we previously called for additional support for this sector in our November 2022 report **Increasing costs: impact on culture and sport** and recent **2023-24 Draft Budget** report.

In February 2023, the Welsh Sports Association and Community Leisure UK wrote to us with "significant concern that not enough is being done by the Welsh Government to support the sector". They said at the time that:

"While the Welsh Government has repeatedly said that they are not aware of any immediate threat to facilities in terms of closure, we believe this view is misguided as there is a very real and immediate threat to the delivery of public leisure services."

On 29 March 2023, the Welsh Sports Association and Swim Wales stressed the need for additional funding whilst giving **evidence to the Local Government and Housing Committee**. Fergus Feeney from Swim Wales referred to the scale of funding needed:

"Just outlining the gap, we think between £10 million and £12 million, best case. But we start at about £30 million. So, this is a significant problem."

We would like to reiterate our call for additional support for sport and leisure facilities, and in particular, swimming pools. We note, of course, that any Barnett Consequential which the Welsh Government receives from the £63 million funding for England will not solve the problems faced in Wales, but we believe nevertheless that it would represent a valuable first step. We would also wish to reiterate our previous calls for capital investment in energy efficiency for sports and leisure facilities, and to stress that this should be a key component of any additional funding provided.

Yours sincerely,



Delyth Jewell MS
Committee Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.
We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

INWARD VISITS - MARCH 2023

13 March Visit by the German Ambassador to the UK

Bi-lateral with Minister for Education to discuss the value of international learning and the opportunities available through the Taith programme.

15 March Visit by Irish Minister of State at the Dept of Finance

Bi-lateral with Minister for Finance and Local Government to discuss opportunities to build on success of the Ireland Wales programme and joint challenges to cost of living.

21 March Visit to Wales by the EU Ambassador to the UK

Bilateral with the First Minister to discuss trade links. The EU Ambassador was accompanied by the High Commissioner of Cyprus and the Ambassadors to the UK for Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia.

21 March Visit to Wales by Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the UK

Bilateral with the Minister for Social Justice to discuss culture, trade and food and drink industry.

23 March Visit by the Marshal of Silesia, Poland

Bilateral with the First Minister to discuss potential areas of collaboration with Wales for a future MOU. Visit included a dinner hosted by Counsel General.

OUTWARD VISITS - MARCH 2023

01 March First Minister Visit to Brussels

The First Minister travelled to Brussels to celebrate St. David's Day and demonstrate Wales' commitment as a European nation with European partners. The First Minister spoke at the European Policy Centre, met with the UK Ambassador to the EU, the Irish Permanent Representative to the EU and the Minister-President of Flanders. In the evening the First Minister hosted a reception to celebrate St. David's Day at the Ambassador's Residence in Brussels.

[Written Statement: St David's Day Ministerial Overseas Visits \(23 March 2023\) | GOV.WALES](#)

01 March Minister for Health & Social Services visit to Copenhagen

The Minister for Health and Social Services visited Copenhagen following an invitation from the World Health Organization to speak at the Wellbeing Economy Solutions Forum. During the two-day visit the Minister met with the Prime Minister of Iceland and, WHO Regional Director for Europe and the Permanent Secretary from Finland's Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. As the visit coincided with St. David's Day, the Minister also co-hosted a reception with the UK Ambassador to Denmark to promote Wales abroad and strengthen links between the Welsh diaspora living and working in Denmark.

[Written Statement: St David's Day Ministerial Overseas Visits \(23 March 2023\) | GOV.WALES](#)

02 March SDD reception - US Ambassador's residence MFLG

Minister for Finance attended a SDD reception in London hosted by the US Ambassador to the UK.

[Written Statement: St David's Day Ministerial Overseas Visits \(23 March 2023\) | GOV.WALES](#)

16 March First Minister visit to Paris

The First Minister travelled to Paris for the launch of Wales in France. Visit included engagement with investors; UNESCO; and launch event. Joined for some elements by a wider delegation including the Urdd, WAI, Future Generations Office.

[Written Statement: Ministerial Overseas Visit to Paris \(30 March 2023\) | GOV.WALES](#)

19 March Minister for Economy visit to San Francisco

The Minister for Economy visited the West Coast of America, travelling from San Francisco to Los Angeles. The focus of the visit was to develop economic links and promoting Wales' tech and creative industries. It provided an opportunity for the Minister to lead a multi-sector trade

OUTWARD VISITS - MARCH 2023

mission to the region and support the Welsh delegation exhibiting at the annual Games Developers Conference.

Written Statement: Ministerial Overseas Visit to the USA (4 April 2023)
| GOV.WALES

28 March First Minister visit to Basque Country

The First Minister travelled to Basque Country to strengthen relations on the back of the MOU between Wales and the region. The visit included meetings with the Lehendakari, President of the Basque Parliament, the Minister for Equality, Justice and Social Policies, Minister for Culture and Linguistic Policy and Minister for Economic Development, Sustainability and Environment. The First Minister also gave the Keynote Speech at an International Seminar, visited a marine energy test area and held a meeting to discuss the Taith International learning Exchange programme.

Agenda Item 2.4

Institute of
Public Health



WIR 11

Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

Pwyllgor Diwylliant, Cyfathrebu, y Gymraeg, Chwaraeon, a Chysylltiadau Rhyngwladol |
Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee
Cysylltiadau rhwng Cymru ac Iwerddon | Wales-Ireland relations

Ymateb gan: Sefydliad Iechyd Cyhoeddus Cymru | Response from: Institute of Public Health

Culture, Communications,
Welsh Language, Sport, and
International Relations
Committee, Welsh Parliament

E: SeneddCulture@senedd.wales

24th February 2023

Re: Institute of Public Health response to Inquiry into Wales-Ireland relations

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee inquiry into Wales-Ireland relations.

The Institute of Public Health (IPH) works to inform public policy to support healthier populations in Ireland and Northern Ireland. As such, our response focuses on the opportunities that this model of international engagement provides for population health. It also provides recommendations as to how the current model could be enhanced to respond to current and future public health challenges.

We have presented our feedback under each key area of interest posed by the Committee:

1. Wales-Ireland relations post-Brexit

The Institute welcomes the commitment to strengthen and formalise bilateral relations between Wales and Ireland. Overall, we see this as an opportunity to enhance transboundary collaboration to improve and protect population health.

At present, health is not included as a key priority area within the Shared Statement or Joint Action Plan, yet it is central to all others outlined. Working to improve population health is associated with wider societal and economic benefits. Transboundary cooperation and partnership working towards common health goals can offer economies of scale, particularly through knowledge exchange and support.

Therefore, the Institute suggest that health is included as a key priority area going forward.

Ireland and Wales, and the wider United Kingdom, share many population health challenges. Rising levels of chronic disease, an ageing and diversifying population, and the detrimental impact of international crises such as the cost-of-living and climate change are challenges faced by all governments. Major ports operate in Wales and Ireland, and as globalisation and international trade increases so too does the need for a concerted effort to manage related health risks; such as infectious disease transmission, food safety issues and even humanitarian risks from human trafficking and displacement of vulnerable people.

Poor health is associated with substantial costs for the individual, but also costs to the health service and wider society. Prevention of disease is key, and high-level leadership is needed to support cohesive policies aimed at reducing major disease risk factors at a population level; such as alcohol use, smoking, physical inactivity and unhealthy diets. Strong connections already exist between key health organisations in Ireland and Wales, with the work of Public Health Wales being notable as highly influential within public health. However, a high-level, formalised relationship between the two countries which prioritises health will undoubtedly strengthen this further at a regional and local level.

Geopolitical factors, such as Britain's exit from the European Union, can be obstacles to transboundary collaboration on policy. There are benefits to be gained, however, in addressing these shared challenges in partnership. Learning from the COVID-19 pandemic has shown the value that formalised pathways for transboundary cooperation can hold for implementing health policy. From the outset, close partnership working was required between government departments and across borders to align the policy direction, for knowledge exchange and to enable strategic cooperation. Going forward, a similar approach which harnesses the benefit of joined up working should be used to respond to and prepare for other shared health threats. This approach would benefit from high-level leadership and formalised pathways with the shared goal of improving health and wellbeing.

2. Current approach to bilateral engagement between the Welsh and Irish governments and whether it is fit for purpose post-Brexit

Britain's exit from the European Union has highlighted the importance of formal governance structures to facilitate cooperation between countries. The Institute welcome the formal bilateral engagement structure that has been applied to strengthen Wales-Ireland relations and see it as an essential platform to build stronger collaboration on public health.

Whilst we cannot comment on particulars of engagement structures and processes, we are supportive of the overall high-level commitment that has been made and see it as symbolic of a collaborative approach that is needed at all levels, across sectors and between countries.

Regular evaluation of the approach would be welcomed to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach and to identify urgent or topical areas of high value to public health and wellbeing that require renewed leadership and collaboration.

3. The Ireland-Wales Shared Statement and Joint Action Plan (2021-2025) as an approach to international engagement

We welcome the Wales-Ireland Shared Statement and Joint Action Plan as a high-level structure to support transboundary engagement. The United Nations Sustainable Development Framework is an excellent framework on which to base bilateral engagement priorities, and it is encouraging to see it referenced throughout the Joint Action Plan. However, we would highlight to the Committee that, as it stands, health has not been included as a priority area for cooperation. It is our recommendation that health should be a priority area in this and all similar transboundary engagement policies. This will be further explored under section 5 'Priority areas for cooperation between Ireland and Wales'.

4. The funding of future cooperation and collaborative projects between Ireland and Wales

Sufficient, recurrent funding to support transboundary collaboration between Wales and Ireland will be essential. We would like to bring the Shared Island Unit to the Committee's attention as a model for funding future projects. This whole of government initiative sits within the Department of the Taoiseach and works alongside the Northern Ireland Executive and British Government to address strategic challenges faced on the island of Ireland. Please access the Government of Ireland website for more information on the Shared Island Initiative: [gov.ie - Shared Island \(www.gov.ie\)](https://www.gov.ie/en/sharing-island/).

5. Priority areas for cooperation between Ireland and Wales

At present, health is not included as a priority area for cooperation. The Institute recommend that health is added as a core priority area in this and all other transboundary engagement policies.

The health of a population is impacted by many factors, known as the determinants of health. Some factors cannot be altered, such as age and genetic make-up, but many are outside of an individual's control, such as the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age. These conditions are known as the environmental and socioeconomic determinants of health and are shaped by regional and global factors such as the distribution of power and resources. As such, health is the responsibility of many different policy sectors working together, rather than the health sector alone. This is known as the 'Health in All Policies' (HiAP) approach, which can be used to address complex health challenges, and to support high-level government goals that impact multiple sectors, including health. There is an opportunity to apply a 'HiAP' approach in strengthening Wales-Ireland relations. This approach is recognised as a cornerstone of international cooperation and is already used at a global level; for example, to implement the International Health Regulations to prevent and control infectious disease outbreaks, chemical and nuclear accidents and other public health threats of international concern.

The current Joint Action Plan is based on a commitment to sustainable development, which is very welcome and highly applicable to health. We are particularly supportive of Priority Action 2, 'Climate and Sustainability', given the detrimental impact climate change continues to have on human health. Health is a key component of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); directly under SDG 3 'Good Health and Wellbeing' but also under many others including SDG1 'No poverty', SDG 2 'Zero Hunger', SDG 'Quality Education', SDG 5 'Gender Equality', SDG 6 'Clean Water and Sanitation', SDG 7 'Affordable and Clean Energy', SDG 8 'Decent Work and Economic Growth', SDG 10 'Reduce Inequalities', SDG 11 'Sustainable Cities and Communities', SDG 13 'Climate Action' and SDG 16 'Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions'. Similarly, health is central to all priority areas that have been identified within the Joint Action Plan and should be the overarching priority on which all transboundary engagement is centred.

Including health as priority action within this plan could hold the following benefits:

- Economies of scale, as many actions that are positive for health tend to also benefit the wider economy and the environment; for example, policies aiming to improve physical activity levels and reduce air pollution through encouraging active travel
- Endorse a 'Health in All Policies' approach to improving health and health equity and addressing complex policy challenges which span across government departments and borders
- Horizon scanning for shared public health threats to support a collaborative, planned response
- Establish formal networks and frameworks to support action on shared public health threats
- Strengthen infectious disease outbreak coordination and response, including through collaborative working between port health authorities, as well as pandemic preparedness and emergency planning
- Knowledge exchange and support on the development of policies and legislation of mutual interest. For example, alcohol-related harm is a substantial public health concern shared by all five nations. Minimum Unit Pricing (MUP) of alcohol has been introduced in Ireland and Wales. Evaluating these policies from a public health perspective and sharing learning, particularly with those countries sharing a land border who have not implemented the policy, will help to progress public health efforts.

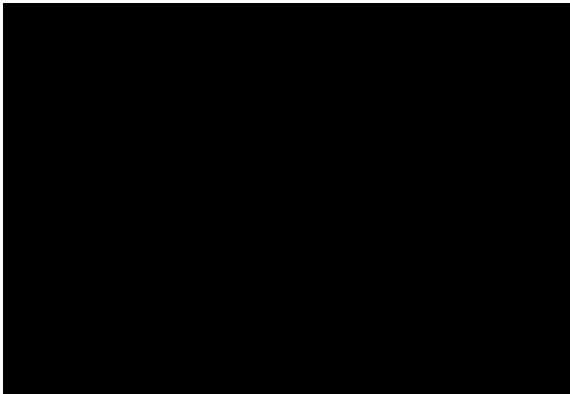
6. Opportunities in developing parliamentary relations between the Senedd and Oireachtas

The Institute welcomes the intention to '*deepen parliamentary links by supporting Senedd Cymru and the Oireachtas to explore opportunities for exchanges on shared challenges such as legislating for language policy, equality and sustainability.*' We recommend this is extended to include legislature of relevance to health. This may be directly in relation to risk factors for chronic disease e.g. through the regulation of

unhealthy commodities or may pertain to wider determinants of health e.g. legislation on air quality or road safety. We also note that the British Irish council does not include health as a defined work sector, and again would encourage that health is included as a key area for collaboration going forward.

The Institute are happy to support the Inquiry further if required. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require more information or wish to discuss any points we have raised.

Yours sincerely,



www.publichealth.ie

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Document is Restricted

Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee
- Inquiry into [Wales-Ireland relations](#).

CHERISH Project – EU Funded Interreg Programme

CHERISH is a six-year Ireland-Wales project (January 2017- June 2023), through a partnership agreement it brought together four organisations: the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (Lead Partner); Aberystwyth University: Department of Geography and Earth Sciences; the Discovery Programme, Ireland; and Geological Survey Ireland.

Funded through Axis 2 of the Interreg Programme to increase capacity and knowledge of climate change adaptation for the Irish Sea and Coastal communities.

CHERISH is a truly cross-disciplinary project aimed at raising awareness and understanding of the past, present, and near-future impacts of climate change, storminess and extreme weather events on the rich cultural heritage of our sea and coast.

It has benefited from €4.9 million of EU funds through the Ireland Wales Co-operation Programme 2014-2020. (Split €2.5 million Wales and €2.4 million Ireland). The project employed(s) 8 full time project staff and has had contributions from a further 15 team members. www.cherishproject.eu

The Ireland-Wales Shared Statement and Joint Action Plan (2021-2025) as an approach to international engagement. [Numbers follow Action plan.]

2. Continue to highlight and promote the impact and findings of projects dealing with climate adaptation and coastal communities in the Irish Sea, under the Ireland-Wales INTERREG programme; This is good, but the key question is what funding is going to replace the INTERREG programme for projects around these topics.

3. Trade and tourism. More efforts are required to decarbonise ferry travel between Ireland and Wales. Funds such as Agile Cymru encourage travel across the Irish Sea for collaboration, which means either flying or taking the ferry. As flying has an extremely high carbon footprint, the ferry is the greenest option, but the carbon footprint is still too high, especially if you are meeting beyond Dublin. If there is no funding available for collaboration, then we would ask why travel? We need to better align the Well-being of Future Generations Act, Agile Cymru and the declared climate emergency. Our concern is that funds such as Agile Cymru are encouraging travel in a climate emergency when there are more efficient ways of collaborating these days and many of the partnerships are already in place.

4. Education and Research

Facilitate and support academic collaboration events / workshops in both countries which explore options to maintain the strong links between academia and business.

Funds are required for organisations that fall outside of academia and business. They seem to be a lower priority and fall between the gaps, despite the importance placed on heritage. Heritage organisations such as the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales ('Royal Commission') undertake research and are far better placed than universities to influence how heritage is protected and promoted.

Explore the possibility of establishing new Welsh/Irish research fellowships.

This suggests that funds are available, but only for universities. Again, research happens beyond the university sector and needs access to this type of funding.

5 Culture, Language and Heritage

Support current initiatives and projects which promote awareness and knowledge of our shared history and built heritage, and encourage interested organisations to identify new opportunities, including in the context of the “decade of centenaries”, the RMS Leinster, the Famine Memorial in Cardiff, and Frongoch in North Wales.

Once more, we ask the question: what type of funding is available for ‘interested organisations’ to apply for? Whilst we appreciate that Universities and Business will always dominate this type of discussion, the role of Welsh Government Sponsored bodies needs to be incorporated into the discussion as they can provide services, resources, and skills not available elsewhere.

Email prompts

- **The funding of future cooperation and collaborative projects between Ireland and Wales.**

There is an appetite for continuing funding projects that have been successful. The Irish Sea workshops have shown that, yet all we have are small pots through Agile Cymru that support travel and network forming. Most of these networks are already in place so until the funding is sufficient to actually undertake a project it is difficult to proceed further. The Irish Sea workshops are a good starting point, but have been around in different guises since Brexit, and we need to move quicker.

- **Priority areas for cooperation between Ireland and Wales.**

The success of, and the interest in, the CHERISH project has shown the desire to continue the collaborative work between the two nations. The project has set base lines which need to be revisited to provide data on the rate of coastal erosion due to climate change on both sides of the Irish Sea.

The medieval aspects of the histories of both countries are a driver of Tourism. We have a shared heritage, especially around Saints and pilgrimage with their abbeys and churches, the buildings associated with the Norman conquests, such as Castles, and similarities in prehistoric cultures.

The culture and buildings of the twentieth century have been identified as increasingly important in recent years and these should also be included in any forward strategy.

Although Universities have other forms of funding available to them, Welsh Government sponsored bodies are not eligible to apply for this in their own right, so as yet there is no direct replacement for INTERREG for an organisation such as the Royal Commission.

When INTERREG projects have completed later this year, the committee should undertake an overview of all the evaluation reports, which have been undertaken by external third parties. These will enable a better understanding of the benefits of co-operation and what we need to focus upon in the future.

Clare Lancaster (CHERISH Project Manager) and Christopher Catling (Secretary - Chief Executive)

Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales

Chair, Children, Young People, and Education Committee

Chair, Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee

Chair, Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International

Relations Committee

Chair, Economy, Trade, and Rural Affairs Committee

Chair, Equality and Social Justice Committee

Chair, Health and Social Care Committee

Chair, Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee

Chair, Local Government and Housing Committee

8 March 2023

Dear Committee Chairs,

Scrutiny of the Draft Budget 2023-24: Evidence provided by the Welsh Government

In our report on the scrutiny of the Welsh Government Draft Budget 2023-24, we made several recommendations relating to budget presentation improvements. We also agreed to consult Committees on the documentation provided by the Welsh Government alongside its Draft Budget proposals, concluding that:

"Conclusion 1. We welcome the Minister's willingness to consider ways in which budget documentation can be improved. While we have reflected our views above, the Committee has decided to consult Senedd committees on their experiences of scrutinising this year's budget documentation and ways in which improvements can be made."

As a result, in reflecting on this year's budget scrutiny experience and in seeking improvements to the budget documentation provided by the Welsh Government at the 2024-25 Draft Budget and beyond, I would be grateful for the views of your committee in response to the following question:

What improvements would you like to see in the Welsh Government's Draft Budget documentation and subsequent ministerial written evidence?

Please make reference to the timeliness, quality and usefulness of any documentation and/or evidence received in your response.

We would appreciate responses by **Friday 28 April 2023**. Your views will then be collated and fed back to the Minister for Finance and Local Government, for her consideration in advance of the Budget Priorities 2024-25 Plenary debate that will be led by the Finance Committee and take place before summer recess.

Yours sincerely,



Peredur Owen Griffiths MS
Chair, Finance Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.



Chair, Children, Young People, and Education Committee
Chair, Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee
Chair, Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee
Chair, Economy, Trade, and Rural Affairs Committee
Chair, Equality and Social Justice Committee
Chair, Health and Social Care Committee
Chair, Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee
Chair, Local Government and Housing Committee

19 April 2023

Dear Committee Chairs,

Welsh Government Draft Budget 2024-25: Engagement

At our meeting on 23 March 2023, the Finance Committee (the Committee) considered its programme of engagement for the forthcoming Welsh Government's Draft Budget 2024-25, ahead of the Committee's annual Plenary debate on spending priorities, provisionally scheduled for 12 July. I am writing to Chairs of subject committees to share our thinking. The Committee has agreed to undertake a number of engagement activities prior to the publication of the Draft Budget, in the autumn. These include, a stakeholder event, focus groups held with the general public, and a workshop with Members of the Welsh Youth Parliament.

Stakeholder Event: Wrexham

This year's stakeholder event will take place at the Glyndwr University Campus (Catrin Finch Centre) in Wrexham on the morning of Thursday 15 June. This will be an opportunity for the Committee to hear directly from interested organisations/individuals on the expected draft budget proposals, as well as their views on the Welsh Government's approach to setting the budget and prioritising resources. As cross-Committee engagement with stakeholders on the budget is crucial to effective scrutiny, I would like to invite Committee Chairs or a Member of your Committee to join the event. If Chairs or

Members are interested in attending, please contact the clerking team seneddfinance@senedd.wales by 22 May.

Citizen engagement focus groups with the Welsh public

On behalf of the Committee, the Senedd's Citizens Engagement Team will be holding a series of focus groups on the Draft Budget with the Welsh public. The team has undertaken similar exercises over the past few years and the aim of this work is to form a longitudinal study to allow the Committee to monitor perspectives and attitudes over time. Participants will be sourced through similar partner organisations to cover the same demographics as last year, and groups will be organised to focus on particular policy areas. The Citizens Engagement Team will circulate the dates of sessions to all Committees, should any Members wish to participate. This will allow an opportunity for Members to hear first-hand from the citizens of Wales where spending should be prioritised.

Welsh Youth Parliament

Last year to further complement our engagement work, the Committee held a workshop with Members of the Youth Parliament. It was extremely informative to hear openly from these young Members about the issues concerning and directly affecting them. We are keen to continue building on this invaluable work and will be inviting the youth Members to participate in a workshop again this year.

Finance Committee Plenary Debate on the Welsh Government spending priorities

As mentioned above, the Committee intends to hold a Plenary debate on Wednesday 12 July on the Welsh Government's spending priorities for 2024-25. The outcomes of our engagement work will inform and feed into this debate, which will provide the best opportunity to influence the Welsh Government spending priorities before the Draft Budget is formulated in the autumn. As ever, we would very much welcome the participation of Committee Chairs, as well as other Members, as part of this debate, to ensure that the Welsh Government's spending plans are informed by the views and priorities of Senedd Committees.

Approach to budget scrutiny

I will shortly be writing to Chairs, with regard to the Committee's approach to budget scrutiny, including information on the consultation and timetable once the Trefnydd has notified the Business Committee of the Draft Budget publication dates.

The Finance Committee has tried to ensure that the profile and effectiveness of budget scrutiny in the Senedd is continually improved and that the Welsh public are able to engage fully with the process. As you are aware, we are currently discussing proposals with the Minister for Finance and Local Government to amend the [Budget Process Protocol](#), which sets out an understanding between the

Welsh Government and the Senedd on the administrative arrangements for the scrutiny of the annual draft budget and other related budgetary matters.

In addition, during last year's budget round the Committee agreed to consult with Committees on the documentation provided by the Welsh Government alongside its Draft Budget proposals, with a view to seeking improvements to the information provided. I wrote to Chair on this issue on 8 March and I am grateful to the Committees that have responded. As this work progresses, I will continue to provide updates to Committees on developments.

If you have any questions about any aspect of the Draft Budget process, please feel free to contact me or the Clerk to the Finance Committee, Owain Roberts, 0300 200 6388, seneddfinance@senedd.wales.

Yours sincerely,



Peredur Owen Griffiths
Chair, Finance Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Agenda Item 12

By virtue of paragraph(s) vi of Standing Order 17.42

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