

Pwyllgor Cymunedau, Cydraddoldeb a
Llywodraeth Leol

Communities, Equality and Local Government
Committee

Huw Lewis AM
Minister for Housing, Regeneration and
Heritage

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd / Cardiff
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10 October 2012

Dear Minister

Huw

**Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee - Inquiry into the
Welsh Government's Historic Environment Policy**

As you will be aware, in July 2012 the Committee undertook an inquiry into the Welsh Government's historic environment policy. As part of our inquiry, we received considerable evidence relating to your decision in May 2012 to set up a working group to look at how the functions of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW) could be merged with the functions of other organisations, including Cadw.

The Committee has agreed, due to the time-sensitive nature of this part of our inquiry, to write to you in relation to the evidence we received.

The consultation question posed by the Committee on this issue was: *What would be the advantages and disadvantages of merging the functions of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales with the functions of other organisations, including Cadw?*

The Committee received 83 written responses to its inquiry. Some respondents believed that there could be theoretical advantages if merger were to go ahead, while a minority believed that there would be more advantages than disadvantages. However, at least numerically, there was overwhelming opposition to the prospect of the functions of the RCAHMW being merged with the functions of other

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organisations, including Cadw – particularly if that was to take place within the Welsh Government itself.

The key themes raised in the evidence against any potential merger were:

- The fact that the Chitty report had addressed a number of issues;
- The timing of the proposal, which many felt was being rushed and should not proceed before a full consultation and the introduction of the Heritage Bill;
- The distinct roles and functions of the RCAHMW and Cadw;
- A risk of losing skills and expertise; and
- A loss of independence – many witnesses referred to the importance of the arm's length principle with regard to the RCAHMW.

The evidence is published in full on the Committee's website¹.

In light of the comprehensive evidence received by the Committee, we have concluded that a merger should not proceed without a full consideration of the impact of such a course of action; and should not proceed until you have satisfied yourself that the issues raised in the evidence we received have been addressed.

I hope that this information will prove useful to you and your officials as you consider this matter. I would be grateful if you could report back to the Committee on your deliberations in due course.

Yours sincerely



Ann Jones AC / AM
Cadeirydd / Chair

¹ <http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?Ild=3978>