

Dawn Bowden AS/MS
Dirprwy Weinidog y Celfyddydau a Chwaraeon, a'r Prif Chwip
Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport, and Chief Whip



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref DB/00024/23

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

31 January 2023

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your correspondence dated 11 January seeking my views on Petition P-06-1321, which calls upon the Senedd and Welsh Government to protect leisure centres and swimming pools from closure during the current energy crisis.

Firstly, I am acutely aware of, and equally concerned about, the pressures the current energy and cost of living crises are having on the sport and leisure sector, in particular swimming pools and leisure centres.

When it comes to responding to these crises however, the main policy levers lie not with Welsh Government, but the UK Government. I met with Swim Wales and WSA on 18 January to discuss these concerns, in particular the issues around the UK Government's new Energy Bill Discount Scheme. They both who acknowledged our position and the constraints that we the Welsh Government are facing but were grateful for our support in calling for pools to be categorised as 'intensive' energy users.

Together we hope the swell of support from the sport and leisure sector, and politicians in Wales and across the UK, will persuade the UK Government to reconsider its position given the importance of these facilities to people's health and wellbeing. As such the Welsh Government is not considering providing ringfenced funding of this nature to Local Authorities.

The final Local Government settlement, referred to in the petition text, has assisted the situation by enabling some local authorities to suspend plans to close some of their facilities. That said it is a concern that leisure centres and swimming pools have not and as it stands will not be equally protected from high energy prices.

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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.

We are also providing support to the sector through the provision of loans to Local Authorities through the Welsh Government Energy Service.

I hope this information is of use.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dawn Bowden'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D' and a long, sweeping underline.

Dawn Bowden AS/MS

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