

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

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27<sup>th</sup> April 2023

Dear Delyth

Thank you for your letter of 28 March 2023, regarding safeguarding the national collections at Amgueddfa Cymru. This matter was raised as part of the scrutiny of the Draft Budget for 2023-24. Therefore, much of the information provided in this response has been shared with you previously.

As you are aware, the Welsh Government has prioritised funding for front line services, particularly health services, in the most recent Budget. It is not possible to fund everything that we would wish to, and difficult decisions have had to be made. Despite this, within a very challenging Budget settlement from the UK Government, we have protected the budgets of Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs) within the Economy MEG as much as possible.

The maintenance and development of Amgueddfa Cymru's estate, especially its historical buildings, is a priority for capital investment. Officials are in regular contact with colleagues at the Museum to discuss these issues. The Welsh Government provides annual Grant in Aid Funding to Amgueddfa Cymru, as well as specific ringfenced and project funding. The Museum also receives further funding through income generation, including from trusts, foundations, donations, sponsorship etc. As part of its Grant in Aid Funding for 2023/24, in addition to c.£27m in Revenue (gross), we are providing Amgueddfa Cymru with c.£4.7m specifically towards Capital Maintenance, plus a further allocation to be agreed for specific projects. We do not stipulate how this funding should be used, it is for Amgueddfa Cymru to prioritise the maintenance work across its estate.

Wherever possible we are providing additional funding to help our cultural ALBs. This is not easy during a cost of living crisis, and especially in light of the challenging financial settlement we have received from the UK Government. Nevertheless, in 2022/23, we managed to make an additional c.£474,000 capital available to Amgueddfa Cymru, as well as £2.652m revenue,

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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.

of which £1.3m was given to help with the increased cost of utilities due to inflation. I have committed £1.25m over three years (2022/23-2024/25) to support decarbonisation initiatives at Amgueddfa Cymru. Also over these three years, £529,000 has been made available towards activities Amgueddfa Cymru is delivering in support of the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan (ArWAP).

I am also aware of Amgueddfa Cymru's plans for redeveloping the National Slate Museum in Llanberis. Subject to an acceptable business case being submitted, in addition to the allocations outlined above, I hope to be able to invest some funding in the first phase of this project.

I note that the letter sent to the Committee by the Interim Chief Operating Officer at Amgueddfa Cymru confirms that the Museum considers its settlement is reasonable over the next two years, whilst also noting uncertainty and challenge related to the longer-term outlook. I am, of course, unable to make any financial commitments beyond this current spending review period, but I would like to assure the committee that I am doing all I can to support Amgueddfa Cymru and the other ALBs within my portfolio, under very challenging economic circumstances. The vast majority of my allocated budget goes directly to these organisations.

You also reference the National Library of Wales in your letter. My officials are working closely with colleagues at the Library and we are providing additional support where possible. For 2023/24, as part of its Grant in Aid Funding, we are providing the Library with c.£1.6 million specifically towards Capital Maintenance. An additional £500,000 was also given in 2022/23, to pay for a new fire system to ensure the safety of collections.

As with Amgueddfa Cymru, for the next two financial years we have made available additional time-limited and ring-fenced funding available to the Library, to support additional cost of living pressures relating to pay and utilities. I have committed a further £1.5m capital to the development of new collections storage, to help care for the national collection held by the Library and £1.61m over three years towards digitisation and decarbonisation. Officials will continue to work closely with the National Library throughout this period.

I am pleased that we have been able to secure additional funding for our ALBs during a difficult cost of living crisis when budgets are being stretched and reprioritised. However, I am acutely aware of the current economic challenges we are facing. Whilst I would like to assure the Committee that if further funding becomes available we will continue to support our ALBs, as integral cultural organisations in Wales, it would be helpful if the Committee could suggest areas where we might reduce spending in order to facilitate this.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dawn Bowden', written in a cursive style.

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