

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

Dear Dawn,

Thank you for your letter dated 27 April 2023, in response to our concerns about the safeguarding of national collections.

We discussed your letter at our meeting on Wednesday, 10 May 2023. Members raised concerns about the risk to our nation's national collections with reference to the fire at the National Library of Wales in 2013, during which part of the collection was damaged, as well as the fire at the National Museum of Brazil in 2018, which suffered significant and irrevocable losses. In addition, during a recent visit to Dublin, Members visited the library at the Trinity College Dublin. At the library, we heard about the significant, ongoing programme of investment to restore and upgrade the colleges' old library building prompted by the fire at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris which served as an urgent reminder that it needed to be protected. These examples reflect the real risk caused by insufficient investment in essential improvements and maintenance works to preserve collections and estates of significant cultural and historical value.

The Committee acknowledges and accepts the difficulty faced by Welsh Government when prioritising resources given the challenging budget settlement and additional cost of living pressures. However, we remain of the view, as previously expressed to you in our letter of 28 March 2023, that safeguarding our national collections for future generations is a priority. We are not assured that enough is being done to address the potential serious threat to important collections housed by Amgueddfa Cymru and the National Library of Wales.

Given the depth of the Committee's ongoing concern, as part of ensuring that the right support is in place for these institutions over the longer term, we would be grateful to understand:

- What action the Welsh Government has taken to understand the risks to these important collections and to prioritise and mitigate those risks given that funding pressures are likely to continue for some time.
- What evidential assurances you can give the Committee that the national collections housed at both Amgueddfa Cymru and the National Library of Wales are and will continue to be safe.

We would be grateful for a considered response to our questions in due course.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Delyth Jewell'.

Delyth Jewell MS

Committee Chair

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