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Dirprwy Weinidog y Celfyddydau, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth
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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Delyth Jewell MS
Committee Chair
Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport,
and International Relations Committee

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28 June 2023

Dear Delyth,

Thank you for your letter of 7 June 2023 responding to my reply dated 28 March 2023, regarding safeguarding the national collection at Amgueddfa Cymru – Museum Wales and the National Library of Wales.

I would like to address the two questions that you raise in your letter separately to ensure a focused response.

“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.”

Firstly, I would like to emphasise that Amgueddfa Cymru and the National Library of Wales are Arm’s Length Bodies and it is up to them to monitor any risks to their collections, and prioritise and mitigate those risks. This includes prioritising the way they use the funding ringfenced for the maintenance of their estates. As part of their Grant in Aid funding for 2023/24, we are providing Amgueddfa Cymru with c.£4.7m and the National Library of Wales with c.£1.6m specifically towards capital maintenance. As previously stated, we do not stipulate how this funding should be used, it is for the respective organisations to prioritise the maintenance work across their estate.

My officials are in regular contact with the Museum and Library and when risks to the national collections are brought to my attention, I have responded where possible to support the organisations. For instance, in my previous response I referenced the £500k towards a new fire system given to the Library in 2022/23 and a further £1.5m capital committed to the development of new collections storage at the Library, to help care for the national collection. Both Amgueddfa Cymru and the National Library are receiving funding over three years towards decarbonisation, with the Library also receiving funding for digitisation.

Although discussions with Museum and Library colleagues are ongoing, I have asked officials to include the safety of their collections as an explicit item on the agenda during

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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.

their monitoring meetings. This will ensure that we are provided with a formal overview of the situation on a regular basis as well as supporting where we can when requests come in.

Wider work

In order to plan more strategically across the sectors, I have commissioned Headland Design Associates to work with the national Arm's Length Bodies and the local and independent sectors in Wales to deliver a 12 month review (to be completed by March 2024) that will provide information that can then be used to improve collections management and reduce costs for cultural organisations, support decarbonisation of collections storage and improve access to collections for researchers and the public.

It is anticipated that this work will enable Welsh Government to work more strategically across Wales to improve standards of collections care. This is important as, alongside the collections held by Amgueddfa Cymru and the National Library of Wales, Welsh Government recognises that there are nationally significant collections held in local and independent museum collections that also require safeguarding.

“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.”

Both Amgueddfa Cymru and the National Library of Wales are accredited organisations. Accreditation, for museums and archives, looks 360° at an organisation in terms of its policies, procedures and planning in respect of collections care, organisational health and users. In order to be accredited, organisations need to evidence appropriate measures of collections care and provide confidence in its continued ability to safeguard collections for the future. Further to this, both Amgueddfa Cymru and the National Library of Wales lend items for research and/or public display under the Government Indemnity Scheme (GIS). To be eligible to lend under GIS, organisations must be able to demonstrate that they meet strict criteria in terms of security and environmental control; maintaining appropriate relative humidity and temperature, managing pollutants and risks to mitigate loss or damage during the term of the loan.

Officials will continue to work with colleagues at the Library and Museum, requesting regular updates from them. I am pleased that we have been able to secure additional funding for our Arm's Length Bodies for the previous financial year and the next. However, as you note in your letter, these funding pressures are likely to continue for some time. Whilst I would like to assure the Committee, I will continue to provide additional support to our national organisations wherever possible, it would be helpful if the Committee could suggest areas where we might reduce spending in order to facilitate this further.

I trust that you will find this response to your questions helpful.

Yours sincerely,



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