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Gweinidog yr Economi
Minister for Economy

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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: MA/VG/3064/24

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

29 January 2024

Dear Delyth,

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the draft budget 2024-25 proposals for the Economy Main Expenditure Group at our evidence session on 17 January. Please find enclosed the further information as requested to inform your ongoing budget scrutiny.

Prioritising spending to safeguard the national collections.

My officials continue to work with Amgueddfa Cymru and the National Library of Wales to understand their long-term maintenance needs and any implications for the safety of the national collections. Where additional funding becomes available, I am doing all I can to support these organisations. For example, we are currently considering requests from Amgueddfa Cymru for additional funding to be spent this financial year on capital projects and items, some of which will help address their long-term maintenance issues. I am also providing the National Library with an additional £1.5m across 2023/24 and 2024/25 to help with the redevelopment of one of its storage spaces. This is on top of their grant in aid and the additional decarbonisation funding being given to both organisations.

I acknowledge the challenges that Amgueddfa Cymru and the National Library are facing in maintaining a historic estate and therefore safeguard the collections in its care. I will continue to review some of our current spending commitments, such as for the Museum of North Wales.

Remit letters and Culture Strategy

I remain confident that I can publish strategic priorities for culture by the end of the year. Officials are currently reviewing the content of the draft strategy given the new budgetary context and considering this in consultation with the culture strategy Steering Group. I will balance the need to provide strategic direction and to maintain the long-term vision and ambitions contained in the draft strategy with a pragmatic approach to actions in support of delivering these ambitions that might be taken forward in the short-term.

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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.

As I said to the Committee, I will review Remit Letters in light of the Budget Settlement.

Welsh Government Redundancies in arm's length bodies (ALBs)

Amgueddfa Cymru, the Arts Council of Wales, the National Library of Wales and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales are currently consulting their staff on proposed voluntary redundancy schemes scheduled to conclude this financial year. My officials are working closely and at pace with colleagues at each of these organisations and I am in the process of exploring whether I can make additional funding available this financial year to help with the costs of these redundancy schemes. Until the work underway this financial year has been completed, it is not possible for our Culture ALBs to confirm whether further redundancy schemes will be necessary next financial year. In terms of Sport Wales, it is not currently proposing to run a redundancy scheme. At present, we do not have additional funding available to support redundancy schemes in 2024/25.

National Contemporary Art Gallery – Anchor site

Officials have provided assurance that we will be in a position to take decisions in March 2024, following the completion of the assessment process. Resources will then be made available to support the development of a business case for the site selected during the 2024-25 financial year.

The three stages of the development of the business case will consider design and cost options, making clearer the level of investment that will be required to deliver an anchor gallery. An investment decision would then need to be made at that time based on affordability and wider priorities. Any decisions relating to the level of investment required, will need to be sensitive to the financial climate and the recent reductions to programme budgets supporting the sector.

Entrance fees to attractions currently free

Like all our Cultural arm's length bodies, Amgueddfa Cymru is exploring all available fundraising opportunities and options for further income generation. This includes exploring a range of potential future charging options, only one of which is charging for entry to some or all its museums in the longer term. I have had an initial conversation with Amgueddfa Cymru's Chair and Chief Executive about this during my most recent biannual meeting with them where their intention to consider a variety of potential options was discussed.

Yours sincerely,



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