

Jack Sargeant AS/MS  
Y Gweinidog Diwylliant, Sgiliau a Phartneriaeth Gymdeithasol  
Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref  
Ein cyf/Our ref: AL1717 (EM043)

Delyth Jewell MS  
Committee Chair  
Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Bae Caerdydd  
CF99 1SN

1 October 2024

Dear Delyth,

Thank you for your letter to my predecessor, the Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip, which contained the Committee's response to the consultation on the draft Priorities for Culture.

Officials are currently reviewing the consultation responses and are required to prepare and publish a summary report on consultation responses within twelve weeks of the consultation closing date.

We received an excellent response to the consultation, with good representation from across the sectors in scope and more widely. It is early in terms of the evaluation process, but we can already see that responses are very supportive of the draft Priorities.

The former Co-operation Agreement required these strategic priorities to be developed 'from the ground up' and by 'engaging deeply and meaningfully with the arts, culture and heritage sectors'. I am confident that we have achieved this, and the emerging support from the consultation seems to indicate the draft strategy reflects the aspirations of the sectors in scope. Developing new policy in this way, and ensuring a thorough and credible process takes time.

Once the summary of consultation responses has been published, our next steps will be to develop and publish a final version of the Priorities and an accompanying implementation plan. In line with the approach taken throughout, any implementation plan must be devised and agreed with the input of key stakeholders and with the external Steering Group in advance of publication.

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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.

I note that the Committee is still considering key issues in relation to its enquiry into Culture and the New Relationship with the EU. Given that a report on the consultation findings for the Draft Priorities for Culture should be published by the end of November, it may be difficult to consider the Committee's final recommendations as part of the consultation report. However, I would welcome early receipt of the Committee's report and will consider whether the findings could inform the development of the implementation plan.

You have emphasised the importance of linking the new Priorities for Culture with the Welsh Government's International Strategy, and I can confirm that Culture Division officials worked closely with the Welsh Government's international relations team as part of developing the draft priorities. These close working relationships continue. Draft Ambition 12 states that culture is integrated into how Wales establishes and develops international relationships and given the level of support for the draft priorities and ambitions in the consultation responses, I do not foresee that this ambition will change significantly.

I recognise the impact on children and young people caused by the Royal Welsh College for Music and Drama's (RWCMD) decision to close its weekend music and drama provision. During a Senedd Plenary debate on the closure held on 18 September, the Minister for Further and Higher Education reaffirmed the Welsh Government's commitment to continued engagement with the College. However, as an autonomous body, the RWCMD is responsible for its own academic affairs, including delivery of its courses and decisions on financial management.

The College has advised that it remains fully committed to providing opportunities in music and theatre for young people and to creating pathways into professional training. It intends to undertake a period of review in 2024-25, working with young people, staff, stakeholders and external UK advisors, with an ambition to develop a national talent programme for Wales.

You have also raised concerns about progress against some Programme for Government commitments relating to culture, including the Museum of North Wales and the National Contemporary Art Gallery.

We will not be progressing work on a Museum of North Wales during this Senedd term. In the current financial climate, we must prioritise protecting and preserving our existing cultural institutions and their collections. We remain committed to supporting the redevelopment of the National Slate Museum at Llanberis, which will include opportunities to increase access to Amgueddfa Cymru's collections, including those of direct relevance to North Wales.

Several updates have been provided to the Committee on progress with delivering Celf - The National Contemporary Art Gallery for Wales. This has included written and verbal evidence provided during the Committee's review of this work, the most recent Written Statement issued on 10 July 2024 and verbal evidence on the same day and the written response to the follow up questions received. This has demonstrated the good progress on digitising the collection and delivering the dispersed model across Wales, which is on track to complete by March 2025.

Thank you for your leadership as Chair of the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee. I look forward to working with you and Committee members on these important matters going forward.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "JACK SARGEANT". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends across the width of the name.

**Jack Sargeant AS/MS**

Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership

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