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Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol, Diwylliant a Chwaraeon
Minister for Natural Resources, Culture and Sport



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref SF/JG/1974/14
Christine Chapman AM
Chair
Communities, Equalities and Local Government Committee

25 July 2014

Dear Chris,

Thank you for your letter dated 10 July in reference to the Committee meeting I attended on the 3 July. During that general scrutiny session I agreed to provide further information on several issues we discussed and these are set out in full at **Annex 1** below.

I trust that I have addressed the Committee's queries in full and I look forward to continuing to work closely with you in the future.

Best wishes

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Minister for Natural Resources, Culture and Sport

1) Provide figures of increases in visitor number to Cadw monuments for the first quarter of this year;

Nearly 400,000 people visited the 30 staffed Cadw monuments in the first quarter of the 2014-15 financial year, a rise of over 7% on last year. The significant rise in April clearly demonstrates the benefit of the Easter holiday period to get the year off to a good start, compared with 2013-14, when there was no Easter period. The good weather over Easter 2014 clearly helped: weather will always be a factor for heritage sites, which tend to be mainly open to the elements.

Visitor Figures Q1	2013-14	2014-15	Trend
April	102,169	133,503	+31%
May	138,478	135,121	-2%
June	120,443	116,930	-3%
Total	361,090	385,554	+7%

Over recent years, footfall counters at Cadw's unstaffed sites have revealed an upward trend in visitor numbers as follows:

2010	750,826 visits
2011	1,086,143
2012	1,079,056
2013	1,108,259

Investment in the offer to visitors

I promised to provide the Committee with information on how investment in visitor facilities and interpretation can deliver results. The positive impact of recent investment in visitor centres and interpretation has been demonstrated at, for example, Denbigh Castle, where the refurbished ticket office and new interpretation has resulted in a 39% increase in visits between 2010-11 and 2013-14.

At Caerphilly Castle, following the installation of new interpretation in 2013, visitor numbers during April 2014 were 12,089 (the highest recorded), which is an increase of 3,132 from the same month in 2013.

Conwy Castle custodians report increased dwell time after an interpretation makeover, and visitor spend from retail sales in its refurbished shop increased by 11% in the first year (2013-14).

Investment in events and activities is as vital to the visitor appeal of heritage sites as capital investment. Hosting the Really Wild Food Festival at St David's Bishop's Palace in May 2013 attracted 5,764 visitors compared with only 198 the year before. A new summer solstice event at Bryn Celli Ddu, Anglesey in June 2014 attracted 750 people.

Customer satisfaction

In the Cadw Visitor Survey 2013, respondents rated their visit for satisfaction and expectation out of 10. The mean score was 9/10, a significant rise from 8.5/10 in 2011, and is reflected in consistently high scores on websites like Trip Advisor.

Since 2011, satisfaction for the suitability of attraction for children has increased considerably. The suitability of exhibits and information for children 8 – 15 has risen by 21% (to 58%) and suitability of exhibits and information for children under 7 has risen by 20% (to 42%). This will increase further as the interpretation programme is rolled out across more sites.

2) Provide details of the work carried out by Cadw so far in relation to reducing their carbon footprint and utility bills;

The Welsh Government has committed to reducing carbon emissions by three percent year on year, with a target reduction of thirty percent by 2020. This is referred to as the Welsh Government's Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC).

Cadw is reporting annually against the CRC and has delivered a 2% cumulative reduction (against 2010 base year) in its carbon emissions. Given the sensitive archaeological constraints posed by scheduled ancient monuments in State care, the increased demand for electronic interpretation, increased events and commercial activity along with the acquisition of an additional two properties into State care in recent years - this is a significant achievement.

Cadw has implemented many energy and carbon reducing initiatives across its estate. These include:

- Replacement of high-energy floodlights at all floodlit monuments in care with low energy LED units. Developed, designed and implemented by Cadw, this initiative has seen associated energy consumption and carbon emissions reduced by fifty percent. Historic Scotland has studied this initiative and proposes the same project roll-out across its monuments in care three years after Cadw;
- Replacement interior lighting with low energy LED units delivering energy and carbon savings of around eighty percent. These lighting units also produce less heat and reduce the need for air conditioning, providing further savings;
- Installation of smart meters at all Cadw monuments with power for the automatic recording of energy consumption. This permits improved scrutiny of energy consumption allowing corrective action to be taken at areas with greatest energy consumption;
- All new developments and visitor centres are designed and constructed with the principles of the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) and include on-site power generation wherever feasible. The visitor centre at Denbigh Castle which opened in 2012 has a Ground Source Heat Pump, natural ventilation, photovoltaic panels and a Building Management System with a live data screen within the visitor area for 'real time' visitor viewing of energy consumed and produced. A similar system was installed in April 2013 during the full refurbishment of the visitor centre at Tintern Abbey where children on school trips can see and learn about how we care for our environment; and,
- Current development works adjacent to Harlech Castle, a World Heritage Site, will provide a new visitor and interpretation centre within the former Castle Hotel. Adaptation and conservation of this Victorian building is core to this project; a significant quantity of carbon emissions, and money, is saved through the retention and reuse of existing buildings such as this. Air Source Heat Pumps are being installed for the heating and cooling of the new facility. Lighting and projected interpretation will be delivered using low energy LED equipment.

The benefit of these initiatives is now being realised. Data (yet to be published) collected through the CRC for the period 2013/14 identifies a year on year reduction in Cadw's Reportable Carbon Dioxide Emissions of twelve percent; this being the highest reduction during 2013/14 of all Welsh Government portfolio areas.

There is a direct correlation between the carbon reduction and the cost of energy; for example, if Cadw reduced its total carbon emissions by 9% (as stated above) - the 12% represents what it is required to report on under the CRC scheme - then its energy costs will reduce (theoretically) by the same 9%.

3) Further information on the work being taken forward with the Minister for Education and Skills on the issue of local authorities needing to ensure contact between schools and libraries in their areas;

Through the recently launched Every Child A Library Member (ECALM) pilot, six public library services in Wales have been working closely with primary schools in their authorities in order to automatically sign up all Year 4 pupils to their local library service. Almost all of the children have been reached during the last 3 months and CyMAL officials met with library representatives from the six authorities and the organisers of the pilot to discuss the work to date and initial findings.

Early feedback is that the children and the majority of schools and teachers have been very enthusiastic about the pilot and there are initial indications that library use and borrowing of books has already increased. Using libraries can help schools with many important agendas, particularly literacy, tackling poverty and digital skills. The ECALM project is an excellent way for schools and libraries to work more closely together to help foster a love for reading for pleasure and to help improve literacy skills.

This pilot scheme was discussed at a bilateral I had with the Minister for Education and Skills in November 2013.

Initial feedback from the six pilot authorities indicated that they faced some challenges in working with colleagues in their local education departments in obtaining access to the necessary data, access to the schools, distributing the library cards and also arranging class visits. Although some schools and personnel were very helpful and enthusiastic, there was an overall picture of difficulty.

It would therefore be an excellent opportunity to strengthen contact between schools and libraries.

4) Provide the figures for Welsh Government investment in museums outside Cardiff;

The Welsh Government invests directly in museums across Wales in two main ways: core-funding Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales (AC-NMW), a Welsh Government Sponsored Body (WGSB), and support via CyMAL for local museums.

Funding for AC-NMW is used to operate seven sites across Wales, including two in Cardiff (National Museum Cardiff and St Fagans) and five outside (National Roman Legion Museum Caerleon, Big Pit, National Wool Museum, Drefach, National Slate Museum, Llanberis and National Waterfront Museum, Swansea) as well as the central support costs for the organisation which cannot be disaggregated by site, such as the Collections, Research and Learning divisions.

In 2014-15 the Welsh Government is providing £22,436,000 in revenue funding to AC-NMW, as well as £2,993,000 capital (£1,855,000 of which is for the St Fagans redevelopment project). £4,356,100 of WG grant-in-aid was used specifically to support the operation of those sites outside of Cardiff. This figure excludes the considerable costs of those divisions based centrally in Cardiff but from which support is provided to sites across Wales.

CyMAL investment in local museums is predominantly via grants which are normally claimed in arrears. Three local museums in Cardiff are accredited and therefore eligible for CyMAL grants: Cardiff Castle, the Cardiff Story and Firing Line. In 2014-15, a total of £419,976 has been allocated outside Cardiff and £10,000 allocated in Cardiff (to the Cardiff Story).

Between 2004, when CyMAL was established, to the end of 2013/14, £4.6 million was invested in local museum projects across Wales. £4 million of this went to local museums outside Cardiff and £0.5 million was awarded to 'all Wales' projects from which Cardiff museums may have benefitted.

In addition to grants, CyMAL has also funded a small programme of Access audits and retail assessments (total cost £28,656 over two years 2012 /14). No museums in Cardiff have so far been involved. CyMAL also invests in local museums by funding participation of all 88 accredited local museums in Visit Wales' Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme, and provision of a training programme.

5) Details of the research undertaken in relation to the health risks of sedentary adults in different socio-economic groups

Sport Wales has commissioned large scale surveys of adult participation levels in sport and leisure in Wales since 1987. This data is collected biennially and has formed a base from which to develop and inform further research, policy, planning and programmes. The survey data enables Sport Wales to further understand the motivations, barriers and unmet demand for sports participation amongst adults in Wales.

The results show that we have bucked the long term trend in adult participation with 262,000 more adults 'hooked on sport' and that there are clear links between more regular participation and physical and mental health.

The data suggests that sport is contributing to the future health of the nation and tackling the challenges we face around preventable illnesses such as obesity. We have also seen increases in participation across the board, but there remain participation gaps, which also reflect those highlighted by the School Sport Survey. Sport Wales' recent £3million investment announcement in the Calls4Action programme is specifically designed to tackle these gaps

The Survey demonstrates a clear link between enjoyment, being hooked at school and participation in adulthood. This supports the call for greater focus on physical literacy and raising the profile of PE in schools. I feel collaboration across sectors and shared outcomes, such as those being delivered by Communities First are key to delivering greater participation in the future.

Sport Wales' Active Adults survey shows that participation in sport has increased from 56% in 2008-09 to 70% in 2012 and that 39% of adults are 'hooked on sport', meaning they participate more than three times a week, an increase of 10 percentage points.

6) Clarification of the extent to which sports facilities are included in the play sufficiency assessments carried out by local authorities.

You may find the following information useful:

Under Matter C (Space available for children to play) of the Play Sufficiency Assessment, the Local Authority should recognise that all open spaces, including those which whilst not owned by them, are accessible to the public within their area, are potentially important areas where children can play or pass through to reach other playable areas or places where they go.

As part of Play Sufficiency Assessments Local Authorities should draw upon existing Open Space Assessments and other local sources of information to map areas that are used for play or could potentially be used for play. The open spaces considered should include those set out in the Welsh Government Planning Policy Wales and Technical Advice Note (TAN) 16 "Sport, Recreation and Open Space"; Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12 "Design" and Creating an Active Wales (2009) as well as brown field sites; residential streets; and school grounds.

Sports facilities fall under the list in Matter C of Outdoor unstaffed designated play spaces. The Local Authority should take into account in its assessment recreation (sports) fields (natural and artificial) and Matter D (Supervised provision).

In March 2013, Local Authorities submitted to the Welsh Government their Play Sufficiency Assessments (PSAs) and Action Plans.

The Play Sufficiency Assessments identified whether or not local authorities recognise the importance of playing fields to children's opportunities to play and include children, young people and their families in any consultations on such decisions. It was reported that Local Authorities are working towards this goal.

The Play Sufficiency Assessments also acknowledged that supervised play provision is part of the delivery of Core Aim 4 for sport, leisure and culture, and of the local "Creating an Active Wales Plan".

7) Further information on the Arts Council's response to the Minister's 2014 – 15 remit letter which asked them to provide a written update on cuts to local authority arts budgets;

At Committee I agreed to provide a copy of the update I have received from the Arts Council of Wales in respect of the commitment within my Remit Letter to ACW that they provide a written update on the impact of cuts to local authority arts budgets. This is attached at **Annex 2**.

You will wish to note that reductions to arts budgets have not yet been fully implemented across all local authorities and the full scale and impact of these cuts have, therefore, not yet been fully assessed. In light of this, I have agreed with ACW that they delay submission of a full assessment of these cuts until the picture becomes clearer. This assessment will now be undertaken in October and I will provide the Committee with further details of this report in due course.

8) Further information on the long term viability of the 'Llyfrau Llafar Cymru/Talking Books Wales' initiative;

Following the Committee meeting I have brought to the attention of the First Minister and the Minister for Health and Social Services the issues raised by Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM in relation to Llyfrau Llafar Cymru.

During the 2011-12 financial year Llyfrau Llafar Cymru received funding of £35,000 from the Welsh Government to assist Llyfrau Llafar Cymru in the transition arrangements as a voluntary organisation independent of the North Wales Society for the Blind.

9) Further information on any impact of the discontinuation of the Community Radio Fund;

The Community Radio Fund (CRF) was established in 2008 in recognition of the important role played by community radio stations within their communities. It was set up as a five year Fund with the specific aim of helping to meet the core costs of running community radio stations. Being a five year Fund, the CRF was due to come to an end in 2012-13 but a decision was taken to extend it for a further year, giving community radio stations an opportunity to investigate alternative sources of funding and to prepare to become self-sufficient post March 2014.

During the final year of the Fund the Welsh Government liaised closely with all community radio stations that were in receipt of a grant from the CRF to advise them of other pots of funding which may be available from the Welsh Government. The community radio stations were alerted to the launch of the Community Facilities Programme on 3 February. In addition, the Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty announced on 22 January that voluntary organisations that provide services to communities across Wales were to benefit from £7.2 million of new Welsh Government funding this year. Dependant upon whether they met the relevant criteria, some community radio stations could have been eligible to access funding from those schemes.

In February 2014 the Department for Culture, Media and Sport published a consultation on community radio. Recommendations included:

- Lifting the restrictions which prevent some community radio stations from taking any income from on-air advertising or sponsorship if they overlap with a commercial radio license whose coverage includes 150,000 adults or fewer.
- Lifting the restrictions which prevent community radio stations from taking more than 50% of their annual income from on-air advertising and sponsorship.

The Welsh Government responded to that consultation stating that it welcomed any relaxation of the restrictions and/or changes to the restrictions which would assist community radio stations affected by the regulations, to enable them to continue to provide the valuable service they offer within their communities.

The Welsh Government has not been made aware that any community radio station in Wales has ceased to operate as a direct result of the closure of the Welsh Government's Community Radio Fund.

10) Further information on any impact of the reduction in funding provided to the Welsh Books Council.

In considering budget allocations, difficult decisions have had to be taken across the Natural Resources, Culture and Sport portfolio. Naturally the impact of the reductions in funding for the Welsh Books Council was considered in detail in the same way as the other bodies within the portfolio.

The Welsh Books Council is a relatively small organisation within a small portfolio therefore reductions to its grant will inevitably have a significant impact on the services the Council can provide.

I am however conscious that the budget allocation for the Welsh Books Council is very challenging. But I am confident that the Welsh Books Council will be able to continue to support the publishing industry in both languages.

So far the Welsh Books Council has accommodated the cuts without impacting on book sales. This was reflected in the fact that sales through the Welsh Books Council during the 2013-14 financial year showed an increase of 5% on the previous year. Obviously in the future we have to recognise the risk of impact to programmes arising from further cuts.

