

4 September, 2014
Mr William Powell AM/AC
Chair of the Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff, CF99 1NA

(Stephen.George@wales.gov.uk)

Dear William Powell AM/AC,

Petition 562: Caernarfon Heritage Centre

Thank you for the letter sent on behalf of the National Assembly for Wales's Petitions Committee, which we received on 31 July 2014, regarding the petition to establish a heritage centre in Caernarfon.

For some years, plans have been discussed and enacted to better depict Caernarfon's heritage. Gwynedd Council is very supportive of the principle of developing Caernarfon as a heritage and cultural hub of the first rank, and it offers continuous support for notable developments to improve the town.

As part of the council's strategic plan for the 2014-2017 period, priority has been given to 'Building on our Strengths'. As part of this, plans will be enacted to develop the Caernarfon waterfront area near the castle World Heritage Site. Though aspects of the scheme will need to be confirmed and developed further, it is very likely that these will include heritage and cultural elements that will align with our vision for the town.

Recently, the council has invested about £60,000 in a new exhibition at the Oriel Pendeitsh gallery, titled 'Our Caernarfon', which depicts Caernarfon's history. The project was funded through the Cadw Heritage Project, which in turn is funded through the European Regional Development Fund. The exhibition is centred on a timeline that depicts the heritage highlights of Caernarfon and its environs from the prehistoric era through to today. In addition, a number of panels depicting Caernarfon's heritage were funded as part of the regeneration project that was funded through European Convergence funding.

In the wake of the interest shown in the 'Our Caernarfon' exhibition, we have now scheduled heritage exhibitions at the Welcome Centre in the Oriel Pendeitsh gallery, including documents of local interest that are stored at the Caernarfon archives.

At present, the partnership between Gwynedd Council and Bangor University is working on a project to redevelop the Gwynedd Museum and Art Gallery in Bangor. The £2.6 million project—funded via the Lottery Heritage Fund, the Welsh Government, Gwynedd Council, Bangor University, the Arts Council of Wales and other partners—is seeking to redevelop Bangor Town Hall as an open and

accessible museum that will depict Gwynedd's rich history and direct people to sites of interest across the county.

Our intention is to develop a series of satellites for the new museum across Gwynedd, and one of these will be located at the Oriel Pendeitsh gallery in Caernarfon. The aim of the satellites will be to showcase artefacts of local interest and to work with local communities to develop heritage projects. As part of the project, we are also collaborating with Cadw to implement community heritage projects specifically on the Segontium site in Caernarfon.

Although Gwynedd Council is very supportive of the principle of developing a heritage centre for Caernarfon, many towns and communities across Gwynedd are also trying to develop similar centres. We therefore need to manage expectations. Regrettably, in the current financial climate, it is not possible for the council to develop a heritage centre in every town in the county, but we are evidently willing to support sustainable projects that are developed by our communities. The council would therefore welcome the opportunity to collaborate on any efforts developed by the Welsh Government to bolster local heritage provision.

If you would like more information on the points cited above, do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,
Sioned E Williams
Head of Economy and Community