

Ken Skates AC / AM
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Diwylliant, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth
Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Christine Chapman AM
Chair
Communities, Equality and Local Government
Committee
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

7 November 2014

Dear Christine,

Thank you for your letter dated 9 October 2014 following my attendance to answer questions on my draft budget proposals for culture and sport for 2015-16. I respond to the issues where you have requested specific responses as follows. My responses also incorporate the actions which arose from the meeting and which were communicated to us separately.

2. The arts sector

I set out below a list of the key performance indicators for Arts & Business Cymru as requested. ACW manage this funding, and are responsible for evaluating their performance. They monitor progress during the year, and formally review the position on an annual basis.

The key performance indicators for the current year are:

- Develop the income generating and business skills of the arts; deliver a service to the arts which will strengthen management, develop essential skills and aid sustainability in a direct and tangible way;
- Increase arts memberships by 5% to 157 including both artists and major institutions within 2014-15, ensuring activity levels are carried out across Wales complying with the organisation's business plan targets;
- Continue to develop the Professional Development Programme, focusing on Skills Bank, Mentor Bank & Board Bank, to achieve at least 35 matches in 2014-15; and

- Establish and develop investment programmes similar to the Culture Steps, Arts & Kids initiative, engaging socially disadvantaged young people with the arts, making tangible difference to the lives of young people across Wales.

There was also an action point from the Committee meeting which asked us to provide a note on the expected outcomes provided to the Arts Council of Wales in the annual remit letter, and their progress against these outcomes. I attach this information at Annex A – showing their achievement against the remit letter for 2013-14.

3. Museums, archives and libraries

I am pleased to inform you that I have accepted the recommendations outlined in your report on public libraries and all Committee members will have received a copy of the Expert Review Panel report. This Report was launched at a joint seminar with the WLGA on 22 October 2014 to discuss the future of our public libraries, and I would like to thank Mike Hedges AM for representing the Committee during the Panel Session.

My officials in CyMAL division will develop an action plan to progress the recommendations of both reports which will include the regular collection of information from local authorities on the delivery plans of individual local authorities.

I am also concerned about proposed decreases in the level of funding of local museums in Wales as non-statutory services. As a consequence, I have instigated a review of local museums services to monitor the current position and to provide advice on more sustainable delivery models. Dr Haydn Edwards, Vice President Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museums Wales, will lead the review which will report to me during the Spring 2015.

My officials in CyMAL have completed an initial survey of the funding position for local authority archives services and are continuing to monitor the situation of individual services. CyMAL is maintaining support for collaborative activities including discussions around the establishment of a North Wales service, audience development activities, on-line access to archival material and digital preservation strategies.

4. The historic and natural environment

Digital donations in free-to-visit unstaffed sites as a means of increasing revenue receipts

My officials in Cadw have reviewed and identified the potential scope for digital donations and have given me proposals for a pilot.

Visitors from disadvantaged groups

Every September, the Open Doors programme provides entry to heritage sites not normally open to the public, or which normally charge an admission fee. Cadw's approach has been to seek to reach as wide a market as possible – young people, families and under represented audiences. Interim findings suggest that in 2014, around 9,000 people attended 1,045 events at over 300 venues.

Previously, Open Doors was managed by the Civic Trust for Wales. In 2014, Open Door was run in-house by Cadw for the first time, representing an estimated saving of £14,000. The cost of marketing, managing and administering the programme was taken from existing budget lines and staffed by Cadw staff and volunteers.

Cadw provides free admission to “self-led” learning visitors to all of its sites, free access to disabled people and their carer, and also to foster families. Cadw also offers concessionary rates to senior citizens, students, children and refugee and asylum seekers. All Cadw sites are free to enter on St David’s Day. Administering these measures is cost neutral – and while there might be an impact on income, they are aimed at people who wouldn’t attend otherwise.

Monitoring visitors to Cadw sites by socioeconomic groups

Cadw uses its visitor survey outputs to inform policy on access, particularly by those in the “C2DE” socio-economic group. This policy is used to target events and activities in deprived areas, such as Blaenavon and Segontium, Caernarfon.

There has also been change in the tone of Cadw marketing messages and dissemination through digital and social media in aiming to reach wider audiences. Since April this year, there are 18,000 people following Cadw’s social media channels, 30,000 following custodians’ social media channels, 26,000 registered to the e-newsletter database, and 40,000 views of Cadw films on YouTube. Cadw also currently has 13,500 members, the highest number since 2007, and since January 2014 significant increases have been seen in young persons (+59%) and child (+456%) membership categories - traditionally under-represented audiences at Cadw sites.

5. Media and publishing

Changes to the commissioning procedure

During the last five years the Welsh Books Council, through its Publishing Grants Panels, has placed greater emphasis on supporting a wide range of publications in order to extend the reach of books from Wales in both languages. Within the sector of books for adults the Welsh Books Council has been able to support a limited number of classic texts representing the best writing from Wales and the richness of our literary tradition, a varied list of literary fiction from contemporary authors and a series of popular titles including biographies of celebrities from the field of sports and the arts.

The same emphasis has been placed on books for children in order once again to extend the reach of books from Wales and to sustain sales.

The indications are that this strategy is proving successful, with sales through the Welsh Books Council for 2013-14 showing an increase of 5% on the previous year, and sales during the first five months of this year also showing a slight increase.

Despite the challenges facing the WBC as a result of the reduction in its budget, we therefore remain confident that the Council will continue to support the publishing industry in both languages.

6. Sports and physical activity

My officials are continuing to develop an on-line toolkit and I will provide you with a progress update in due course including how its usage and effectiveness will be monitored.

Turning to your request for figures on the difference in participation levels in sport and spending in sport between genders, Sport Wales advise that this information is currently unavailable in terms of funding by gender. They are considering how this information may be extracted in the future.

Breakdowns of participation figures by sport and gender are attached – separate tables for children/young people, and adults.

Should you require any further information, please contact me.

Yours Ever,



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