

Vaughan Gething MS
Minister for Economy
Dawn Bowden MS
Deputy Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism
Welsh Government

Welsh Government Draft Budget 2024-25 - Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales

Dear Vaughan and Dawn,

Further to our [letter](#) on 18 January 2023, we are writing to you with concerns regarding the Draft Budget settlement for the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW). We received [correspondence](#) from the RCAHMW on 10 January 2024 which caused us great concern.

As you will be aware, the RCAHMW has a number of statutory functions. It is required, for example, to provide a record of historic building and archaeology in Wales, and it also has statutory duties under the Public Records Act relating to the National Monument Record of Wales. These are roles that provide important records which sit alongside the work undertaken by Amgueddfa Cymru and the National Library of Wales. The proposed reduction of 22 per cent in their budget, in line with CADW, is of significant concern to us. In their letter they noted that:

A more equitable reduction in our budget of 10 per cent would still leave us struggling, but it would buy us the necessary breathing space to avoid precipitate decisions and enable us to work with Cadw and others to plan for an orderly strategic solution to the future of the heritage sector. If we cannot secure an improved grant settlement, we will need to take immediate steps to reduce our headcount from 28 to 20 in order to avoid running out of money just before Christmas 2024.

As you will be aware, the RCAHMW is working on important projects at the moment including:

- The CHERISH climate change project which secured €6million worth of funding;
- Compiling the dossier of evidence that resulted in awarding UNESCO status to the slate landscape of northwest Wales;
- Working with the Foundation for Jewish Heritage to transform the Merthyr synagogue into a heritage centre;

- Delivering the Welsh Asian Heritage Project (which is funded by the Welsh Government's Anti-racist Wales programme)– a pioneering project which is collecting, displaying and archiving important stories which reflect a contemporary Wales;
- Working on a community archaeology project at Pendinas hillfort.

Many of these projects feed into a variety of government objectives and strategies, which cut across both your departments, as well as others including International Relations and Climate Change. We believe that the proposed reduction in their budget is going to severely affect their ability to continue delivering their work. This could, in turn, affect the delivery of government aims and objectives.

As outlined in the Royal Commission's letter to our Committee, the proposed budget reduction will have an extremely negative effect on their workforce. Without any changes to the proposed budget settlement, they will have no choice but to reduce their staffing headcount by 29 per cent (from 28 to 20). We would like to know why they have been singled out for such a reduction, when compared with other bodies like Amgueddfa Cymru, the National Library and the Arts Council of Wales.

Given their status as a protected institution, and the vital role they play in delivering many government objectives, we would ask that you reconsider the proposed reduction in their budget from 22 per cent to 10 per cent. This would provide parity with their partners in the wider sector.

We would also ask what financial assistance you are able to provide for a voluntary redundancy programme.

Preserving the stories of our historic built environment and archaeological history is as important to telling the story of Wales as is protecting the national collection. We would urge you to reconsider the budget settlement for the RCAHMW as a matter of priority.

I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely



Delyth Jewell MS

Committee Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.
We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.