



Delyth Jewell MS
Chair of the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations
Committee

7 October 2024

Dear Delyth,

Thank you for your correspondence of 9 September to my predecessor, following Lesley Griffiths' appearance before the Committee on 10 July. As culture is now within my portfolio, I am responding to you. Please find below the further information the Committee requested.

Difference in budget allocations between 2014-15 and 2024-25

My officials are working through the budget figures and the information will be provided to you as soon as possible. This has taken longer than expected due to the difference in the way budgets were presented in 2014-15.

The Museum of North Wales

The Programme for Government commitment 'Develop plans for a Museum of North Wales' was being addressed separately to the redevelopment of the National Slate Museum at Llanberis.

My predecessor announced on 10 July that we have stopped further development of plans for the Museum of North Wales. In this current financial climate, we must prioritise protecting and preserving our existing cultural institutions and their collections. Therefore, we will not be progressing work on a Museum of North Wales during this Senedd term.

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.

The Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama

The Cabinet Secretary for Education and officials have met with the College and the Minister for Further Education & Higher Education will continue conversations.

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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.

The National Music Service, established by the Welsh Government in 2022, is delivering on a Programme for Government commitment for every child and young person from the age of 3 to 16 to benefit from opportunities to engage in and experience music-making activities. The Service is fully funded by the Welsh Government, via grant to the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA).

While it is not a key function of the Service to provide higher-level provision in music training, of the type offered by music conservatoires, it does cover a broad work programme, as set out in the [National Plan for Music Education](#), including activity with key bodies such as the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and the Arts Council of Wales (ACW) to support learner progression in music. The overriding focus of the Service's remit is, however, of necessity, to support music education in schools (through provision such as 'First Experiences' and 'Music Pathways').

From the end of September, a new weekend 'Academi' for young musicians in Cardiff and the Vale Glamorgan area has been launched by CF Music Education (the music service for this area).

Developed by, and run in partnership with, tutors with experience of previously delivering youth music activities at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, the new weekly sessions form part of Cardiff Council's Music Strategy. The new 'Academi' sessions will run on Saturdays, at Stanwell School in Penarth and Whitchurch High School in Cardiff, and with scope to expand to other venues across Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan.

Welsh National Opera

On 26 September I held a series of meetings with ACW, the Musicians' Union and Equity, and WNO, to understand the nature of the situation facing the WNO. During these meetings I emphasised the Welsh Government wants to see WNO thrive and flourish as one of our major arts organisations. In my meeting with WNO I urged them to apply for the recently announced Resilience Fund, being administered by ACW to protect jobs in the arts sector. The deadline for applications is the end of September and I understand WNO has applied seeking additional support.

My private office is currently finalising details for the key stakeholder meeting - involving UK Government Ministers, Welsh Government Ministers and senior officials at ACW and Arts Council England – which will take place later this month.

Arts Council of Wales (ACW)

Following the budget announcement for 2024-25 where ACW's budget was reduced, ACW had to change as an organisation, to adapt to a new funding model and to safeguard the sector as much as possible. ACW passed on a 2.5% cut to the sector, whilst the rest was adsorbed within its own running costs.

ACW underwent a process of voluntary and compulsory redundancies as its senior leadership team was reconfigured. While the whole organisation was restructured there was some slippage in timescale on certain initiatives.

The English Language theatre review was launched in July and the work is on schedule for Council's consideration at its December meeting, followed by a public announcement early in 2025. Approved recommendations are still on course to be actioned from 2025-26.

ACW's Strategic Plan is currently with the Welsh Government for approval and will be launched once agreed. It is, however, a development of the priorities as published as part of ACW's Investment Review and the sector is fully aware of this.

Broadcasting and media policy development

The £1 million set aside in the 2024-25 budget to deliver against the broadcasting commitment has been allocated as follows:

- £100k – to support the establishment and operation of a Broadcasting and Communications Advisory Body in 2024-25.
- £500k – to support skills and talent development in the creative industries through the Creative Wales Skills Fund.
- £250k – transferred to the journalism budget in 2024-25, taking the total available budget to support journalism projects this financial year to £350k.
- £150k – to support a Wales presence at the Frankfurt and London Book Fairs in 2024-25.

Terms of reference for the Broadcasting and Communications Advisory Body are currently in development.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "JACK SARGEANT". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

Jack Sargeant AS/MS

Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership
Y Gweinidog Diwylliant, Sgiliau a Phartneriaeth Gymdeithasol