

Kirsty Williams AM
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Welsh Government
Tŷ Hywel
Cardiff Bay CF99 1NA

1 December 2017

Dear Kirsty

Welsh Government Draft Budget 2018-19

Background

Thank you for attending the Culture, Welsh Language and Communication Committee's meeting on 16 November to discuss the Welsh Government's draft budget proposals for 2018-19.

Prior to the meeting, the Committee asked for a range of information on those parts of the budget for which you are responsible and in which the Committee has an interest. You provided us with a paper, dated 8 November, which was published by the Committee along with the agenda and other papers for our meeting on 16 November.

On this occasion the Committee has decided not to report formally on the budget to the Assembly but would nevertheless be grateful for your response to the points set out below. We will publish your response and it would be helpful if it could be provided before the debate on the final budget, which I understand will be held in January.

Specific Issues

Creative Learning through the Arts

The Committee welcomes the recognition of the importance of the wider benefits of arts and music in children's education and that funding continues to be made available through the Creative Learning Through the Arts programme. You mentioned in particular the 'Go and See' element of the programme and offered to supply a breakdown of the numbers of schools and children that have participated by local authority area.

Music in Schools Initiative

The Committee also welcomes the additional funding of £1m in each year for the next two years for music initiatives in schools. We noted that you are currently still considering how this funding might be used and that you hope to draw on evidence from the Committee's inquiry report in this area. While this is welcome,



it would be reassuring to know whether the Government has itself in mind any specific use of this funding? The Committee would also be grateful to know whether you intend to consult further with stakeholders on potential uses of the funding and would commend that approach if so.

Database of Musical Instruments

The Committee notes that the Music Task and Finish Group recommended that a database of musical instruments should be established. We have since received evidence from the WLGA that the aims of a database could be met through more modest investment. The WLGA told us that there would be 'considerable set-up costs and significant ongoing resource to maintain' and that 'there are established communication channels between authorities which enable music services to ask for assistance in accessing musical instruments from another local authority area'.

They suggested that the additional funding might be more profitably channelled toward other uses than new instruments that might provide a longer legacy benefit. This might include maintaining instruments already in stock. You explained that these concerns had not been raised with you in discussions with the WLGA. However, the Committee would value any further thoughts you may have in this area.

Fundraising - NYAW and the Endowment Fund

Members raised the potential for confusion between fundraising opportunities for National Youth Arts Wales and the National Endowment for Music. You announced the Endowment earlier this year with funding of £1 million and which you told us will be launched formally with the Arts Council in January. However, given these concerns, the Committee would be grateful if you could reflect further on this issue and how any possibility for confusion might be addressed.

Yours sincerely



Siân Gwenllïan AM
Acting Chair

