

**P-05-880 Wales is Rapidly Losing its Musical Reputation and Heritage,
Correspondence - Petitioner to Committee, 11.11.19**

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Chair - Petitions Committee
Janet Finch-Saunders AM
National Assembly for Wales

10.11.19

Dear Chair

First can I thank the panel for revisiting the Petition:P-05-880 - "Wales is rapidly losing its musical reputation and heritage".

With regard to the letter you received from Kirsty Williams dated 6.11.19

- * It was decided after the publication of Hitting the Right Note in July 2018 that a Feasibility Study would be completed in 6 months so it was first expected to be completed by February 2019.
- * When it did not appear it then came to light that consultants had not been appointed and in fact tenders were not sought until March 2019.
- * The information following this was that the study would be completed by the end of August/ September 2019.
- * There is no explanation as to why there has been a long delay in receiving the final report and for the sake of transparency the Minister needs to explain the reasons why the music services, teachers, parents and pupils have got no idea about their future.
- * The Minister states that the study has now been concluded and that the contractor is still in the "process of finalising". As I am aware of the cost being paid to the chosen contractors I feel this statement is totally unacceptable and am therefore questioning the choice of contractor, the terms of reference and the timeline for completion.
- * How long is shortly? As I write more teachers are waiting either to be made redundant or downgraded to self employment while more pupils are going without access to music.

An update to the petition.

- * When the Minister made the decision to carry out a Feasibility Study I and my colleagues made it quite clear that Hitting the Right Note was such an efficient report that it was in fact a Feasibility Study in itself. There are growing concerns that with Education funding in serious

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downfall that the £100,000 spent on contractors for irrelevant studies is not a sensible way forward and that money wasted is money that should have gone to the front line. Is the case then that the delay is due to the report being inadequate?

- * I wrote to the Minister on 14th October (copy attached) requesting an explanation for the delay of the Feasibility Study and the second grant of £1.4 million that the services are waiting for to plan ahead.
- * I received a reply from the Minister on 1.11.19 (copy attached) and the content is similar to the letter sent to you. I have not replied as the decision to revisit the petition came through.
- * It has come to my notice that the first part of the grant has been distributed to local authorities but that there is some controversy as to how the WLGA has monitored its distribution. There appears to be a lack of clarity in report backs between the WLGA and the Welsh Government on how the initial grant was used.
- * I wrote to the Chair of WLGA at the end of October requesting an update on the payment of the 2nd grant to which I had a reply that a member of staff would contact me but to date nothing has arrived.

Finally the petition P-05-880 - "Wales is rapidly losing its musical reputation and heritage" is now 16 months in further decline with no apparent timeline of any serious debate at Welsh Assembly level. I am of course aware of all the serious situations that Wales is facing at present but with daily reports regarding the importance of music for well being, creativity, equality and its profile in the New Curriculum any further delay is going to damage the present situation beyond rescue. I am therefore asking the petitions panel to break the impasse and call for an urgent debate in the Senedd to discuss the reasons for the delay and a decision that will allow local authorities, music services and all affected plan for the Spring 2020 term.

Yours sincerely

Dinah Pye

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