

Culture, Welsh Language and Sport Committee

CWLS2 03-05(p7)

Meeting date: 16 March 2005

Meeting time: 9.00am - 12.15pm

Meeting venue: The Riverfront, Bristol Packet Wharf, Newport

REPORT OF THE MINISTER FOR CULTURE, WELSH LANGUAGE AND SPORT

1. CULTURE

National Museum 'Vision' Consultation

The National Museum has launched a public consultation on their 'Vision' exercise which sets out their plans for the future. Members will have received copies of the bilingual 'Perthyn' magazine, which summarises the National Museum's thinking. The plans outlined in the Vision concentrate on three museums; the National Museum & Gallery, Cardiff; the Museum of Welsh Life, St Fagans and the Roman Legionary Museum in Caerleon. The main themes under discussion in the Vision are *Origins, Belonging, the Future* and *Creativity*. The consultation period will last for 8 weeks ending on 22 April 2005. NMGW will publish an evaluation report of the public's responses on its web site in June. I urge Members to read the consultation document and contribute their views on the way forward for our National Museum.

@ Your Library

On World Book Day, I attended the Library and Information Conference Wales and announced CyMAL's new '@ Your Library' scheme. This Strategic Library Development Programme will provide support to enable libraries to promote their services, provide free access to Welsh library resources, create the online library service, work in partnerships to deliver better services and improve relevant workforce skills. I have allocated £1 million to this scheme in 2005-06.

Supporting Archives in the Community

I am providing funding of £35,000 to the Archives and Records Council Wales via CyMAL. The money will pay for IT equipment for each of the 13 local archives offices. It

will enable them to undertake a wider range of outreach activities and encourage the development of community archive projects.

New Museum Accreditation Scheme

I have launched the new Accreditation scheme for local museums which is administered in Wales by CyMAL. The scheme will give clear requirements about how: museums should document and care for their collections; be governed and managed; and what information and services they should offer their visitors. The scheme builds on existing professional standards, which have been extensively revised and updated to reflect people's growing expectations of visitor attractions.

National Botanic Garden of Wales

The National Botanic Garden of Wales continues to implement its five year Recovery Strategy, supported by the Welsh Assembly Government.

As the Committee will know the Recovery Strategy set some stiff targets for the Garden, both in terms of visitor numbers and income generation. During the winter, the Garden's visitor numbers have been near to target with income generation from visitors close to the targets set in the Recovery Strategy.

The challenge for the Garden in relation to their Recovery Strategy is to raise income from sources other than from visitors, including effective joint ventures with private sector partners. These commercial negotiations continue and are crucial to the success of the overall strategy.

In the meantime the Welsh Assembly Government and its sponsored bodies continue to provide the Garden with both financial and practical support in line with my statement to Plenary on 17 March 2004.

2. SPORTS POLICY

1. Active Lifestyles

Mountain Weather Wales

In January 2005 there were over 30,000 hits recorded on the Mountain Weather Wales web-site. This continues to be an important service that is proving great value for the Assembly funding it has received, helping people to enjoy participating in outdoor activities more safely. Since August 2003 there have been over 400,000 hits recorded on the site.

Commonwealth Games Council for Wales

13 governing bodies of sport in Wales, including athletics, hockey, netball, squash and swimming have called for radical changes to be made to reform the Commonwealth Games Council for Wales, before the 2006 Games in Melbourne. The need for reform was highlighted following the post Manchester Games report, which made a series of recommendations.

The Sports Council for Wales has also advocated the need for reform and refused to provide financial support to the team, unless the Commonwealth Games Council commits to change. I totally support the Sports Council view.

A Special General Meeting of the Commonwealth Games Council for Wales will be held shortly to discuss the matter.

2. Sporting Success

Ryder Cup

Congratulations to Ian Woosnam who has been selected as Captain of the 2006 European Ryder Cup team. This is also good news for Wales as we lead up to the Celtic Manor event in 2010

Objective 1 ESF Project - Welsh Rugby Learning Industry

The Welsh Rugby Union with the Welsh regional academies and Coleg Gwent (on behalf of other FE Colleges) have been awarded Objective 1 European Social Fund (ESF) funding of £1.6m to establish a new supportive programme to develop the skills of players both on and off the field. The aim of the project is to strengthen the profession's long term economic potential and will provide support for 270 beneficiaries. It will assist the WRU and Regional Academies and their professional and semi professional clubs to improve their employer's skills and establish a structure, which will support the development of Welsh rugby as a sustainable professional industry.

3. WELSH LANGUAGE

Wythnos Cymraeg yn Gyntaf (Welsh First Week)

This is the second year that the Welsh Language Board has run the Wythnos Cymraeg yn Gyntaf (Welsh First Week) campaign. Its purpose is to target Welsh speakers and learners, encouraging them to use Welsh in their everyday lives.

This year's campaign was extended to include 10 areas with the local Language Action Plans responsible for organising events and activities to promote the campaign locally during the first week of March. Around 100 events were held across Wales with over 9,000 people taking part. One of these events was a competition for the best St David's day shop display in Ruthin, the award for which I presented to the winning business.

Bilingual Design Awards

The Welsh Language Board held its fifth annual Bilingual Design Awards ceremony last month. The awards promote and raise the profile of bilingual design and recognise best practice in this specialised field. More than one thousand entries were received with more than 40 companies reaching the shortlist this year demonstrating that companies are increasingly seeing that using Welsh and English in design can be a unique selling point. The highlight of the evening was the Designer of the Year award, which I presented to The Welsh Whisky Company for their distinctive Penderyn whisky bottle.

Translation of the European Constitution Treaty into Welsh

On 8 March we announced that the Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, had agreed to the translation of the EU Constitutional treaty into Welsh. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office will fund the translation and it will be published on the Internet.

I am very pleased that the merits of the case put forward by the Welsh Assembly Government have been accepted. The translation of the treaty into Welsh is another significant example of the growing status of the language and of its importance to the Governments in London and Cardiff.

4. ARTS POLICY

1. Access to Excellence

Welsh National Opera at Wales Millennium Centre

I attended the WNO's opening weekend at the WMC. La Traviata was excellent and the new production of Wozzeck was inspirational and received a very positive response. I am aware of some controversial comments on the Front Row programme and I have asked for a transcript of the programme. I will be meeting the Chair & Chief Executive of the WNO shortly to discuss the first few months of the project and their plans for the future.

Additional funding for arts projects

I have released an extra £290,000 for arts projects this year. These extra grants will help

to support a range of exciting and important work for eight projects, ranging from overseas tours to essential structural alterations, that will promote Welsh arts at home and abroad.

I am delighted by the scope that these projects represent. Internationally, for example, the Venice Biennale will showcase the best of Welsh art whilst Earthfall's tour of Poland will help consolidate the links that already exist between Wales and the region of Silesia. At home the Artes Mundi Prize, will once again bring the best of the world's visual art to Wales whilst the extra funding for the Bay Lit festival will enable Academi to build on its excellent work with local schools and the wider community.

5. BUDGETS

Transfer of Resources between Budgets for 2004-05

I wrote to Committee Members earlier this month setting out the planned in-year changes to the Culture, Welsh Language and Sport budget for 2004/05. The Finance Minister announced on 8 March all the changes to the Assembly's budgets in the MEG to MEG motion and I am delighted that my Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL) was increased by **£402k** to pay for the storage and maintenance of the Newport Medieval Ship, and to help support a number of small capital projects. This brings the total increase in the Culture Departmental Spending Limit Budget for 2004/5 of **£13.2million** which is a **13%** increase over the year.

The MEG to MEG motion also included a number of transfers between Budget Expenditure Lines (BELs) to allow maximum utilisation of existing funding and ensure that budgets were correctly allocated to the correct financial category. All of these changes have neutral effect on the overall MEG budget.

For example, the National Museums & Galleries of Wales and Sports Council for Wales have generated additional income of £340k and £368k respectively. This is balanced against the additional running costs of staff to run commercial operations or external research contracts (in the case of the Museum) or providing instructors and equipment for laying on additional courses at Plas Menai (in the case of SCW). Another example is the transfer of £90k from the Welsh Books Council's Literature Grant (in the Culture Fund) to the Welsh Books Council's core costs to pay for the administrative costs for their Outreach Scheme, Trade Representation Scheme and English-language children's book catalogue.

I have reproduced all of the changes to my budget at Annex A for information.

6. MEDIA

Green Paper: Review of the BBC's Royal Charter: A Strong BBC, independent of Government

The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport published the Green paper on 2 March. The closing date for response is 31 May 2005. As confirmed in the Assembly debate on the day of publication, the Assembly Government will be responding in due course.

7. HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Historic Buildings Council

The Historic Buildings Council for Wales met on 4 March and recommended a number of applications for historic buildings and conservation area grant. I will provide Committee members with further information at our meeting.

8. FORTHCOMING LEGISLATION

Legislative Programme 2004/05 - Welsh Language Schemes (Public Bodies) Order 2005

We are currently planning an Order to bring further public bodies under the Welsh Language Act 1993. The relevant legislation will be made by following the standard procedure. This will mean scrutiny by the legislation committee, followed by a debate and vote in Plenary, probably in the Autumn term of 2005.

9. COMMITTEE ACTION POINTS FOR CULTURE

The following respond to action points from the previous Culture Committee meeting.

9.1. Mass participation in sports – Playing Fields

Technical Advice Note 16 *Sport and Recreation* is currently being reviewed. Officials in Planning are considering the contributions of the Technical Advice Group, set up to facilitate the review, prior to preparing a revised draft note for consultation.

9.2. Ofcom's Review of Public Service Broadcasting

My response to the second phase of the Review of Public Service Broadcasting is available on the Welsh Assembly Government website.

English version:

<http://www.wales.gov.uk/subculture/content/ofcom-pstv-assembly-resp-e.htm>

Welsh version:

<http://www.cymru.gov.uk/subculture/content/ofcom-pstv-assembly-resp-w.htm>

10. OTHER VISITS AND MEETINGS

- Urdd National Eisteddfod 2005 launch, Wales Millennium Centre
- Oriol Plas Glyn Y Weddw in Llanbedrog
- Dylan Thomas Theatre with Andrew Davies AM
- World Book Day Lecture, Chaired by Jane Davidson AM
- World Book Day Announcement of the Long List for Welsh Book of the Year 2005, Wrexham Library
- Premiere of Doctor Who, St David's Hotel
- Shakespeares "Troilus and Cressida, New Theatre, Cardiff
- Theatr Elwy, Ysgol Glan Clwyd, Llanelwy, St Asaph

Annex A - ADJUSTMENTS TO 2004-05 BUDGETS

Culture, Welsh Language and Sport MEG Departmental Spending Limit (DSL) 2004/05

£000s

BEL/SEG Title	Current Provision	Proposed Change	Proposed Revised Provision
National Museums & Galleries of Wales Running Costs (incl. Cost Capital /Depreciation)	23,882	340	24,222
National Museums & Galleries of Wales current Receipts	-958	-340	-1,298

BEL/SEG Title	Current Provision	Proposed Change	Proposed Revised Provision
Arts Council of Wales	2,395	-14	2,381
Sports Council for Wales	2,922	-259	2,663
Welsh Language Board	3,439	0	3,439
Other Arts Libraries and Culture Support (Welsh Books Council Running Costs)	1,019	90	1,109

Culture Fund Current Expenditure	52,782	61	52,843
Culture Fund Capital Expenditure	7,648	766	8414
Culture Fund Current Receipts	-3,313	-256	-3569
Culture Fund Capital Receipts	-555	0	-555
Wales Millennium Centre (WMC)	4,000	14	4,014
Royal Commission for the Ancient and Historic Monuments (Wales)	1,992	0	1,992
Cadw	7,748	0	7,748
Total DSL	115,020	402	115,422
Total AME	22,437	0	22,437
<u>TOTAL MEG</u>	<u>137,457</u>	<u>402</u>	<u>137,859</u>