

CULTURE, WELSH LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE WRITTEN EVIDENCE – PORTFOLIO PRIORITIES

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide written evidence to the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee on priorities within the Economy and Infrastructure portfolio that relates to the Committee's remit, including culture, creativity and the arts, marketing and promotion and the historic environment.

Historic Environment

2. Our national historic assets represent a precious and unique heritage, but also have substantial economic potential. The sector supports nearly 40,000 jobs, generates £749 million in GVA and is vital to tourism.
3. Historic buildings and monuments give communities their character and deserve our appreciation and protection. The condition of our designated historic assets is an indicator of our cultural well-being, and historic buildings that are well-used and cared for contribute to the health of our communities. Conversely, buildings that are at risk through neglect or decay are wasted assets that degrade the quality of their environment, and can damage social and economic vibrancy.
4. The Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016, which received Royal Assent on 21 March 2016, gives Wales progressive new legislation for the historic environment. The Act will support the sustainable management and conservation of listed buildings and to take appropriate action when a building falls into disrepair through neglect. As part of a suite of guidance documents that are being prepared to support the Act, the Welsh Government through Cadw will be issuing specific guidance on managing historic buildings at risk. Consultation on a draft of this guidance is planned for later this year

Museums, Archives and Libraries

5. The Museums, Archives and Libraries team is responsible for the development and implementation of museum, archive and library policy for both national and local institutions, which protect and make accessible the culture and heritage of Wales. They contribute to the delivery of a range of Welsh Government initiatives including tackling social exclusion through the Fusion programme, supporting formal and informal learning for all ages, improving literacy and engagement through initiatives including *'Every Child a Library Member'* and *Taking over Museums Day*, supporting volunteering and apprenticeships, and providing access to information via our network of public libraries.
6. Over the next five years, the priority is to pursue a transformational agenda to ensure sustainability of high quality services against a continuing difficult financial background and to support the development of new approaches, particularly in the area of digital services, to meet the growing expectations of users for online access and service delivery. We will build on the success of the People's Collection Wales digital heritage programme, particularly in the area of community engagement, and expect the sector, both national and local, to play its part in the Year of Legends in 2017 and future campaigns.
7. A series of expert reviews has provided a strong foundation on which to develop these transformational agendas. A number of the recommendations have been delivered or are in progress.

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8. The Fusion programme will continue to be a priority, building on the success of the pilot projects, to ensure that disadvantaged groups from all parts of Wales develop new skills and confidence through engagement with culture and heritage.
9. Our national institutions will continue to receive Welsh Government grant-in-aid to protect our culture and deliver services across the nation. In 2018, the work to redevelop St Fagans will come to fruition, helped by a £7 million investment from the Welsh Government. The National Library will continue to lead on digital delivery of services and will begin implementation of a new 3 year strategy by April 2017, delivering innovative and inclusive services.
10. Collaboration with a wide range of other organisations and sectors is key to improving the sustainability of service delivery in a challenging economic climate. We will challenge national institutions, including the National Museum and National Library, to proactively work together to explore ways of increasing external investment in cultural heritage activities and in providing leadership to the wider sector.
11. To maximise the potential of the sector we are also evaluating options for the creation of 'Historic Wales', exploiting synergies between our national historic environment organisations and drawing upon the findings of the recent review undertaken by Baroness Randerson.

The Arts

12. Our programme for government will include a number of commitments focused on the arts, and others where the arts will have a part to play. In addition to the priorities set out in my annual Remit letter, the Arts Council of Wales (ACW) and the arts sector will have a key role in helping to implement the following initiatives:
 - *The Challenge Fund for Sports and Arts*: this will be targeted at increasing investment and participation. The Fund will help organisations, particularly those working at a community and grass-roots level, to match fund their projects and to fuse creativity and digital exploitation. It will augment, not replace, existing Arts Council (and Sport Wales) budgets.
 - *National Endowment for Music*: in partnership with the Education Minister, and ACW, we are looking to establish a permanent endowment fund for music. The aim is to build-up a fund of £20 million or more. In time, it could yield up to a £1 million per year to support young people to develop their skills and talents in music. Achieving this target is possible, albeit it will be very challenging, so the fund will need to attract funds from various public and private sector sources. We are consulting a range of potential partners and beneficiaries, to ensure we have an effective plan for creating and sustaining this new body.
 - *The Wellbeing Bond / Social Prescriptions*: these public health initiatives will invest in groups and activities - including arts and cultural organisations - that help to reduce sedentary lifestyles, poor nutrition and excessive consumption of alcohol, and support the treatment of depression and mental illness. There is growing evidence that in many cases, arts therapies and cultural

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participation can be an effective and affordable way of increasing patients' confidence and self-worth, and of reducing symptoms such as anxiety and depression.

13. There will continue to be a focus on increasing participation. In particular, the arts have a key role in promoting more opportunities for young people and for people from disadvantaged backgrounds. This will help us to make further progress with the ambition for Wales to become the most creatively active nation in Europe. Together with the Arts Council, we will also be encouraging the sector to play an active part in our city region initiatives, given its proven record in contributing to place-based regeneration schemes. Another priority will be to encourage local authorities to do everything they can to continue supporting arts venues, projects and services, given their importance to the wellbeing of communities.

Publishing and Literature

14. An independent review of literature and publishing is currently underway and is considering the Welsh Government's current cultural, social and economic aims in supporting the publishing and literature industry in Wales and whether the current provision is fit for purpose for the 21st Century. The Panel is due to report in October.

Welsh Books Council

15. The Welsh Government supports the publishing industry in Wales through the Welsh Books Council (WBC). Over 70% of the Welsh Government's grant to the WBC is channelled through the publishers in order to support and develop a thriving and viable publishing industry. The WBC supports the publishing industry by offering paid-for specialist services to the publishers in the fields of editing, design, sales and marketing and by grant-aiding around 300 titles annually (200 in Welsh and 100 in English) with about 100 of these books for children.
16. The publishing industry in Wales is very aware that books need to be accessible to all readers, whatever their background, which includes more than just the cover price. The WBC has made a concerted effort over the last few years, and this will continue, to extend the range of more commercial titles with a greater emphasis on popular fiction, biographies and sport in order to reach a greater number of readers. The presence of books from Wales in e-book formats has again opened the market to new opportunities.
17. The WBC makes a contribution to the Welsh Government's strategic agenda in a number of areas including Welsh Language, Economic Development and Sustainability, Literacy and Reading, Tackling poverty and working in deprived areas.

Literature Wales

18. Literature Wales, funded by the Welsh Government through the Arts Council of Wales, is the national organisation responsible for developing and promoting literature. It represents the interests of Welsh writers both inside Wales and internationally and encourages people to enjoy others' writing and to write themselves, through a programme of workshops, courses, festivals and

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competitions. Literature Wales' main projects include the Wales Book of the Year, the National Poet and the event funding scheme, Writers' on Tour. Services offered by Literature Wales include mentoring, writers' bursaries, information and advice, and independent manuscript assessment.

Media Forum

19. The Welsh Government's Media Forum will consider a number of issues including the challenges facing the media industry in Wales. This forum is very timely considering the significant challenges facing the media in Wales

Marketing and Communications

20. The Wales brand strategy has been updated and a strong and coherent new approach to promoting Wales is now in place. The new brand approach centres on promoting Wales in an integrated way, and is highly contemporary but also distinctive and uniquely Welsh. Our focus over the next few years will be to drive this approach across all aspects of Wales marketing to make as much impact as possible with individual campaigns and activities.

Tourism Marketing

21. In 2016 a new, thematic approach to promoting Wales – based on Wales's key competitive strengths – launched with the Year of Adventure. This will be followed by a Year of Legends in 2017 and a Year of the Sea in 2018. The aim of the approach is to focus efforts to promote Wales in the UK and internationally, with a view to influencing over £300 million a year in additional spend in the Welsh economy.

22. Visit Wales marketing is multi-channel and multi-market. The key focus is on the domestic market and key English regions, where activity includes television, print, out-of-home, experiential, digital and social media marketing, as well as PR. This approach drove over 4 million visitors to visitwales.com in 2015/16, and resulted in record campaign response levels for Wales in the same period.

23. Internationally the focus is on the Republic of Ireland, Germany and the USA – and we have seen a significant increase in web-traffic to the German site in particular since we launched a coordinated marketing programme in this market in 2013 including cinema and television marketing.

24. The Visit Wales travel trade programme draws in an additional £4.5 million a year to the economy and is growing year-on-year as interest in Wales from a target list of top operators grows. This work again focuses on Wales's primary markets internationally but also extends to other markets and territories too – including emerging markets such as Japan and China.

25. Visit Wales marketing also responds to major events and market opportunities as they arise and recently deployed a £500,000 campaign to maximise on Wales's success at the Euro 2016 Finals. This included television advertising in Germany as well as print and digital advertising in France and here in the UK.

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26. A Memorandum of Understanding has recently been agreed with VisitBritain. Visit Wales marketing recently undertook a promotional roadshow, visiting four key European cities, in partnership with the GREAT Campaign.

Business Marketing

27. For the past five years, Business Marketing has worked in partnership with the priority sector teams, the Trade and Invest team and the Enterprise and Business Information team to drive awareness and interest of Wales as a business destination for businesses to start; grow or locate in Wales.

28. In addition, Business Marketing has promoted the Business Wales service to drive awareness and take-up of the services and support available from Welsh Government and its partners. Key markets have been Wales and the UK, with activity in other overseas markets linked to trade missions and events.

29. For 2016, we are engaging with the Regional Entrepreneurship Acceleration Panel on how elevate Wales' status as a destination to start a business and promote a culture of entrepreneurialism in Wales. Enterprise Zones have been a significant focus of activity.

30. Through the Just Ask Wales campaign, launched in 2014, we have targeted foreign direct investment based in London and South East England, with the aim of building a pipeline of interest that can be cultivated over time into projects. In the first year of operation, there was 10 per cent uplift in new enquiries from new investors. For 2016, we are working to introduce the Business pillar of the Wales brand, bringing consistency alongside activities in the tourism sector.

31. For overseas markets, a high level investment campaign has been launched to promote Wales' status as a business destination.