

**CULTURE, WELSH LANGUAGE  
AND SPORT COMMITTEE**

**PWYLLGOR DIWYLLIANT,  
Y GYMRAEG A CHWARAEON**



Cynulliad National  
Cenedlaethol Assembly for  
Cymru Wales

Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd / Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

Alun Pugh A.M  
Minister for Culture, Welsh Language  
and Sport

3 June 2005

Dear

**BUDGET PRIORITIES 2005**

I am writing to confirm the views of the Culture, Welsh Language and Sport Committee, on its priorities for the 2005 budget planning round as discussed at its meeting on 18 May. Your paper, (CWLS2 -06-05 (p.4)), and the Finance Minister's letter of 8 April were taken into consideration by the Committee.

The Committee did not disagree with your priorities for 2006-7 and beyond as set out in paragraph 8 of your paper. We did however, wish to underline a number of points which we would like taken into consideration:

- (I) the budget should take account of the Committee's proposals in its reports on "Art, sport and Community Regeneration", "Welsh Writing in English", and, later this year, on its review of "Dance in Wales".
- (II) We reiterate our plea from last year that a larger percentage of the overall budget should be allocated towards Culture. You will know our firm view that comparatively little spending in this area can lead to positive benefits in the Welsh Assembly Government's other key strategic areas such as health, employment and safer communities. A relatively small shift in funding from those areas to Culture could make a very real difference.
- (III) In terms of Government priorities, the Committee also believes that creativity and excellence should underpin the more tangible objectives in public health, jobs and building safer communities.

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- (IV) We welcome your reassurance that the priorities of equality and sustainability will “focus very heavily” in next years remit letters for the ASPBs
- (V) Again, on ASPBs, we wish to see that they all have sufficient running costs to maintain and develop an appropriate level of services including funds for pension costs and building maintenance.
- (VI) More fundamentally on ASPBs, we remain concerned that the timetable for the wider Welsh Assembly Government budget and that of the corporate planning round are still not aligned in such a way as to allow Committees to influence decisions on ASPB budgets. I realise that this is a wider issue, but I would ask that you make representations again and to let the Committee know the outcome.
- (VII) Finally, the Committee were very concerned that yet again, there was insufficient detail on the “culture” budget on which to make informed decisions. We realise that the discussion on 18 May was about priorities, but we are, to a large extent, working in a vacuum. With no breakdown of the Culture Fund, beyond that set out in May and November last year for 2004-05, and none for the additional £28m for the Welsh language it is difficult to identify where the balance should lie.
- (VIII) We therefore welcome your intention to “reshape and re-present” the budget so that the Committee can better identify and comment its makeup. There are also detailed issues on areas such as the free swimming initiative as well as on the arts and the Welsh language, on which the Committee would wish to make representations.
- (IX) In that respect, I signalled at the meeting on 18 May that we will, in future, include a termly review of the culture budget in our programme. This will begin in September, when I hope we will be able to have a breakdown of the figures along the lines discussed on 18 May. We will then wish to monitor spend. This will not, of course, supplant discussion on the draft budget which should take place sometime in October/November in order to meet the Finance Minister’s deadline for Committees’ responses of 11 November.

I am copying this letter to the Finance Minister.

Yours sincerely

**Rosemary Butler A.M**

Chair, Culture, Welsh Language and Sport Committee

cc Sue Essex, Minister for Finance, Local Government and Public Services

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