



1 October 2010

Sandy Mewies AM
Chair
Communities and Culture Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
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CF99 1NA

Dear Sandy

Communities and Culture Committee Meeting – 22 September 2010

Thank you for your letter of 27 September on the above. I was very grateful for the opportunity to attend your Committee meeting last week.

Thank you, also, for forwarding the Members' additional questions. My responses are set out below.

1. Our principal partners in achieving our access and participation aims are the artists, arts organisations and local authorities that we fund or collaborate with. In most cases we grant aid activity. However, we also issue competitive tenders for work. Once the tenders have been selected, the terms of our partnership are then set out in specific service delivery contracts.

The mechanism that we use to agree goals are the funding agreements – or contracts – that we negotiate with our partners. Public engagement is one of the key measures that we use to assess performance as part of our Quality Framework, *Strive to Excel*. (This document can be viewed on our website through the link below.)

<http://www.artswales.org/what-we-do/funding/investment-review/key-documents>

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BUDDSODDWR Y MEWN POBL
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Through our monitoring of revenue funded organisations, we look at a range of measures that include:

- awareness and understanding of audience, participants or customers
- the extent to which organisations engage their audiences, participants or customers
- their commitment to clear strategies for inclusion, education and life long learning
- evidence that they have robust mechanisms for evaluating the success of their work

Our survey of revenue funded organisations for 2008/09 showed that across this funding programme alone, around 2.8 million attendances were made to participatory activities during the year (of which just over 761,000 were to activities specifically targeted at children and young people).

A significant amount of our funding that year was targeted on Communities First areas: capital projects to the value of £1,008,250; projects funded through the Lottery totalling £722,870; and, grant-in-aid funding of £7,968,054.

Other partners include Government (both the Welsh Assembly Government and agencies of the UK Government). For example:

- We're one of the national sponsors of the Welsh Assembly Government's Convergence funded *Reach the Heights* project. The total value of our programme within *Reach the Heights* is £10.75m to the end of 2013. We're supporting 41 projects delivering arts based training to work with young people identified as not in education, employment or training (NEET) or in danger of becoming so. We aim to have reached some 15,000 young people by the end of December 2013
- We're working with the Youth Justice Board to deliver *Splash Arts Cymru* a programme of arts activities for youth inclusion programmes and Youth Offending teams to deliver arts activities primarily during holiday times



Finally, we work directly with local communities themselves as partners in developing and promoting activity. For example, our *Night Out* community touring scheme In 2009/10 supported 589 events in small local venues across Wales, 168 of them in Communities First areas. 352 local promoters were used across 388 Venues, with over 36,500 people attending performances booked through the scheme.

2. Yes, we would like to see local authorities' support for the arts formalised through a Measure using the Cultural Duty LCO.

We're very sensitive to the significant pressures being faced by local authorities and are wary of adding to their already significant workloads. However, we believe that the scale and range of arts activity supported through local authorities strengthens the case for a Cultural Duty.

Legislating by Assembly Measure would ensure that the arts had proper visibility within local authorities and were treated consistently. It would also highlight the contribution that the arts make to cross-cutting agendas such as education, health, social inclusion, regeneration and cultural tourism. It would make it more likely that the planning of services would be approached in a coherent, planned fashion. This, we believe, would achieve more effective delivery.

3. Our funding for Tŷ Cerdd and the future of community based music across Wales are two related, but separate, issues. Our investment in Tŷ Cerdd is not synonymous with our support for community music. For example, we also invest in two national music development organisations – trac and Community Music Wales – both of which have extensive programmes of community music activity. And music organisations such as BBC National Orchestra of Wales and Welsh National Opera also have well-established programmes of community activity.

The Arts Council provides some £375,000 of annual revenue funding to Tŷ Cerdd. Of this, Tŷ Cerdd usually 're-grants' around £110,000 to amateur/community music groups. The precise allocation of these funds is a matter for Tŷ Cerdd. However, we've made it clear that we'd strongly support the continued support of the amateur/community music sector.

Tŷ Cerdd is a complex organisation whose work stretches across a range of activities. These activities include the joint management (with WJEC) of National Youth Arts Wales, commissioning of music and educational resources, a recording studio, the provision of free concerts, and management of the Welsh Assembly Government *Healthy Sounds* initiative. Tŷ Cerdd is also developing a major new resource for the promotion of Welsh composers.

There is already a commitment to look again at some aspects of Tŷ Cerdd's work (for example the current joint arrangement with WJEC for the management of National Youth Arts Wales). We firmly believe that there are a variety of ways that we can help Tŷ Cerdd to develop, protect investment in 'front-line' activities (such as the support to community groups) and achieve some efficiency savings. It will require imagination and disciplined planning, but it is possible.

4. The benefits that we see from strategic investment in communities – improved self-confidence, esteem, aspirations, personal development, and social cohesion – are the outcomes of our investment rather than criteria. 'Public engagement' is, however, one of our criteria for potential support, and we look to arts organisations to offer persuasive evidence that they have devised and planned their work in such a way as to achieve the outcomes listed above.

We take a differential approach depending on the nature of the activity that we're investing in. For example, a large number of amateurs and volunteers take part in the arts for recreational or social reasons. There's nothing wrong with this. These are entirely legitimate reasons for taking part in the arts, and we'd be the first to endorse this particular type of engagement. We do, however, work hard to seek out – and support – the very best in community arts activity. Work that actively reaches out and engages people; work which empowers and connects; work which is unique, authentic and life-affirming; work which at its best is genuinely transformational.



We expect all of our revenue funded organisations to engage with their communities. However, we also invest in a network of 13 'expert' community arts organisations (3 in North Wales, 4 in Mid and West, and 6 in South Wales). These are acknowledged leaders in the 'front-line' delivery of community arts, and will be a priority for future support.

It's also why we're focusing revenue support on organisations that help deliver front-line, direct arts activity (such as Tŷ Cerdd, Community Music Wales and Disability Arts Wales), rather than agency/service organisations (such as Voluntary Arts Network and Audiences Wales).

5. Evidence has shown us that the best results are achieved when we're able to address organisations' capital and revenue needs in an integrated, coherent way. Having high quality, 'fit for purpose' facilities make it easier for organisations to offer a wider range of activities. This is more attractive to potential audiences and participants. However, it's equally important that organisations have the right level of revenue support to ensure that the benefits that have been achieved through capital investment are fully realised. (It's no good have a wonderfully refurbished building if there's not enough money to programme it.) This has been the fundamental principle underpinning our Investment Review. And it's why it's essential that our proposals for re-investment are not undermined by future funding cuts.

We also work with our revenue funded organisations to help develop their business capability. We've offered assistance with better governance, business planning, fundraising and marketing. This type of assistance will continue to be a feature of our future work.

If you have any further queries, or you'd like more information about an aspect of our work, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,
Nick

Nick Capaldi
Chief Executive/Prif Weithredwr

