



Ein cyf/Our ref: MA - P/DET/2629/18

Phil George - Chair of the Arts Council of Wales  
Kate North - Chair of Literature Wales  
M Wynn Thomas - Chair of the Welsh Books Council

10 October 2018

Dear Phil, Kate and Wynn

I am writing in relation to the independent review of support for publishing and literature in Wales.

The Welsh Government has considered the Panel's report as well as views from stakeholders following its publication and the findings of the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee.

Excellent work is already being undertaken by your organisations and across the sector and this is something I have witnessed first-hand since becoming Minister. This includes the London Book Fair, which demonstrated the excellent partnership working between a number of bodies that ensured Wales' significant and effective presence at the Fair.

I have some brief observations to make in response to the specific recommendations in the report suggesting changes in the way support is currently administered.

### **Wales Book of the Year**

Since becoming Minister I have had the pleasure of attending, and presenting awards at, two Wales Book of the Year ceremonies. I appreciate the importance of the Awards in raising awareness of the industry and the writing talent in Wales.

Literature Wales should remain the lead organisation for Wales Book of the Year at present. However, I expect a closer and more strategic partnership with the Welsh Books Council and other stakeholders in future, both in the Awards themselves and work throughout the year to capitalise on them. Literature Wales should set out annually a plan for the Awards that acknowledges and acts upon concerns and suggestions from the Welsh Books Council and other stakeholders, on issues such as timing, branding, marketing and commercial impact. These developments will further strengthen the Wales Book of the Year brand in the marketplace.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:

[Gohebiaeth.Dafydd.Elis-Thomas@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Dafydd.Elis-Thomas@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Dafydd.Elis-Thomas@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Dafydd.Elis-Thomas@gov.wales)

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

## **Bursaries**

I acknowledge the separate, good work already being done by Literature Wales and the Welsh Books Council via the awarding of bursaries, but there is a need now to bring this activity together. To ensure that all bursaries for writers in Wales are targeted effectively and delivered in a consistent manner, a unified strategy for writers' bursaries should be agreed, by both organisations and their sponsor bodies.

This should set out a coordinated approach to the delivery of a broad programme of bursary support, strategically designed to maximise benefits at the various stages of writer development and across the sector as a whole. Bursaries linked to commercial activity and those allocated purely for developmental purposes are both valuable when targeted effectively; therefore the best and most appropriate use of different types of bursaries should be agreed and set out as part of the unified strategy. To be clear, I am not mandating that the delivery of all bursaries should move to a single organisation - although that is an option the stakeholder organisations could explore.

We will convene a working group with the Arts Council of Wales, Literature Wales and the Welsh Books Council to take this strategy forward. This will consider the structure, aims, funding and implementation of a more strategic and impactful programme of bursaries for writers in Wales; it will also set out a timescale for the unified strategy to be agreed and implemented. Other parties may be asked to contribute to the group's work as needed.

As a first step, the working group will identify improvements that can be delivered now, by maximising the collaboration possible within existing arrangements. This might, for example, include the creation of a single grants panel, comprising Literature Wales, the Welsh Books Council and an independent member, responsible for decisions on all bursary applications via their existing schemes.

## **Writers on Tour**

Literature Wales should remain the lead organisation for Writers on Tour, but two changes to current delivery are required. Literature Wales should cover reasonable travel and subsistence costs for authors, in line with usual public sector rates. The Welsh Government and the Arts Council of Wales should consider whether a small budget increase for Writers on Tour is required to facilitate this.

Writers on Tour must become financially viable for writers, to increase participation. This would then deliver greater impacts across relevant Welsh Government policy areas. With this in mind, Literature Wales should provide a reasonable opportunity for writers to sell books at the end of these events, inviting the Welsh Books Council to support writers in doing so, as required.

## **Children and Young People / Literary Events**

There should be no transfer of functions or funding in relation to children and young people and literary events, given the complex mix of grant in aid and Lottery funding which currently underpins much of the delivery activity in these areas. However, this is conditional upon Literature Wales and the Welsh Books Council discussing current arrangements and agreeing how support can be delivered more collaboratively in future.

The Welsh Government will take on board the recommendations addressed specifically to Welsh Ministers. We will discuss these recommendations further, as appropriate - with you as the relevant stakeholder organisations and with the wider sector.

I also expect you to respond to the specific recommendations provided for your individual consideration. The Welsh Government stands ready to engage with you as you develop practical responses to these recommendations, and to consider how it might assist where required, in its capacity as a sponsoring body. Regular reports on progress will be expected from you as part of existing arrangements.

I now expect you to work together more collaboratively, in genuine partnership and with mutual respect, to ensure the sector goes from strength to strength and delivers even more for people across Wales. I look forward to our continued close working as we all move forward.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'I. Elis-Thomas'.

**Yr Arglwydd Elis-Thomas AC/AM**  
Y Gweinidog Diwylliant, Twristiaeth a Chwaraeon  
Minister for Culture, Tourism and Sport