

Dawn Bowden AS/MS
Dirprwy Weinidog y Celfyddydau, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth
Deputy Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Dafydd Rhys
Chief Executive
Arts Council of Wales

Peter Holt
Interim Chief Operating Officer and Interim Accounting Officer
Amgueddfa Cymru

Pedr ap Llwyd
Chief Executive and Librarian
National Library of Wales

CC: Maggie Russell, Chair of Arts Council of Wales, Carol Bell, Chair of Amgueddfa Cymru, and Ashok Ahir, Chair of National Library of Wales

24 May 2023

Dear Mr Rhys, Mr Holt and Mr ap Llwyd,

The development of the National Contemporary Art Gallery of Wales (NCAGW) is a key commitment in both the Programme for Government and the Co-operation Agreement with Plaid Cymru and is included in each of your respective Remit Letters. It represents a significant investment in the Arts in Wales. I therefore wish to express my disappointment in the lack of progress being made, including particularly the development of the dispersed model. I am concerned with the recent progress reports, the financial position reported at the end of 2022-23 financial year and that this project does not appear to yet be integrated as core business within your respective organisations.

During our recent bilateral meeting with senior representatives of each of the project partners I have been provided with clear assurances that good progress was being made with this project. It was therefore very disappointing to be informed on 17 March 2023, very late in the financial year, of a delay in delivery and a resulting underspend in grant resources allocated to this project from resources identified to support the Co-operation Agreement.

In order to address these issues and prevent any future instances, I have asked my officials to set in place closer monitoring of delivery of this project outside of the current governance structure and have also asked for clear next steps to be developed and agreed to increase momentum. I understand that further meetings have recently taken place to discuss these issues including a meeting with the chief officers of each of the three partner organisations to agree the next steps.

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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.

I have also asked officials to arrange a workshop, with the dual aims of resetting the project, to get this back on track and ensure greater accountability and ownership by the three lead partners.

Attached to this letter are the actions that have recently been agreed between my officials and the three partner organisations. I would expect an increased engagement and oversight from you as partners moving forward, I would welcome a report on the outcome of the workshop by 5 June 2023. I look forward to the positive progress being made on this exciting and important project in the near future with the dispersed model being fully operation by the start of April 2025 and the model being supported as part of business as usual for the three collaborating organisations.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dawn Bowden', with a stylized, cursive script.

Dawn Bowden AS/MS

Dirprwy Weinidog y Celfyddydau a Chwaraeon, a'r Prif Chwip
Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport, and Chief Whip

Doc 1 – List of All Priority Actions for NCAGW

- 1) Participate in workshop resetting project described above (further details are provided below).
- 2) Regular catch ups between the Welsh Government, Chief Officers of the three partner organisations and Independent Chair.
- 3) Monthly meetings between Culture Team and senior project operational leads
- 4) Representatives from the three partner organisation's boards at the Project Board, to ensure that the respective boards were sighted and had oversight.
- 5) Identification of opportunities to embed this activity as business as usual within the organisations (especially for activity that has moved from project to established/live activity e.g. digital portal/website).
- 6) Appoint the Project Director and Creative Director.
- 7) Appoint the Independent Chair, new and independent members/trustees for the project board.
- 8) Agree a 'come into work' date, for the Project Director and during their notice period. – ideally in May.

Workshop

- Attend and report back from a workshop Involving the Project Chair, Project Director and members of current Project Board. The purpose of the workshop will be to reset the project and create a PID type document which will
 - Reaffirm objectives.
 - Identify workstreams and leads.
 - Identify key tasks and resources for delivering each task.
 - Identify key risks, interdependencies etc.
 - Set key milestones -identifying phasing for opening of galleries.
 - Funding and accounting for the project
 - Identify key stakeholders and how to interact.
 - Determine admin resources to support e.g. a PMO type who will be able to ensure that the project continues to work at pace.