

Nick Capaldi

Chief Executive

Arts Council for Wales

13 January 2020

Dear Nick,

I write in response to the Arts Council's Investment Review 2020. The Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee's report into the role of arts and culture in addressing poverty (Count me in!) made several recommendations that are pertinent to this review, namely:

- The Arts Council of Wales should ensure that all members of Arts Portfolio Wales (its revenue-funded organisations) work with the different communities they serve to design their programme of activities.
- The Welsh Government, via the Arts Council for Wales, should require all arts and cultural bodies in receipt of public funding to set out their objectives for tackling poverty and social exclusion in their strategic plans. Those in receipt of funding should also set out how they intend to co-design creative activities and content with these target audiences.

I welcome the positive way that the Arts Council contributed to and responded to this piece of work, and that in your response to the report the Arts Council agrees with both of these recommendations. I would therefore like to see these messages embedded in the investment review documentation, including the Planning Guidance.

As a general point, the Committee would like to see arts organisations who are embedded within their communities, and work with them to co-design their activities, being foregrounded in this review. This view is supported by the evidence we took during the culture and poverty inquiry, which showed how organisations that work with local communities from the outset are

more likely to engage successfully with these communities in terms of both attendance and participation in artistic activities. Such engagement can have a transformative impact, including on people in poverty: either helping to lift them out of poverty, or ameliorating its impact. You say in the draft Planning Guidance, that “reaching out to new audiences is the key headline of this Investment Review”, and we think that early engagement with local communities is a fundamental way of making this happen.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your productive engagement with the Committee’s work in 2019, and wish you every success in the New Year.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bethan Sayed".

Bethan Sayed

**Chair of the Committee**

Tuesday 14 January 2020

Bethan Sayeed AM  
Chair  
Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
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*Dew Bethan*

### Investment Review 2020

Thank you for your letter of 13 January on the above. I'm very grateful to you for taking the time to write to us on this matter.

We've studied carefully the Committee's recent report "Count Me In!" I'm pleased that you feel we have contributed positively to your work around tackling poverty and social exclusion. We agree with you that these are important issues which need more attention if the arts sector collectively is to provide more opportunities for a wider cross-section of the Welsh public to enjoy and take part in the arts.

This will certainly be a key issue for our forthcoming Investment Review, and your comments are well-timed to influence the final version of our Planning Guidance. I suspect that there will be little doubt that my Council will want to respond to your suggestions and will ensure that the importance of these issues is well-understood by those applying to us for future support.

Finally, thank you for your kind comments on our engagement with the Committee's work during 2019. The Committee chooses important issues to examine and in doing so provides an important public forum for the discussion of the arts and cultural matters of the moment. You can rely on our continuing interest and involvement in the Committee's work.

*Yours sincerely  
Nick Capaldi*

Nick Capaldi  
Chief Executive

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Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg, ni fydd gohebu drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.  
We welcome correspondences in Welsh and English, corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay.