



Ein cyf/Our ref DB/00425/23

Ashok Ahir
President
National Library of Wales

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17 July 2023

Dear Ashok

Thank you for your letter dated 29 June regarding the National Library of Wales' framework agreement and its quarterly monitoring meetings with my officials.

I appreciate that there has been a delay in updating your framework agreement. This is due to wider Welsh Government reviews being undertaken over the past year which may directly impact the wording of any future agreement document. This includes the Director of Propriety and Ethics' review of Chartered Bodies to which the Library has contributed, and officials are now considering its content. Officials in the Public Bodies Unit have also recently undertaken a review of core governance documentation to refresh and update it. This includes updating the model framework document which helps bring consistency in the arrangements between Welsh Government and its arms-length bodies.

The report of Amgueddfa Cymru's Tailored Review Panel was also published on 13 July. The Panel has recommended that the Museum's framework document is replaced with a partnership agreement. This suggested change may be of interest to the Library and I have asked my officials to explore this in more detail.

You may also be aware that there have been substantial resourcing pressures in our partnership team. I am pleased that from September we will be back to a fully resourced team. That would therefore be an appropriate time for us to review all the framework agreements in my portfolio, and ensure that the recommendations from the relevant reviews are incorporated. Until a new framework or partnership agreement is agreed, the existing one is still in place and should be followed accordingly.

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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 acknowledge the second matter that you raise and your concern that, up until recently, the Library had not had a full quarterly monitoring meeting since September 2022, although our officials have met regularly especially on important issues. I understand from officials that there are a variety of reasons why meetings were postponed, including often at the request of Library officials. New dates were then hard to find due to the availability of key members of staff at both the Library and Welsh Government, especially at short notice. I have been assured by officials that, following a recent meeting held on 6 July, the monitoring arrangements are back on track and dates for monitoring meetings for the remainder of the 2023/24 financial year have been agreed. Processes are also being reviewed to ensure that the planning arrangements for these meetings are as effective as possible going forward. It would be helpful if Library officials could ensure that meetings go ahead, even if key documentation or personnel, e.g. from the finance directorate, are not available.

I trust that you will find my response to your concerns helpful.

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, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth
Deputy Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism