

National Assembly for Wales
Communities and Culture Committee

Promoting Welsh Arts and Culture on the
World Stage

Inquiry report
July 2009



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Committee Membership



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(Chair)
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Ogmore



Eleanor Burnham
Welsh Liberal Democrats
North Wales



Alun Cairns
Welsh Conservative Party
South Wales West



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Plaid Cymru
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Joyce Watson
Labour
Mid and West Wales

Eleanor Burnham replaced Peter Black on the Committee on 13 January 2009.

Alun Cairns replaced Paul Davies on the Committee on 3rd March 2009.

Bethan Jenkins replaced Nerys Evans on the Committee on 11 February 2009.

Chair's Foreword

"No culture can live if it attempts to be exclusive."



Wales has a great deal to celebrate in its arts and culture, and in this inquiry I have been greatly impressed by the dedication of artists who inspire us with their work. The promotion of Wales' arts and culture has the potential to help us to build bridges and forge relationships with people from all over the world, creating new opportunities for trade and business, and for learning from one another's countries and cultures.

I believe a strategic, easily communicated plan is particularly important in the current economic climate, because it will enable existing resources to be better focussed on achieving better results. Wales hosts, and is involved in, events that have the potential to promote its arts and culture to millions of people internationally, including the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod, Brecon Jazz, the National Eisteddfod, the Hay Literary Festival, the Faenol Festival, Artes Mundi, the Venice Biennale and the Smithsonian Folklife Festival to name but a few. It is critical that we utilise such opportunities, and provide Wales' artists with the support they need to promote our country to best effect.

I am therefore encouraged that the Welsh Government is taking the promotion of culture seriously, and has recently proposed a legislative competence order on culture and other fields, which could lead to a responsibility on local authorities to promote culture. However, such action needs to be taken forward in combination with the development of a clear strategic plan for promoting Wales' arts and culture more broadly, if it is to be effective.

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to offer my thanks to all those individuals and organisations who gave us the benefit of their experience and advice in formal committee meetings, during visits, or by responding to our call for evidence. I would also like to thank members of the Communities and Culture Committee for their strong commitment to this inquiry.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janice Gregory". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Janice Gregory
Communities and Culture Committee

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation 1

We recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government (hereafter referred to as the Welsh Government) refreshes its strategic framework to promote Wales on the international stage

Recommendation 2

We recommend that the Welsh Government provide a firm commitment to expediting the new culture strategy

Recommendation 3

We recommend that the Welsh Government develop wales.com to become the definitive internet site that people consult on Wales providing comprehensive information and taking the opportunity to promote a multitude of topics including business, investment, arts, culture and tourism, all with consistent and recognisable branding

Recommendation 4

We recommend that the Welsh Government, Arts Council of Wales and Wales Arts International collaborate to take maximum advantage of available funding (including European funding) to support Welsh arts and culture abroad

Recommendation 5

We recommend that the Welsh Government, Arts Council of Wales and Wales Arts International explore how public patronage of the arts could be better encouraged and supported

Recommendation 6

We recommend that the Welsh Government produce a detailed action plan linked to its strategic framework to identify specific opportunities such as those created by touring Welsh arts companies and individuals, to create international links and promote Wales abroad, articulating how working together, each Welsh Government department and relevant public organisations in Wales will contribute in strategy, delivery and review. In doing so it should liaise with universities to examine and learn from their experiences of engaging internationally

Recommendation 7

We recommend that the Welsh Government considers how the provision of art regionally and locally, as well as across the whole of Wales, can contribute to Wales's international cultural presence nationally, explicitly in its preparatory and consultation work in developing its new culture strategy and proposed Legislative Competence Order on Culture and other fields.

Recommendation 8

We have recommended greater co-ordination of effort between our cultural departments and agencies, and consider that this should extend to the work of our literary agencies. We also recommend that capacity should be built between our agencies to enable a Wales centre for translation.

Recommendation 9

We recommend that the Welsh Government takes into consideration the financial constraints and other barriers faced by artists in consulting on the new cultural strategy.

Recommendation 10

We recommend that the Arts Council of Wales and Wales Arts International explore how they might improve the proactive marketing of their services to engage arts practitioners at the coal face.

Recommendation 11

We recommend that Wales Arts International provides, and markets, a support service aimed at providing advice, and diplomatic assistance to help artists address the practical difficulties of taking their work abroad.

Introduction

1. The Communities and Culture Committee agreed terms of reference for conducting an inquiry into the *'Promotion of Welsh Arts and Culture on the World Stage'* at its meeting of 19 November 2008.
2. The Committee took oral evidence in this inquiry in meetings between 3 December 2008 and 26 February 2009, along with written evidence. In this process we took from a wide range of witnesses, including the Welsh Government's Minister for Heritage, representatives of government sponsored bodies, academic experts, informed observers and practitioners of arts and culture. We are very grateful to all our witnesses for contributing to this inquiry.

Terms of reference

3. On 19 November 2008, we agreed to review:
 - The Welsh Government's over-arching policy, strategies and associated action plans to promote Welsh Arts and Culture abroad; how Welsh Ministers and Departments collaborate and coordinate; and how success is measured.
 - The different arts and culture strategies operating in Wales, including the work of the British Council and other UK-wide strategies applicable to Wales, and how they are coordinated and funding allocated
 - The opportunities available for people to take part in and access Welsh Arts on the World stage.
4. Specifically, the Committee sought answers to the following questions:
 - How are the Welsh Government's national strategies on promoting arts and culture on the world stage being delivered and coordinated?
 - What are the top priorities of the Welsh Government and the British Council on promoting Welsh arts and culture internationally: i.e. where are efforts and funds being focused to maximise impact?
 - Is there enough research into unique/growth areas in Welsh arts and culture? How are these being supported? Is the current balance correct?
 - How is the Welsh Government ensuring that efforts to promote arts and culture internationally are coordinated between Ministerial and Department portfolios (for example in the fields of education and skills, economic development, tourism, heritage, arts and culture, international cultural relations, European and external affairs)?
 - The Welsh Government is currently working on developing a statutory cultural duty on Welsh local authorities. How might this fit with the promotion of Welsh arts and culture internationally?

- Are the outcomes of funding and promotional work being measured and evaluated adequately to ensure value for money for the public purse?
- How effective are partnership arrangements between arts and culture bodies, such as the British Council and the Welsh Government, in supporting an over-arching strategy?
- How successful are local arts and culture bodies in promoting their work on the world stage and how are they being supported to do this?
- How do the Welsh Government's policies and strategies fit with those of the UK Department for Culture, Media and Sport, such as their efforts to make the UK a 'global creative hub', particularly in the context of the Cultural Olympiad 2012?
- How is equality of opportunity taken into account in the promotion of Welsh arts and culture internationally?

What is the 'world stage'?

5. The majority of our witnesses saw the 'world stage' as the 'world outside Wales' including the rest of the United Kingdom. We considered that this made sense as Wales is culturally distinct from its neighbours and devolution has enabled our distinct voice to be emboldened through the application of policy tailored to our needs. We heard from touring companies that regularly work across UK borders such as Wales National Opera, Nofit State Circus and Volcano Theatre. These organisations saw cross border working as an important part of their role in raising the profile of their work within the home countries and internationally as well as being an indicator of the quality of their work. For example, Nofit State Circus commented that:

*"...for most companies success on an international stage is one of the clearest indications of the quality of work created."*¹

What are 'arts and culture'?

6. In our inquiry we have not sought to set a rigid limit on our understanding of the term 'arts and culture,' but rather have sought contributions from a wide range of stakeholders that contribute to the arts and culture of Wales, including visual artists, performing arts, broadcasting, academia, as well as the public bodies responsible for supporting arts and culture. The following section details background information on some of these stakeholders.

¹ Nofit State Circus – written evidence to Committee

Background information on bodies contributing to the development of arts and culture in Wales

7. There is a complex mix of bodies that are responsible for and contribute to the development and sustenance of arts and culture in Wales. This section sets out who the main bodies are. These bodies can be broadly categorised as ‘government or government sponsored bodies,’ ‘informed observers’ and ‘practitioners.’

- **Government and government sponsored bodies**

The Welsh Government

8. Welsh culture and heritage are the responsibility of the Welsh Government. It delegates some of this responsibility to various Assembly Government Sponsored Bodies (AGSBs) including: the Arts Council of Wales, the National Library of Wales, and National Museum Wales. Further delegation occurs from the Arts Council of Wales to Wales Arts International in conjunction with the British Council to promote Welsh arts and culture abroad.

9. At the highest level the Welsh Government’s One Wales coalition agreement makes it clear that culture is a central and cross-cutting theme, stating that:

“Promoting the importance of a rich and diverse culture lies at the heart of the One Wales programme for government.”²

10. One Wales also commits the Welsh Government to raise the international profile of Wales and make Wales a location of choice for people to live, work, study, visit and do business.

11. Much of the funding to support the development and safeguarding of Welsh arts and culture originates from the Welsh Government and flows through the AGSBs which are individually charged with contributing to delivering the One Wales commitments and responsible for delivering different aspects of arts and culture development and providing the necessary expertise to do this.

12. The First Minister’s Department is responsible for ‘putting Wales on the map’. The European and External Affairs Division oversees this and the coordination with other relevant government departments including the Department for Economy and Transport responsible for International Business Wales and the Heritage Department’s Visit Wales activity. In addition to this the Welsh Government has a culture strategy, published in 2002 and currently being reviewed.

² Welsh Assembly Government written evidence

The Arts Council of Wales

13. The Arts Council of Wales is a Royal Charter body and registered charity as well as an AGSB with the strategic priorities to: promote the arts; implement the Stephens Report³; development of theatre and examining future funding models and actively investigating European funding opportunities.⁴

14. The Arts Council of Wales seeks to develop and improve understanding and practice in the arts and to promote the accessibility of the arts to the public of Wales.

British Council

15. The British Council is the UK's international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations. It is an executive non-departmental public body (NDPB), a public corporation (in accounting terms) and a charity. Its purpose is to build engagement and trust for the UK through the exchange of knowledge and ideas between people worldwide. It has three programme areas of central importance to the international interests of the UK: intercultural dialogue, especially with countries and communities where the UK is less trusted; supporting the UK's creative and knowledge economy; and highlighting the case for tackling climate change.

16. The British Council receives expert advice from three National Committees (for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) and three Sector Advisory Groups for education and governance, English, science and engineering. It also has an Arts Group consisting of a team whose task is 'to mobilise the best of British creative talent to develop innovative programmes that will engage with thousands of people all over the world, drawing them into a closer relationship with the UK'.⁵

17. The British Council has responsibilities in a wide range of areas, including music, drama, dance, visual arts, design, architecture, film, literature, new media, museums management and the creative economy. Multi-disciplinary arts specialists are based in offices in Cardiff, Edinburgh and Belfast. Unlike the UK's Arts Councils, it is not an arts funding organisation; rather it aims to:

“use the arts to respond to the UK's international strategic and geographical priorities by promoting the debate of issues and ideas, challenging opinions and increasing understanding between cultures.”⁶

³ The Stephens report, titled *A Dual Key Approach to the Strategic Development of the Arts in Wales* was published on 29 November 2006 and was endorsed by the Assembly in December 2006. It detailed the findings of an independent review panel tasked with examining: the existing and future role of the Arts Council in relation to funding the arts (including the National Arts Organisations), developing the arts, and developing access to and inclusion in the Arts in order to help reduce social inequalities; the roles of the Arts Council and the Welsh Government in the future; and the way in which arts are funded in other countries, both as to the level and mechanisms, which may be relevant in the Welsh context.

⁴ Welsh Assembly Government – Arts Council of Wales remit letter 25.03.08 -

[http://www.artswales.org.uk/publications/ACW%20Remit%20Letter%202008-09%20\(25.03.08\).pdf](http://www.artswales.org.uk/publications/ACW%20Remit%20Letter%202008-09%20(25.03.08).pdf)

⁵ British Council website: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/arts-about-us-what.htm>

⁶ British Council website: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/arts-about-us-what.htm>

Wales Arts International

18. Wales Arts International was established in 1997 as a strategic partnership between the Arts Council of Wales and the British Council.⁷ In practice this means a sharing of financial and human resources between the Arts Council of Wales and the British Council. It works to promote knowledge about contemporary culture from Wales and encourage international exchange and collaboration.

Much of the Arts Council of Wales' direct international activity is located within Wales Arts International's programme.

19. Wales Arts International's principal objectives are to:

- Help develop and support collaborative international opportunities for individual artists and arts/cultural organisations in Wales
- Encourage international programming by presenters and promoters in Wales
- Ensure that Wales has a high profile within the British Council and its offices overseas
- Enhance involvement by practitioners in Wales in international networks and initiatives⁸

National Museum Wales

20. National Museum Wales is a Royal Charter body and registered charity as well as an AGSB with key strategic objectives to make the museum's collections widely accessible throughout Wales and develop the UK national and international profile of the museum's collections and research activities.⁹

National Library of Wales

21. The National Library of Wales is a Royal Charter body and registered charity as well as an AGSB. The Welsh Government has asked the Library to:

- develop and implement policies and strategies to reflect and respond to library users' requirements in the 21st century; grow its audience;
- take information to the user through digitisation;
- maintain user access;
- work closely with other relevant bodies such as the National Museum
- and make the most of the Library's resources.¹⁰

Local government

22. Local government includes the 22 local authorities in Wales, represented by the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGAs), who commented that:

"Local authorities deliver arts provision locally as a discretionary service and aim to provide citizens with diverse, quality opportunities"

⁷ Creating 2013 – Wales Arts International's 5 year strategy

⁸ Wales Arts International website: <http://www.wai.org.uk>

⁹ Welsh Assembly Government – National Museum Wales remit letter – 25.03.08

¹⁰ Welsh Assembly Government – National Library of Wales remit letter – 31.03.08

to participate in arts activities, develop artistic and cultural skills, and to experience and enjoy a range of art and cultural events locally.”¹¹

23. The Welsh Local Government also noted that whilst there was currently no statutory cultural duty on local authorities, they recognised the benefits of arts and culture, and the role they can play in promoting them.

- **Informed observers**

24. Informed observers include those stakeholders with an interest in the arts and culture in Wales such as news providers, consultants, broadcasters and universities.

- **Practitioners**

25. Practitioners include the many artists and bodies that positively contribute to the Welsh arts, culture and heritage. During the course of this inquiry we have heard from a wide range of practitioners including theatre companies, opera companies and visual artists. Many of these practitioners receive government funding via an appropriate AGSB funding programme.

¹¹ Welsh Local Government Association, written evidence, http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-third1/bus-committees-third-ccc-home/cc_inquiries/nafw_arts-home/nafwcc_3_arts/nafw_cc3-arts-written_responses/nafw_cc3-arts-16.htm

The Legislative Context

26. Broadly speaking, 'Culture' is a devolved responsibility of the Welsh Government.

27. By virtue of the *Government of Wales Act 2006*, the Welsh Government has the power to seek legislative competence for the National Assembly to make new laws, known as Measures, in relation to a range of subjects, including Culture.

28. In conducting its inquiry, the Committee was aware of the Welsh Government's intention to propose a legislative competence order in relation to 'Culture.'

29. A proposed Legislative Competence Order on Culture and other fields was laid in the National Assembly for Wales on 15 June 2009, by The Minister for Heritage. Laying the proposed Order, the Minister noted that:

"At present the Culture Field (3) and associated Field 2 (ancient monuments and historic buildings) of Part 1 of Schedule 5 to the Government of Wales Act 2006 are empty. However, this Legislative Competence Order provides a way of starting to fill these voids.

The proposed Order, if approved, would give the Assembly the power, through a Measure, to implement the 'One Wales' commitment to place a statutory obligation on local authorities to promote culture and encourage partnership to deliver high quality cultural experiences for their communities.

The competence is concerned with the cultural functions of local authorities and is specifically linked to three elements of local authority cultural provision namely, 'support', 'improvement' and 'promotion'. In this way the competence will fully enable the policy aim of the One Wales commitment to be achieved through for instance such local authority functions as planning, consultation, collaboration/co-operation, financial or other support, promotion etc.

"The competence extends into Fields 2 (ancient monuments and historic buildings) and 16 (sport and recreation), in addition to Field (culture), so that the full range of all the cultural activities and services provided by local authorities across Wales are within the scope of the power."¹²

30. The later section on "Local authorities and working across the whole of Wales" shows the potential impact of a statutory duty compared with the current discretionary power, and this is expanded upon in the Government's Explanatory Memorandum in relation to the proposed LCO. Nevertheless, the process of seeking legislative competence through an LCO, followed by the

¹² Minister for Heritage, Written Cabinet Statement, Legislative Competence Order on Culture and other fields, 15.06.09.

drafting of, consultation upon, and legislative scrutiny of a future Measure can be a protracted one.

31. It is therefore worth quoting in full the provisions of section 61 of the Government of Wales Act 2006 –

“Support of culture etc.

The Welsh Ministers may do anything which they consider appropriate to support—

- (a) archaeological remains in Wales,
- (b) ancient monuments in Wales,
- (c) buildings and places of historical or architectural interest in Wales,
- (d) historic wrecks in Wales,
- (e) arts and crafts relating to Wales,
- (f) museums and galleries in Wales,
- (g) libraries in Wales,
- (h) archives and historical records relating to Wales,
- (i) cultural activities and projects relating to Wales,
- (j) sport and recreational activities relating to Wales, and
- (k) the Welsh language.”

32. These very extensive enabling powers would be sufficient to enable the Government to implement most of the recommendations of this report. The only exceptions would be legislative changes such as those proposed by the Government in relation to local authorities, or anything that ran counter to the Charters of the National Library, the National Museum or the Arts Council.

Analysis of the evidence

33. We considered that six key issues emerged in the course of our inquiry, which were:

1. The need for a strategic approach
2. The need for funding and support
3. The need for partnership working
4. The role of local authorities and working across the whole of Wales
5. The role of publishing
6. Barriers and support for arts practitioners

34. Each key issue has been considered in a specific section of this report. Each section analyses the evidence provided by the three main groups of contributors to this inquiry:

- government and government sponsored bodies,
- informed observers,
- practitioners.¹³

35. On the basis of this analyses, we have provided a set of evidence-based recommendations to the Welsh Government and to relevant others. A summary of our recommendations is detailed on page 6 of this report.

36. Two other issues emerged during the course of this inquiry, but we did not have significant evidence on which to base recommendations. These were:

Equality of Opportunity

37. Equality of Opportunity issues did not feature significantly in the evidence we received in this inquiry.

38. We received evidence to indicate that a limited number of witnesses were concerned about the equality of opportunity involved in funding decisions. For example, Ensemble Cymru commented that

“At present classical chamber music production receives no public support and relies on lottery. This does present a challenge to equality of opportunity for this particular art form.”¹⁴

39. David Petersen was also concerned that:

“In the Arts Council’s strategy (until 2013), under the Dance section (p.35), the Vision is that “Two long term revenue funded contemporary dance touring and production companies that currently receive direct funds; To these have been, added further resources to support India Dance Wales.” The Welsh Dance Society will receive nothing. (They have applied for support and continually been refused). So it would appear that the Arts Council supports other cultures much more

¹³ An explanation of these terms is provided in the previous section, ‘Background information on bodies contributing to the development of arts and culture in Wales’.

¹⁴ Ensemble Cymru, written evidence.

readily than Welsh culture. The Arts Council promotes arts and culture IN Wales and not OF Wales.”¹⁵

40. However, this issue was not raised in any of the other submissions of written evidence, or in oral evidence, and evidence was not received from either India Dance Wales or the Welsh Dance Society.

41. We consider that the process for determining funding should be open and transparent, and should promote the principles of equality of opportunity. We also note and support comments previously made by the National Assembly for Wales’ Equality of Opportunity Committee, that Wales:

“boasts a population with a truly cosmopolitan mix of cultures and nationalities... [who have]... helped to redefine what it means to be Welsh, and enriched the culture... of Wales.”¹⁶

42. Indeed, we were encouraged to hear of a significant number of examples of good practice in promoting the principles of Equality of Opportunity. For example, the Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum of Wales stated that

“In its mission to tell ‘Wales about the World; and the World about Wales’, Amgueddfa Cymru has made considerable effort in engaging with the diverse communities of Wales; through the development of the innovative and highly successful Oriel 1 gallery at St Fagans, recent Divali celebrations in November 2008 at National Museum Cardiff and through a Festival of Muslim Cultures in 2006-07.”¹⁷

43. Peter Finnemore also noted that his communication with Wales Arts International (WAI):

“has predominantly been through the Welsh language, it’s important in the future for WAI to continue with this bilingual policy.”¹⁸

44. We consider that the principles of equality of opportunity should continue to be advanced through the Promotion of Welsh Arts and Culture on the World Stage.

The need for effective research and evaluation

45. In written evidence to the Committee, David Petersen commented that:

“As far as I have experienced it the evaluation of how successful a project has been and if it was value for money has not been dealt with adequately. After the “Year of Wales” in 2002 I was invited to write and submit a de brief report for consideration by the International

¹⁵ Written evidence response from David Petersen, http://www.assemblywales.org/cc_3_-_pwa15_-_david_petersen_-_e.pdf, page 11.

¹⁶ National Assembly for Wales’ Equality of Opportunity Committee, *Issues affecting Migrant Workers in Wales, their families, and the communities in which they live and work*, page 2.

¹⁷ Written evidence, response from Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales.

¹⁸ Paper 7: Written paper from Peter Finnegan, Communities and Culture Meeting of 12 February 2009.

Relations Unit of WAG and I did. In that report I pointed out several mistakes that I hoped would have been learnt from in any future events and wrote at length what I believed had caused these mistakes and how they could be remedied in future. This report was received with some scepticism by the officers involved and I was left in no doubt about their unwillingness to accept or to act upon my comments.”¹⁹

46. However, this issue was not specifically raised in evidence by other witnesses. The Welsh Local Government Association indicated that evaluation of international activity did take place, commenting that:

“Wales Arts International and the Arts Council of Wales have provided detailed updates on their international work during Arts Strategy Board meetings of 2008.”²⁰

47. The Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum of Wales also commented that they:

“have put considerable effort into developing an evaluation framework and our work including events, exhibitions and marketing, is evaluated through this in order to learn and improve for the future.”²¹

48. We consider that evaluation should continue to take place on the effectiveness of efforts towards the Promotion of Welsh Arts and Culture on the World Stage.

¹⁹ David Petersen, Written evidence response, http://www.assemblywales.org/cc_3_-_pwa15_-_david_petersen_-_e.pdf, page 7.

²⁰ WLGA, written evidence response, http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-third1/bus-committees-third-ccc-home/cc_inquiries/nafw_arts-home/nafwcc_3_arts/nafw_cc3-arts-written_responses/nafw_cc3-arts-16.htm

²¹ Written evidence, response from Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales. http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-third1/bus-committees-third-ccc-home/cc_inquiries/nafw_arts-home/nafwcc_3_arts/nafw_cc3-arts-written_responses/nafw_cc_3_arts-35.htm

Key issue 1: The need for a strategic approach

“...we try to take a more corporate strategic approach to promoting Wales. That was reaffirmed in ‘One Wales’ and it continues to be a priority[...] there is not a one size fits all solution to this, so the approach that we are taking to the Smithsonian folk festival, for example, is different from the one that we took to the Lorient festival in Brittany last August which was more about tradition, culture and tourism”²²

49. The Welsh Government’s primary focus on promoting Wales covers Welsh arts and culture. However, ‘Arts and culture’ are not topics that neatly align with departmental portfolios, and consequently these themes are inter-woven through several strategies and delivery plans.

50. The key body which has responsibility for arts and culture in Wales is the Arts Council of Wales which, over the last ten years, has operated in a strategic partnership with the British Council, to form Wales Arts International.²³ The promotion of arts and culture on the world stage falls within the remit of Wales Arts International:

“We wish to transform the opportunities for international artists in Wales, invest in artistic practice and cultural leadership through contacting international and local networks, bring financial investments to the arts and Wales’s creative economy, create relationships with different cultures through the arts, foster international artistic excellence and promote results and international recognition for the arts and culture in Wales”²⁴

51. Witnesses agreed that whilst there are clearly structures in place to promote Welsh arts and culture abroad, the arts and culture landscape is a complex and cluttered one and it is difficult to make sense of it, especially if you are an arts practitioner or company helping to deliver Wales’s aspirations. These people are often left wondering where they fit in this complicated jigsaw of government, AGSBs, priorities and funding programmes. On being asked for a recommendation of how the current situation could be improved, Makers Guild Wales responded with:

“...a more joined up funding structure in which all the funding organisations work as one or pull in the same direction”²⁵

52. Similarly, Nofit State Circus told us that:

“...One of the problems at the moment is that when there is a number of different bodies, each of which has its own very focused remit, it is very difficult for them to step outside their remit when often work activity can fall between remits...and things sometimes do not happen. A greater degree of flexibility and open thinking are required”²⁶

²² Welsh Assembly Government – Gary Davies, Head, European and External Affairs Division – oral evidence 12.02.09

²³ British Council – Kevin Higgins, Director – oral evidence 12.02.09

²⁴ Wales Arts International – Eluned Haf, Director – oral evidence 12.02.09

²⁵ Simon Burgess, Makers Guild Wales – oral evidence 12.2.09

²⁶ Alison Woods, Nofit State Circus – oral evidence 12.2.09

“there is no such strategy...the main benefit would be better coordination between different parts of government and different public organisations within Wales, so that, essentially we are all facing the same way.”³²

60. The Minister cited several events as evidence of the Welsh Government’s successful strategic approach to promoting Welsh arts and culture, including current collaboration between government departments on the forthcoming Smithsonian festival in Washington USA. However, we consider that it is essential to ensure that Wales extracts the maximum benefit from its arts and culture industries and exploits the synergies between arts and culture and the promotion of Wales abroad.

61. We heard evidence that the Smithsonian festival has provided a focus of coordinated activity to promote Wales, but that these efforts should be ongoing:

“Wales is the featured nation of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival which will be a major opportunity for Wales to show itself directly to more than half a million people. That has focused efforts and brought all the different institutions together in a way that has not happened before...So that would be the chief benefit of having an overall strategy; it is not to spend more money – which is not available – but to focus existing money, resources and effort on doing similar things”³³

62. We also received evidence from key stakeholders about how Wales could take advantage of opportunities for international showcasing:

“I am struck by the absence of any clear strategy for using our national arts institutions and organisations to promote Wales on a global stage. The BBC National Orchestra of Wales toured the United States two years ago with the support of the Welsh Assembly Government to use those opportunities to promote Wales...there is an opportunity to use these big national organisations such as the Welsh National Opera, our orchestra, Diversions and the National Theatre of Wales...there is an opportunity to put together a strategy to ensure that wherever they go, some use can be made of those tours and visits to promote Wales. I think that it is in the Netherlands that the touring plans and diaries of national companies are brought together with public support to ensure that wherever they go to tour – whether it is for a trade mission, for tourism purposes or whatever – piggybacking is possible.”³⁴

63. Similarly, Welsh National Opera noted that:

“There is an opportunity, if the Assembly is to have a strategy for Welsh arts on the world stage, to work with whatever companies are performing abroad and to make best use of those opportunities in terms of all the activities that relate to international visits, whether for trade development or developing business relationships. There are all sorts of opportunities around, particularly at the most prestigious and major festivals at major

³² National Library of Wales – Andrew Green, Librarian, oral evidence 26.02.09

³³ National Library of Wales – Andrew Green, Librarian, oral evidence 26.02.09

³⁴ BBC Wales – Menna Richards, Controller, oral evidence 12.02.09

*locations. There must be plenty of opportunities for various government departments to exploit that.*³⁵

64. We agree this would be sensible and would like to see the Welsh Government taking a more strategic approach to promoting arts and culture to create and exploit opportunities for promoting Wales abroad.

Recommendation 1

We recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government (hereafter referred to as the Welsh Government) refreshes its strategic framework to promote Wales on the international stage

Recommendation 2

We recommend that the Welsh Government provide a firm commitment to expediting the new culture strategy.

65. The National Library commented more specifically on Wales's lack of presence on the internet:

*"Wales may be almost invisible in the world, geographically...but that does not mean that Wales has to be invisible in what is increasingly an important way to make an impact – in the virtual world."*³⁶

66. The National Library provided suggestions of how this could be improved³⁷:

- Through improved partnership working – with Welsh Universities, for example, which often have numerous links with foreign countries but which only focus on promoting the educational links
- **By creating a specific internet presence to promote Wales possibly by expanding the existing website www.wales.com, with the aim of:**
 - **attracting, interesting and inspiring people and helping them to learn about Wales**
 - **being fully interactive**
 - **pulling together the vast quantities of information about Wales currently scattered throughout the internet and coordinating information and active links to relevant public**

³⁵ Welsh National Opera – Peter Bellingham, Executive Director, oral evidence 12.02.09

³⁶ National Library of Wales – Andrew Green, Librarian, oral evidence 26.02.09

³⁷ National Library of Wales – Andrew Green, Librarian, oral evidence 26.02.09

bodies as well as private industry to ‘ensure there is one corner of the virtual world that is Wales to the rest of the world’

67. This suggestion was also supported by Academi, who commented that using Wales.com could be a very cost effective way of better representing Wales.³⁸

68. We pointed out to Andrew Green that the branding used by the old Welsh Development Agency used to be a well known and consistent brand, to which he responded:

“...it does not matter what the brand is, in a way – what kind of dragon – the important thing is that there is one image of Wales that is recognised across the world.”³⁹

69. Another aspect of branding for Wales is the introduction of the dotCym domain name. This is a One Wales commitment and was supported by the National Library of Wales as:

“an effective way of capturing people’s attention and ensuring that they realise that there is such an entity as Wales in the virtual world.”⁴⁰

70. We agree with these suggestions and consider they offer the opportunity to actively promote Wales without requiring significant investment.

Recommendation 3

We recommend that the Welsh Government develop wales.com to become the definitive internet site that people consult on Wales providing comprehensive information and taking the opportunity to promote a multitude of topics including business, investment, arts, culture and tourism, all with consistent and recognisable branding

71. Wales’s cultural bodies including (but not exclusively): Visit Wales, National Museum Wales, Arts Council of Wales, Cadw, Sports Council for Wales and the National Library, could be tasked with developing such a coordinated and integrated web-service. Considering the detailed information the National Library of Wales provided in relation to this recommendation, we would expect to see it as a lead partner.

³⁸ RoP, Communities and Culture Committee, 26.02.09, particularly paragraph 65.

³⁹ National Library of Wales – Andrew Green, Librarian, oral evidence 26.02.09

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Key Issue 2: The need for funding and support

72. Key funding support for arts and culture is indirectly provided by the Welsh Government through the Arts Council of Wales:

“Decisions regarding who is to receive support and who is to be chosen are matters for the arts council or whichever body is part of any arrangement. It is certainly not and nor should it be, a matter for politicians, although I greatly desire that power of course, ... In situations such as this one, the only thing that you can wish for is a clear selection process and criteria that have been set out...Once you reach the point of choosing who is to do it and who cannot go you know there will be complaints’⁴¹

73. We note the importance of the ‘arms length’ principle but support the Minister’s assertion that the process must be open and transparent.

74. We received evidence suggesting that Wales Arts International’s (WAI) selection procedures for festival organisers were flawed. However, WAI told us that:

“On the accountability of choices we had set up a system of international consultants through the Arts Council and we have specialists in the sector. That process was an open one, which was advertised so that we could turn to people who knew what they were talking about in the relevant fields. In general, we are establishing an open selection panel for all the projects we are involved in.’⁴²

75. We are satisfied that Wales Arts International is taking an appropriate approach to selecting festival organisers and we also note the importance of applying this openness and transparency when selecting artists to represent Wales abroad.

76. Other sources of direct funding for arts and culture are:

- **National Lottery investment** – some funding of sports facilities has come from lottery investment including the 50m Wales national pool in Swansea, the Wales national velodrome in Newport and the national indoor athletics centre in Cardiff⁴³
- **Public patronage** – offered by individuals and organisations which witnesses commented has partially met the gap in funding for the arts and played an important part in the development of arts in Wales⁴⁴
- **European funding** – The arts have had a significant role in the application of European structural funds within Wales. The Arts

⁴¹ Heritage Minister – oral evidence 29.01.09

⁴² Wales Arts International – Eluned Haf, Director oral evidence 12.02.09

⁴³ Welsh Assembly Government – written evidence

⁴⁴ Glyndwr University – written evidence

Council of Wales highlighted these as a beneficial strand to current plans for Convergence funding and in future programmes⁴⁵

77. Inevitably there are tensions in how funding is distributed between funding large international ventures and supporting smaller grass-roots ventures. NoFit State Circus commented that:

“An individual arts organisation can be very large, have high levels of public funding from the Arts Council of Wales and yet have relatively little international impact at all and be virtually unknown outside of Wales and you can have an individual artist who lives on half a tin of baked beans a week and receives virtually no funding, but has an incredible international profile and reputation.”⁴⁶

78. Volcano Theatre supported the view that smaller bodies should be offered more support:

“...the smaller, innovative, entrepreneurial units are the ones that are generally projecting a modern, contentious contemporary view of Wales...I would recommend that the Assembly Government focus on the smaller, entrepreneurial companies that are flexible, risk-taking and responsive.”⁴⁷

79. The Minister acknowledged to us the frustrations with funding:

“There will be a tension until we have enough money for everyone...You are right that a balance needs to be struck. Almost everyone would say that they do not get enough money to carry out the work they would like to do”⁴⁸

80. While the intention to seek additional funding from Europe was supported by the WLGA:

“The new Convergence programme of European funding for Wales also provides opportunities to work with other regions of Europe, particularly through Interreg projects to develop cultural links and learn from experiences.”⁴⁹

81. We would like to see a strategic approach bringing together the key stakeholders to coordinate and promote Welsh arts and culture on the world stage and seeking to maximise all available funding sources to provide financial support.

Recommendation 4

We recommend that the Welsh Government, Arts Council of Wales and Wales Arts International collaborate to take maximum advantage of available

⁴⁵ Arts Council of Wales – written evidence

⁴⁶ RoP, Communities and Culture Committee, 12.2.09.

⁴⁷ Volcano Theatre – Paul Davies, Artistic Director – oral evidence 12.02.09

⁴⁸ Heritage Minister – oral evidence 29.01.09

⁴⁹ WLGA – written evidence

funding (including European funding) to support Welsh arts and culture abroad.

82. More specifically, Glyndwr University considered that public patronage could provide more support, recommending that:

“The Communities and Culture Committee should ensure that in its consideration of the allocation of resources, alternative sources of funding possibly from the public patrons, should be sought before funding is withdrawn from locally based arts and culture activities.”⁵⁰

Recommendation 5

We recommend that the Welsh Government, Arts Council of Wales and Wales Arts International explore how public patronage of the arts could be better encouraged and supported

83. Whilst direct funding for arts and culture in Wales and ensuring Wales is promoted on the world stage is essential, there is potential for significant input from other sources to enhance and support arts and culture. For example, the BBC is seriously considering bringing together drama production into one location to produce a number of well known programmes including *Pobol y Cwm*, *Doctor Who*, *Torchwood* and *Casualty*:

“we are currently considering the financial implications... Ideally we would want to see a drama village and a new headquarters for BBC Wales on the same site

“another aim is of course to respond to the challenge the BBC Trust has set, namely that 17 per cent of BBC network productions be produced outside London by 2016. I have said that I hope we in Wales will be able to reach our own target before then, but that of course, depends on getting the drama village.”⁵¹

84. This could create a significant boost to investment in certain aspects of arts and culture in Wales. We welcome the increased exposure this will create for Wales on the world stage.

⁵⁰ Glyndwr University – written evidence

⁵¹ RoP, Communities and Culture Committee, 29.01.09

Key Issue 3: The need for partnership working

85. The Welsh Government established an Arts Strategy Board to bring together people from the arts to take an overview of the arts in Wales and feed into government policy making and implementation. In describing the Strategy Board, the previous Heritage Minister made clear the role that the Welsh Government will play in relation to the arms length bodies, including the Arts Council:

“My work and my responsibility, as well as the responsibility of the Government, is to create policy and it is the responsibility of the Arts Council of Wales to implement that and to fund projects in the arts. Therefore, the arm’s-length principle has been most firmly established. The board does not seek to operate on the ground, seeking, rather, to get a wider picture of what is happening in the context of the arts and culture.”⁵²

86. The main vehicle for joint working between the Welsh Government and the British Council is Wales Arts International via the Arts Council of Wales.

87. However, we noted that the British Council has a much broader remit than the promotion of arts and culture and of course its remit covers the UK as a whole, not just Wales:

“We are not a funding body; we do not fund arts or cultural development. Our focus is always on reaching an audience and on changing people’s minds, perceptions and lives. That is what we look for when we look to engage in the UK with the arts and culture sector and to help to internationalise that in the right place and at the right time to make a difference to the UK.”⁵³

88. Funding flows from the Welsh Government to the Arts Council of Wales to Wales Arts International. Whilst proportionally little funding is contributed by the British Council for joint projects other resources are made available:

“...in terms of money, most of it comes from the Arts Council and a little comes from the British Council. In terms of human resources across the world, the partnership that enables us to contact officials across the world is priceless”⁵⁴

89. Dialogue between the Arts Council of Wales and the British Council through Wales Arts International is clearly very active. The Directors of Wales Arts International and the British Council gave complementary oral evidence together to the committee on 3 December. The British Council commented that:

“...over the last 10 years we have worked in close cooperation and partnership with the Arts Council of Wales, which has been managed

⁵² Oral evidence to Committee – Heritage Minister (Rhodri Glyn Thomas) – 26.6.08

⁵³ British Council – Louise Wright – oral evidence 3.12.08

⁵⁴ Wales Arts International – oral evidence 3.12.08

*through the joint venture of Wales Arts International. It is an extremely important partnership for us*⁵⁵

90. Similarly, Wales Arts International commented that:

*“...working in partnership is extremely important to us. What works well is that we can combine the strengths of the two main partners, namely the Arts Council of Wales and the British Council”*⁵⁶

91. On partnership working, BBC Wales gave us examples of several formal and informal arrangements it has, such as the key strategic partnership with S4C; the Arts Council of Wales and with local authorities such as between Cardiff Council and ‘BBC Singer of the World’. BBC Wales’s controller warned however, that:

“we in the BBC must evaluate these partnerships as we progress. There is sometimes an expectation that we can support everything. We cannot do that and part of the analysis that is undertaken involves considering how long we should continue with various partnerships”

92. National Museum Wales commented on the importance of partnership working:

“Arts, culture and heritage organisations such as us, along with the Welsh Assembly Government could be smarter at spotting opportunities that are projected through Westminster as being UK-wide. We could share those opportunities more smartly, getting in there and talking about Wales’s role on the right occasions and with the right product...In a sense we have to be alert to opportunities for us to come along and say ‘We can collaborate.’

*“There are some really interesting opportunities for collaboration across borders by trusts and foundations, the third sector and the lottery bodies. We must ensure that we are able to pick up on those kinds of opportunities early, so that they do not get marshalled into an England-only programme”*⁵⁷

93. Another aspect of partnership working that this inquiry set out to examine is how Welsh Government policies and strategies fit with those of the UK Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), particularly in its efforts to make the UK a ‘global creative hub’ in the context of the Cultural Olympiad 2012.

94. The Olympic Games coming to Britain in 2012 has presented us with an opportunity to capitalise on the increased visitor numbers and focus on the UK during this time. The ‘Cultural Olympiad’ is a four year celebration that encompasses all cultural elements of the Olympic movement that will engage the arts and culture worlds, between 2008 – 2012.

⁵⁵ British Council – oral evidence 3.12.08

⁵⁶ Wales Arts International – oral evidence 3.12.08

⁵⁷ National Museum Wales (Michael Tooby) – oral evidence 29.01.09)

95. Commenting at a local level the WLGA told us that the full benefits of the London 2012 Olympics to Wales could not be assessed at this early stage. However, the knock on consequences of the Games have already been felt in Wales with cuts to lottery funding:

“...cuts felt in Wales to lottery funding to sport, culture and heritage funds (estimated at a total loss of funding to Wales of £73M until 2012)”

96. Some have commented that Wales will continue to pay for the games many years after the event, which is why it is essential that we capitalise on the opportunities the games offer as a ‘springboard’ to boost the creative economy and opportunities to develop international links. The WLGA commented:

“There are fantastic opportunities to engage with the Olympic and Paralympic movement. For example, the Australian Paralympic team has already decided on Wales as its training camp and has an education programme including 1400 primary schools which could link with every primary school here in Wales”

97. Such links offer Wales the chance to promote itself on the world stage. These opportunities should be maximised and exploited to their full potential. These examples are welcome; however, we would like to see a more strategic approach to identifying and exploiting opportunities to make international links.

Recommendation 6

We recommend that the Welsh Government produce a detailed action plan linked to its strategic framework to identify specific opportunities such as those created by touring Welsh arts companies and individuals, to create international links and promote Wales abroad, articulating how working together, each Welsh Government department and relevant public organisations in Wales will contribute in strategy, delivery and review. In doing so it should liaise with universities to examine and learn from their experiences of engaging internationally.

Key Issue 4: Local authorities and working across the whole of Wales

98. The Welsh Government has recently proposed a statutory cultural duty on Welsh local authorities. We invited the Welsh Local Government Association to attend Committee and provide evidence on the role of local government in promoting arts and culture. Unfortunately, it declined our invitation to present oral evidence to our committee so we have not had the opportunity to scrutinise this issue in more detail. The WLGA did submit a written response outlining that the provision of arts locally by local authorities (LAs) is a discretionary service and that LAs:

“work with disadvantaged communities and within certain policy areas such as youth arts and disability arts to ensure that cultural experiences are available to all.”⁵⁸

99. The importance of the arts is recognised by the WLGA and its paper identified that the arts have a role to play in helping to share understanding and promoting tolerance of cultural differences. However, the WLGA downplayed its role in the delivery of the arts, commenting that:

“Local authorities in Wales have a small but important role in working with other organisations such as the Arts Council of Wales, Wales Arts International and the British Council in ensuring that international opportunities for local artistic talent is fully exploited and maximised”⁵⁹

100. The WLGA provided its view of the development of a statutory cultural duty in its early stages:

“...the main focus of the statutory duty is and should be on delivering quality cultural experiences for local citizens and therefore it should not play a central role in promoting Welsh arts and culture on an international level”⁶⁰

101. It is clear that the WLGA does not see it as a core function of Welsh LAs to be a main contributor to promoting Welsh arts and culture internationally:

“At a time when arts service budgets are being squeezed and the financial situation likely to continue for some time yet, the priority of local authority arts services should remain on delivering for local people. Any statutory duty must outline the core roles that local authorities should provide through their leisure and cultural services and not become a wide catch-all duty which fails to deliver its key aims”⁶¹

102. The WLGA also commented that funding constraints are a major concern for local authorities and new statutory duties bring with them funding implications:

⁵⁸ WLGA, written evidence.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

“This does not preclude work of international standard being developed but this outcome is not the core purpose and role of local authority arts services. If this were to be included in any statutory duty then significant additional financial resources would need to be provided to local authorities to deliver this aim”⁶²

103. Whilst the WLGA did not consider local authorities to have a key role in delivering Welsh culture and arts internationally, it did suggest that there are opportunities for more joined up working between the Arts Council of Wales, the British Council and local authorities, which could contribute to promoting Welsh arts and culture on the world stage:

“The WLGA would be happy to look at ways of working with the Arts Council of Wales and the British Council to improve communication channels to artists and art organisations in Wales about possible international opportunities.”⁶³

104. National Museum Wales, in giving oral evidence noted there were good examples of working collaboratively with local authorities, citing examples of specific local authorities they have worked with. However, it appears that these relationships are not consistent across the piece:

“we have a good relationship with Cardiff as a local authority, but we have not yet been able to make the most of that on an international stage.”⁶⁴

105. There is clearly good practice amongst local authorities in promoting Welsh arts and culture, for example, the Cardiff BBC Singer of the World competition is a collaboration between the BBC and Cardiff Council and whilst it is not specifically a competition about Wales, it is an event that showcases Cardiff and Wales. The BBC told us of other collaborations with local authorities:

“Coal House is another fine example of working with local authorities, working with the people of Blaenavon. Proms in the Park has been resident in Swansea for some time now. In collaboration with Cardiff and Swansea, we recently launched big screens in those city centres which we are using not only for the purposes of showing BBC programmes but also to support community projects...Children in need, for example, has a very extensive presence in Colwyn Bay – for three or four years...we find that local authorities are extremely open to those types of discussions”⁶⁵

106. We heard further evidence of local authorities promoting arts and culture:

“...local authorities do cultural things that are of strong international interest. That is clear in my home town of Swansea, where we have the link with Dylan Thomas and many other things that are of clear

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ RoP, Communities and Culture, 29.01.09

⁶⁵ BBC Wales – Rhodri Talfan-Davies, Head of marketing, communications and audiences, oral evidence 12.02.09

international importance and advantage should be taken of them internationally – indeed that does happen.”⁶⁶

107. Whilst there is clearly good practice going on, we heard evidence that the promotion of arts and culture could be improved and that local authorities have a key role to play in making these improvements. For example, Glyndwr University suggested that local authorities could cluster resources and work regionally to gain the critical mass required to provide quality support to arts and culture:

“We are starting to work together much more now. For example, we have recognised that we have to work together with counties in England. You have the Mersey Dee alliance, through which you get people to talk to each other. We are developing projects through the university in Flintshire and Denbighshire, as well as in Wrexham.”⁶⁷

108. We also heard strong views that there is too great a concentration of the arts in Cardiff and South East Wales:

“One of the major issues facing the arts in Wales is a feeling that it is too Cardiff-centric. This has now ceased to be merely a feeling that all new developments will go to Cardiff and has developed into a fear that facilities will be taken from other parts of Wales so as to boost Cardiff.”⁶⁸

109. We recognise the importance that local authorities play in internationally recognised events taking place across the whole of Wales. In this context, we welcome the development of the proposed Legislative Competence Order on Culture and other fields, but also the concerns raised by the Arts Council of Wales that:

“You cannot possibly arrive at a form of cultural duty that a cultural strategy does not equate with. So, the two go hand in hand. As to whether one needs to happen before the other, I think that they need to happen in tandem and stay closely related.”⁶⁹

110. We also recognise the concerns that there is a tendency for artistic activities and investment to gravitate towards south-east Wales. Whilst there are recognisable benefits to the clustering of activities, such as through basing symbiotic arts organisations within the Millennium Centre, these benefits may also be at a cost to those living beyond easy travelling distance to artistic centres. Schemes such as the Assembly Government’s Sharing Treasures scheme, and outreach work by companies such as the WNO or BBC National Orchestra of Wales addresses some of our issues, but we consider that more can be done.

⁶⁶ National Library of Wales – Andrew Green, Librarian, oral evidence 26.02.09

⁶⁷ Glyndwr University – Professor Michael Scott, Vice Chancellor and Chief Executive, oral evidence 12.02.09

⁶⁸ Glyndwr University – written evidence

⁶⁹ RoP, Communities and Culture Committee, 3/12/08

Recommendation 7

We recommend that the Welsh Government considers how the provision of art regionally and locally, as well as across the whole of Wales, can contribute to Wales's international cultural presence nationally, explicitly in its preparatory and consultation work in developing its new culture strategy and proposed Legislative Competence Order on Culture and other fields.

Key Issue 5: The role of Publishing

111. We heard during our inquiry about the importance of the publishing sector in disseminating information about Wales through literature:

“We have a national poet project, through which the national poet acts as a cultural ambassador – our national poet will be in Dubai next week, representing Wales and the idea of Wales. I cannot tell you how important it is to have the ability to use quality writers to elevate Wales and its culture and to take that culture to places where, often, people have not heard about Wales”⁷⁰

112. The Mercator Institute for Media, Languages and Culture also commented that promoting Welsh Literature internationally would enable other countries to gain:

“to a better understanding of Wales, to get people to become familiar with Wales, which will, ultimately, raise Wales’s profile and bring economic benefits.”⁷¹

113. However, Academi was concerned that Wales capacity to promote its literature internationally was limited, needing more resources dedicated to

“translation, publication, distribution and promotion... We are much less effective when it comes to engaging with other tongues. Despite a constant flow of visitors from continental Europe and elsewhere supplemented by an open attitude to immigration our engagement with the other languages of the world is poor.”⁷²

114. Similarly, the Mercator Institute commented that:

“The resources allocated specifically for the promotion of literature in translation so far is significantly lower than what our foreign partners expect from a nation such as Wales.”⁷³

115. Academi were also concerned about a lack of strategic co-ordination on Wales’ international priorities in relation to promoting literature, commenting that:

“we are not made aware of what the UK Government’s priorities are, never mind what the Welsh Assembly Government’s priorities are. We dug through the documents and identified countries that are targeted, but that takes a lot of pushing. No-one has made a public presentation.”⁷⁴

116. To improve the capacity of Wales’ publishing sector, Academi suggested four key recommendations to us in their written evidence, including:

⁷⁰ Academi – Peter Finch, Chief Executive, oral evidence 20.02.09

⁷¹ RoP, Communities and Culture Committee, 26.02.09

⁷² Academi, written evidence.

⁷³ RoP, Communities and Culture Committee, 26.02.09

⁷⁴ Ibid.

- A published set of international priorities for Wales
- Formal co-ordination between those agencies involved in the delivery of literary product internationally
- Greater use made of Academi's subject expertise as well as its administrative ability
- Establishment of a Wales centre for translation

117. We recognise that publishing is an essential voice for Wales which transcends global borders. We commend the work of our literary agencies and would expect that support will continue in these financially difficult times.

Recommendation 8

We have recommended greater co-ordination of effort between our cultural departments and agencies, and consider that this should extend to the work of our literary agencies. We also recommend that capacity should be built between our agencies to enable a Wales centre for translation.

Key Issue 6: Barriers and support for arts practitioners

118. We have concluded from this inquiry that being an artist in Wales is not an easy vocation and that there are several significant barriers for artists to overcome – mainly financial barriers, but also minimal support, encouragement and direction for what artists are doing:

“Art can be an expensive business. To compete on an equal footing with artists from London and maybe even Bristol or Birmingham, we need affordable studios where we can make art and we need reasonable incomes because materials are expensive.”⁷⁵

119. It seems that practicing art is rarely well paid, and many artists no doubt struggle financially to continue. Mr Finnemore went on to tell us:

“We do not have the support of the buying public in Wales and have to generate money ourselves. I do so through teaching and the various commissions that I have been working on and then I plough that money back into my practice...I can work on a shoestring because I do not drive, I do not have a mortgage and I do not have a family.”⁷⁶

120. Glyndwr University confirmed to us that arts graduates were amongst the worst paid.⁷⁷

121. Moreover, Peter Finnemore noted that skilled artists may lack administrative skills, and may need assistance with the practicalities of promoting their work. He noted that both Glyndwr University and the University of Wales, Newport have created ‘incubation units’ to teach graduates business skills as part of their courses, which helps; however, there is a need for such a mechanism to continue after they leave. There is an incentive to look after our artists in Wales as the creative industries are wealth creators that should be supported at grass-roots level.⁷⁸ All witnesses we heard from expressed similar views about the value of arts and culture to Wales.

122. Stefan Caddick also suggested that there were constraints on the ability of artists to progress to world class events. He told us that:

“there is quite a lot of provision at the top end of visual art practice, such the Venice Biennale and Artes Mundi, but if you view visual arts provision as a ladder, you see that there are a couple of rungs at the bottom, and two rungs at the top, namely Artes Mundi and the Venice Biennale, but there is a big gap in the middle.”⁷⁹

123. We were also given some practical suggestions on how artists might be supported to address these gaps. For example, Stefan Caddick said:

⁷⁵ Peter Finnemore – oral evidence 12.02.09

⁷⁶ Peter Finnemore – oral evidence 12.02.09

⁷⁷ Glyndwr University – written evidence

⁷⁸ Peter Finnemore – written evidence

⁷⁹ Stefan Caddick – oral evidence 12.02.09

“You could scrap business rates for artist-run spaces and studio spaces. You could make regional studio provision compulsory for local councils. It is all about supporting artists on the ground.”⁸⁰

124. We consider that addressing the barriers faced by artists is an essential element in supporting artists to progress to world class status. We do not consider that we received sufficient evidence to make specific recommendations in this area. Rather, we consider that such provision should be explored fully in the development of the new culture strategy.

Recommendation 9

We recommend that the Welsh Government takes into consideration the financial constraints and other barriers faced by artists in consulting on the new cultural strategy.

125. Whilst there is undoubtedly support for artists from the Arts Council of Wales and Wales Arts International – indeed all arts practitioners were very positive about the interaction they had had with these bodies – we were told that the onus on seeking funding and developing their work was entirely on the artist, and that the work of the British Council and Wales Arts International was that of an enabler and not an initiator.⁸¹

126. It is also difficult to escape the fact that Wales is a small yet spatially challenged country. This creates its own problems, not least the difficulties faced by artists outside the capital who are marginalised by poor public transport.⁸² No doubt this also causes difficulties in achieving the critical mass of support and encouragement required to create high-quality work.

127. Unfortunately as a result of these barriers, it seems that many artists choose to leave Wales to continue with their artistic ambitions, particularly those in the middle rungs of the development ladder.

128. We all face financially challenging times ahead, and pressures are particularly acute for the creative community in Wales. The impact of the credit crunch and diversion of lottery funding to the London Olympics will only serve to create greater hardship for many artists and companies who face high costs and often uncertain and irregular income. We are encouraged by the British Council increasing its presence in Wales, and the current level of opportunities for Welsh practitioners in its programmes, and would hope that the recently recruited Senior Adviser will ensure a strong role for the Welsh artistic community to play a major part in the British Council’s activities.

129. We were also encouraged by the positive comments by organisations and arts practitioners about the work of Wales Arts International, not least

⁸⁰ Stephan Caddick – oral evidence 12.02.09

⁸¹ Stephan Caddick – oral evidence 12.02.09

⁸² Peter Finnemore – oral evidence 12.02.09

the inside knowledge, enthusiasm and hard work of Wales Arts International staff. While there was little to criticise its work, we consider that the communications and marketing reach of the organisation could be improved, through use of presentations, open days and newsletters for example.

Recommendation 10

We recommend that the Arts Council of Wales and Wales Arts International explore how they might improve the proactive marketing of their services to engage arts practitioners at the coal face.

130. We recognise that arts practitioners may not always have the practical skills in taking their works abroad. Even established artists, who may not require the financial support of our arts organisations, might on occasion acknowledge that diplomatic support could make a significant difference in raising a profile abroad, or help to smooth the path through customs. We also consider that a central source of information for Artists in Wales could be helpful in addressing this issue.

Recommendation 11

We recommend that Wales Arts International provides, and markets, a support service aimed at providing advice, and diplomatic assistance to help artists address the practical difficulties of taking their work abroad.

Annex 1

Organisations and individuals who gave evidence in person to the Committee

| Presenter | Organisation | Transcript Paragraph Reference |
|--|---|--------------------------------|
| 3 December 2008 | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kevin Higgins, Director • Louise Wright, Senior Advisor, Arts, Creative Industries and New Media • Rebecca Walton, Acting Director, Arts, British Council UK | British Council Wales | 6 - 147 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eluned Haf, Director • David Alston, Arts Director, Arts Council of Wales | Wales Arts International Arts Council of Wales | 6 - 147 |
| 15 January 2009 | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frances Medley | FM Consultancy | 7 - 85 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Fisher, General Director • Peter Bellingham, Executive Director | Welsh National Opera | 86 - 172 |

| 29 January 2009 | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alun Ffred Jones AM, Heritage Minister • Jo Jones, Director, Tourism and Marketing • Marie Knox, Head of Culture, Welsh Language & Sports Division • Gary Davies, Head of European and External Affairs Division | Welsh Government | 3 - 106 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michael Houlihan, Director General • Michael Tooby, Director of Learning & Programmes | National Museum of Wales | 107 - 174 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Menna Richards, Controller BBC Wales • Rhodri Talfan Davies, Head of Marketing, Communications and Audience | BBC | 177 - 234 |
| 12 February 2009 | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stefan Caddick • Simon Burgess, The Makers Guild in Wales • Peter Finnemore | | 4 - 90 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alison Woods, Executive Director • Paul Davies, Artistic Director | NoFitState Circus Volcano Theatre | 91 - 163 |

Organisations and individuals who provided written evidence to the Committee

British Council
Wales Arts International
Wales Arts International 5 year Strategy
Arts Council of Wales
Dot CYM
National Library Wales
FM Consultancy
Welsh Books Council
Academi
Peter Finnemore
The Makers Guild in Wales
The Chartered Institute of Marketing
University of Wales, Newport
Wales International Festival of Theatre for Young Audiences
Venice Biennale
David Petersen
WLGA
Angela Swann
Nofit State Circus
Traude Allison Rogers
Fforwm Crefft Cymru
Ensemble Cymru
Christine Willison
Dr Jeni Williams
Glyndwr University
National Eisteddfod of Wales
Michael Cousin
Stefhan Caddick
Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru
Voluntary Arts Wales
Welsh National Opera
Hay Festival
Volcano Theatre
Welsh Music Foundation
Welsh Assembly Government
Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales
BBC
Mercator Institute - Aberystwyth University

Schedule of Committee Papers

| Date | Name of Organisation | Paper Reference Number |
|------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| 19 November 2008 | Committee Service | CC(3)-21-08 - Paper 1 |
| 3 December 2008 | British Council Wales | CC(3)-22-08 - Paper 1 |
| 3 December 2008 | Wales Arts International | CC(3)-22-08 - Paper 2 CC(3)-22-08 - Paper 2a |
| 3 December 2008 | Arts Council of Wales | CC(3)-22-08 - Paper 3 |
| 15 January 2009 | FM Consultancy | CC(3)-01-09 - Paper 1 |
| 15 January 2009 | Welsh National Opera | CC(3)-01-09 - Paper 2 |
| 29 January 2009 | Welsh Government | CC(3)-02-09 - Paper 1 |
| 29 January 2009 | National Museum of Wales | CC(3)-02-09 - Paper 2 |
| 29 January 2009 | BBC | CC(3)-02-09 - Paper 3 |
| 12 February 2009 | Stefhan Caddick | CC(3)-03-09 - Paper 1 |
| 12 February 2009 | NoFitState Circus | CC(3)-03-09 - Paper 2 |
| 12 February 2009 | Volcano Theatre | CC(3)-03-09 - Paper 3 |

| | | |
|------------------|---|-----------------------|
| 12 February 2009 | Glyndwr University | CC(3)-03-09 - Paper 4 |
| 12 February 2009 | University of Wales, Newport | CC(3)-03-09 - Paper 5 |
| 12 February 2009 | Simon Burgess, The Makers Guild in Wales | CC(3)-03-09 - Paper 6 |
| 12 February 2009 | Peter Finnemore | CC(3)-03-09 - Paper 7 |
| 26 February 2009 | The National Library of Wales | CC(3)-04-09 - Paper 1 |
| 26 February 2009 | Academi | CC(3)-04-09 - Paper 2 |
| 26 February 2009 | Mercator Institute for Media, Languages and Culture, Department of Theatre Film and Television Studies, Aberystwyth University | CC(3)-04-09 - Paper 3 |

Copies of all papers and transcripts can be found at:
<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-third1/bus-committees-third-ccc-home.htm>