# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Future priorities relating to the Feasibility Studies on a Sport Museum and Contemporary Art Gallery** |
| **DATE**  | **10 May 2019** |
| **BY** | **Dafydd Elis-Thomas, Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism** |

Last year saw the publication of two feasibility studies, considering a National Contemporary Art Gallery for Wales and a National football / sports museum. The Welsh Government has set aside £10 million in capital funds to progressing both studies, honouring the budget agreement with Plaid Cymru. This statement outlines initial actions.

The Arts feasibility study set out an innovative and ambitious vision for growing and celebrating the contemporary arts sector in Wales. It promotes the concept of a ‘distributed model’, with a phased approach to implementation. The proposed model would build upon the many excellent art galleries we already have across Wales. The consultants also identified the need for further feasibility work, related to the recommendations.

Firstly, the report called for a full exploration of how to secure the capital funds required, but also of how such a gallery would impact on existing funding streams, to ensure that it would benefit, not harm, the wider sector. Secondly, it recommended further audience research, to develop ‘a more sophisticated understanding’ of the market for contemporary visual arts in Wales. I have asked officials to identify what the specification for this should include, and to commission the research as soon as possible. Both the Arts Council of Wales, and Amgueddfa Cymru, will play a central role in steering this project, as it develops.

I recognise that there is a need for early action and that there is a case for investment in our distributed galleries across Wales. I am thinking, for example, of the Gregynog gallery at National Library Wales, with its potential to house excellent contemporary art exhibitions. Therefore I have asked my officials to develop the framework for a capital grant fund into which galleries can bid, making their case to be part of this distributed offer. This will deliver improvements for the display of contemporary art across Wales.

I also recognise and am committed to the three-phase approach set out in the feasibility study which includes exploring an ultimate Headquarters for the distributed gallery. My officials will carry out more detailed business planning this financial year to progress this.

I am aware that these are just the first steps towards developing the vision set out in the feasibility study, and that the completion of further feasibility work is key to identifying long-term actions.

The case for creating a football related museum and visitor attraction was set out clearly in the consultants’ report. This concluded that developing new facilities at Wrexham Museum would be the best option to create a showcase for our football heritage. The study also recommended that this be done in partnership with Amgueddfa Cymru, which continues to collect and promote sporting heritage as an integral part of the cultural life and national history of Wales. As I outlined in the plenary debate in November, I do see investment in the local museum in Wrexham as a pragmatic and achievable approach that can deliver a high quality result. The realisation of this, however, lies not just with the Welsh Government and discussions have now begun with the key partners. I have asked my officials to determine an agreed way forward by the end of the summer.

I will issue a further statement once more progress has been made.