

Rt Hon Dafydd Elis Thomas AM
Minister for Culture, Tourism and Sport
Welsh Government
Tŷ Hywel
Cardiff Bay CF99 1NA

8 January 2018

Dear Dafydd

Start-up grants for journalists seeking to set up their own business in hyperlocal news

Thank you for attending the Culture, Welsh Language and Communication Committee's meeting on 16 November to discuss the Welsh Government's draft budget proposals for 2018-19.

During the meeting we touched on the Welsh Government proposed funding of £100,000 in 2018-19 and 2019-20 for "start-up grants for journalists seeking to set up their own business in hyperlocal news".

As a result of the announcement, and as part of our inquiry into news journalism, the Committee consulted stakeholders on how this funding could best be used to support news journalism in Wales. Though we will soon be publishing our findings in our report on news journalism we understand that, given the need to have arrangements in place before the start of the 2018-19 financial year, it may be useful to share them with you at this stage.

Findings of the consultation

Though there was not a general consensus on the best use of this funding a common theme among the responses was that the funding should not be reserved entirely for the setting up of new hyperlocal news providers. The consultation has led us to conclude that the new funding should be made available more broadly than simply to new hyperlocal start-ups through Business Wales.

Cardiff University's Centre for Community Journalism, who offered relatively comprehensive views on the use of funding – having consulted themselves, called for "a contestable funding scheme", suggesting that "a range of relatively small investments could have a great impact on local journalism, local enterprise, and social cohesion as the tools to innovate and publish local news are widely available at low cost."

We agree with this approach. We also agree that the thoughtful response from the Centre for Community Journalism in Cardiff University (which is annexed to this letter) has considerable merit and should be given serious consideration by the Welsh Government.

Yours sincerely



Bethan Jenkins

Bethan Jenkins AM
Chair

