

Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee

Inquiry into the Welsh Government's Historic Environment Policy

Response from Dr D. Leigh

Dear Sir,

Consideration of any such merger should be undertaken as part of the consultation for the forthcoming Heritage Bill which will form the new structure for the protection and management of the historic environment. An untimely prior decision to merge these organisations would pre-empt wider decision-making and could prejudice the effectiveness of those broader recommendations.

During any consideration of a merger it will be vital to have regard to the provision of sufficient high quality expertise to inform policy and decision-making. The closure in recent years of both the Ancient Monuments Board for Wales and the Historic Buildings Council for Wales, has deprived the Welsh Government of a fund of free expert advice. Similarly, it is vital to ensure that the professional expertise which currently informs the exemplary work of the Royal Commission is maintained and nurtured and not sacrificed to perceived administrative priorities.

Yours faithfully,
David Leigh, B.Sc, PhD, FIIC, FSA