# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TITLE**  | **Expert Review of Local Museum Provision in Wales 2015 report – Update on progress** |
| **DATE**  | **9 January 2017** |
| **BY**  | **Ken Skates, Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure** |

In October 2014, I appointed an Expert Panel to review local museum provision across Wales. The Panel published their report *Expert Review of Local Museum Provision in Wales 2015* on 25th August 2015. On 30 March last year, I issued a written statement advising you of the recommendations and my response.

This statement provides you with an update on the progress so far.  In March, I acknowledged implementation would take time but I am encouraged by the progress so far and that the museum sector in Wales is engaging whole-heartedly with this work.

An update of progress against the recommendations is set out below:

Recommendation 1:  Creation of three Regional Bodies

I believe regional working that enables delivery at a local level will provide more effective and efficient museum services for the people of Wales.  We are working with museum officers to identify the opportunities and challenges involved in working across boundaries.  It is, of course, for Local Authority Members and Chief Executives across Wales to decide whether and how they work in this manner, and I am sure they will carefully consider the evidence that comes from this study.  I was encouraged by the recent positive discussion I had with the Welsh Local Government Association.

Recommendation 2: Creation of a national Museums’ Council

A specialist policy Division is already in place. Officials have discussed with the Museum Strategy steering group, the possibility of expanding their remit to provide a wider consultative panel. The steering group has agreed to consider this.

Recommendation 3: Development of a Museums’ Charter

Work is in progress on developing a draft museum charter that sets out what the public should expect from their local museum service and how museums can enhance the experience for visitors.

Recommendation 4: Local Authorities consider all options when reviewing museum services

This recommendation is for Local Authorities to consider.  My recent statement on culture identifies the key role cultural institutions like museums can play in regeneration of a locality.

Recommendation 5: Establish Collection Wales

Work is underway on developing an action plan for establishing Collection Wales and will be presented to officials in February.

Recommendation 6: Workforce development

The Museums, Archives and Libraries Division is delivering a high quality programme for workforce development, and is offering access to specialist training.

Recommendation 7: Transformation fund

Funding has been made available to support the study into regional working identified under recommendation 1.  The provision of further funding will depend upon the agreement of local authorities to work together on a regional basis.  I look forward to taking those discussions forward as part of our commitment in the culture statement to identify more equitable ways to fund regional facilities and improve sustainability and resilience.   I have also extended the Community Learning Libraries Capital fund to include local museums and archives, supporting much needed capital improvements.

Recommendation 8: Museum entry charges

Recommendation delivered:  Officials worked with the Association of Independent Museums to explore the issues around charging for museum entry.  The report and guidance was published on 8 September.

<http://www.aim-museums.co.uk/content/evaluating_the_evidence_the_impact_of_charging_or_not_for_admissions_on_museums/>

Recommendation 9: National Non-Domestic Rates relief

The issue of rates relief for museums would have to take place as part of a wider discussion.

Recommendation 10: Welsh Government support and development of museums

I will receive a draft of the new Welsh Government plan for museums for consideration in early 2017.  This will set out the Welsh Government’s support for museums over the next five years and will take account of the recommendations of the Review as well as the Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, my culture statement *Light Springs through the Dark: A Vision for Culture in Wales,* and our Programme for Government *Taking Wales Forward.*