

**22/12/14**

**Museums Association condemns new cuts to Local Authority funding**

Cuts to Local Authority funding for 2015-16 are likely to result in the closure of local authority-run museums in England.

The Museums Association’s recent Cuts Survey revealed that Local Authorities are already amongst the cultural services worst affected by funding cuts, with 55% of those surveyed reporting a drop in income in the previous year. Some 40 museums have closed in the UK in the past eight years – a figure which looks set to rise.

While each Local Authority will decide how to impose the new cuts, DCLG’s own survey shows that cultural services are the fourth most threatened area for new cuts by councils in England. This is in spite of the fact that the contribution that cuts to cultural services are able to make to the total savings required is miniscule – just 3% in 2013.

All local authority-run museums have taken steps since the beginning of the economic crisis to become more resilient. Many have increased the income that they generate and turned to other sources for fundraising. In many cases museums have lost staff, changed their opening hours, increased their commercial activity and engaged with audiences in innovative new ways. But museums are now struggling to find savings and keep the doors open.

Sharon Heal, Director of the Museums Association, said: “The economic, educational and wellbeing benefits that museums provide to local communities could be at risk as a result of these cuts. Local authority museums are adapting to changed circumstances and finding new ways to raise income but there is only so much that can be done before cuts impact on front line services. Around 40 museums have closed in the UK in the past eight years – I am concerned that this number will grow and that it will be the public that suffers as a result.”

Responding to the Museums Association’s Cuts Survey, a member of staff as a Local Authority museum said: “There’s no longer any money to do anything. We’re keeping going, but only just. There’s nothing left to cut except closing buildings and losing frontline jobs.”

-ENDS-

**Notes**

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The Museums Association’s Cuts Survey can be accessed here: <http://www.museumsassociation.org/download?id=1123548>

**About the Museums Association:**

The MA is an independent membership organisation representing museums and galleries in the UK and the people who work for them. It has over 6,000 individual members and 600 institutional members. It was formed in 1889 and is a not-for-profit charity that seeks to inform, represent and develop museums and the people who work for them in order that they may provide a better service to society and the public.