
Renaissance in the Regions: a new vision for England's museums

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To the memory of Sir Richard Foster,
whose pioneering work in Liverpool
at the National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside
did so much to illuminate and inspire this report

Introduction: A new vision for England's museums

Museums are one of the enduring legacies of the nineteenth-century commitment to education for all. They played a vital role in spreading knowledge and enjoyment in the twentieth century, but face special challenges today. In January this year, the then Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, the Right Honourable Chris Smith, appointed us to look at the state of museums and galleries in the English regions and report back to him.

At the outset we recognised, like many others within and beyond the museum world, that this was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to shape and secure the future of these important national cultural assets that had been neglected for a generation or more. We set about the task with a determination to work quickly, but also to involve as many people as possible in the museum and gallery community and in central/local government and other agencies – not only in preparing the actual report, but also through an extensive consultation process throughout the regions.

Exciting ideas emerged – many of which are incorporated in this report – but very early on we identified that our major objective should be to establish a much stronger strategic and operational framework for museums and galleries throughout the country, based on a philosophy of cooperation and mutual dependency. This framework should be designed to encourage and empower all museums and galleries – the nationals, the regional museums, the university museums, and small local and community museums – to work together in a creative way for the greater good of an audience which already generates over 77 million visits per annum.

Museums and galleries have an important part to play in education, learning, access, social inclusion, the regions, and the modernisation of public services. However, to perform their role effectively, the major regional museums and galleries have to be revitalised to become focal points for excellence within the areas they serve, cooperating with other local and community museums, and forging creative and dynamic relationships with the university and national

museums. Their collections and spaces must be opened up for all to use in a creative way for learning, inspiration and enjoyment

This report sets out a vision for how this might be brought about, and explains what can be delivered for the initial investment. Creating the sort of regional network which is needed will require sustained funding into the future. We hope that government and other funding bodies will recognise that museums affect many sectors – education, the arts and tourism – as well as economic and social regeneration, and will consider the implications of this report in a ‘joined-up’ way. Museums and galleries are integral to the work of at least four government departments – the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the Department for Education and Skills, the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions, and the Cabinet Office – and we would hope that contributions towards the total sum required could be drawn from the spending plans of all relevant departments, the lottery distributors and the private sector.

In this report, we believe we make the case for a new structure that will allow regional museums and galleries to flourish and that will stand the test of time. It is one that requires all institutions in the museums and galleries domain to work together to deliver the objectives that we all want. We believe that the investment required is modest in national terms, but will contribute to regional prosperity, to an enhanced sense of local community, and to the improved education of young and old across the country.

Our recommendations are not the final word; this is the beginning of a dynamic renaissance of our great regional museums and galleries. If it is to be sustained, many – not just government – will need to be committed to ensuring we get the museums and galleries we deserve.

Matthew Evans, Chair
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18 September 2001

Executive summary

6 OUR REMIT

- 1.1 During 2000 concerns were expressed by the press and by leading figures in the art world about the state of major regional museums and galleries (in this summary the term ‘museums’ applies also to galleries). In parallel with this DCMS and Resource carried out analyses of the issue. Both concluded that there were a number of problems that needed to be addressed if the major regional museums were to make a full contribution to meeting local, regional and national policy goals. At a seminar organised by the Royal Academy in December 2000 Chris Smith, then Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, announced the formation of a Task Force to report to government on how the problems identified might best be tackled.
- 1.2 The Terms of Reference for the Task Force, its membership and its methodology are described in the main body of the report. Although it was assumed at the outset that the Task Force would concentrate on the problems of the major regional museums, it quickly became apparent that this issue was inseparable from the wider issue of how all museums should work together to provide first-class services to users. The government therefore agreed that the Task Force should look at this wider issue.
- 1.3 This report takes a radical and far-reaching look at what is needed in order to capitalise on the potential of museums to deliver innovative and sustainable public services, and especially in education and learning. We recommend a fundamental redefinition of the way in which museums work together, at the heart of which is a substantial strengthening of major regional museums. Reform and modernisation within the museum community is necessary in order to secure better value from existing resources. But additional investment is also required in order to move museums from where they are now to where we would like them to be. Linked to this is a need

for government and museums alike to be clear about what that investment should deliver.

KEY FACTS ABOUT MUSEUMS

- 2.1 England has some of the finest museums in the world. The richness and variety of their collections and their innovative programmes are important resources for our society and the wider world. Collectively they are palaces for our imagination and homes for our memories. Their mission is to make their collections readily accessible and useful to people today, and to preserve them so that they may be used by future generations.
- 2.2 Although there is no generally agreed figure for the total number of museums in the UK, Resource’s registration scheme recognises 1,860 institutions which have met or are working towards basic standards in museum management, care of collections and services to the public. The museum community is one of huge variety, ranging from the biggest national museums to one-room institutions. They may be funded by central or local government, by universities, or through admission charges and commercial operations. They cater for a diverse range of users, from domestic and overseas tourists to local community and scholarly audiences.
- 2.3 Museums are among the UK’s most popular attractions. Over 77 million visits are made to them each year – more than to any other category of visitor attraction. However, the latest year-on-year attendance figures show a downward trend for museums in the UK – all the more serious for the regions when we take account of the growth in visitors to London’s museums over the same period. Overseas visitors account for 23 per cent of UK museum visits. Within the UK population a third of adults have visited a museum in the past year, and between 20 per cent and 30 per cent of adults are regular visitors. But the visitor profile is skewed by socio-economic group and educational achievement and the ethnic minorities are under-

represented. Less than 5 per cent of the population makes almost half of all visits.

- 2.4 Most museums in the regions are small and have very localised audiences. Over 50 per cent attract fewer than 10,000 visits per annum and 66 per cent attract fewer than 20,000 visits. Nevertheless, such museums often tell the story of the locality through the experiences of its people and, as such, they help to generate a sense of civic pride and citizenship. In contrast, there are a number of larger regional museums, mostly based in the major cities, with significant spending power and audience reach. Many of their visitors come from beyond the boundaries of their host local authorities and their collections often reflect region-wide collecting over many decades. Unlike the smaller museums already referred to, they can convincingly claim to be regional in status.
- 2.4 Within each English region, an Area Museum Council (AMC) – funded by Resource – exists to promote museum development. AMCs are independent membership associations which provide advice and support to museums rather than directly to users.

WHAT MUSEUMS CAN DELIVER

- 3.1 The traditional role of museums in developing and interpreting their collections and safeguarding them for future generations to enjoy remains as important as ever. But museums also have a much larger role in society. They can make a real difference to people's lives by using their collections for inspiration, learning and enjoyment. We have identified the following five main aims for the UK's museums in the twenty-first century:

- **To be an important resource and champion for learning and education**

The enormous potential of museums for learning has been demonstrated in many ways in many places over a long period. They use their collections imaginatively to enliven school-based

learning and they encourage people of all ages and backgrounds to broaden their horizons by making learning enjoyable and entertaining. Much good work already occurs but the potential is very far from realised. What is needed now is a coordinated approach to support for formal and informal learning at all levels. The most important regional museums should become beacons for excellence in learning, providing a comprehensive service to schools, support for adult learners and examples for other museums to follow. The Sharing Museums Skills Millennium Awards Scheme – administered by Resource – which provides for secondment of museum staff to acquire new skills, should be extended to enable teachers and curators to share knowledge and understanding of each other's learning environments and to develop teaching skills. And every primary school should be given the chance to work with museum objects as part of their core curriculum entitlement.

- **To promote access and inclusion**

No one can learn from collections unless they have access to them. Improving access, both physically and intellectually, for a wider audience – more representative of each region's population – is essential. In future museums must do more to unlock the full potential of collections and must become inclusive places for learning and inspiration. ICT has an important role to play in widening access beyond the walls of museums for those who are prevented from visiting in person, whether by disability or geography. If our recommendations are acted on the number of visits each year to the major regional museums – many of them in areas of high social deprivation – will be not only significantly increased but the profile of users will become much more representative of the population as a whole and the social and economic benefits for individuals and

communities substantially enhanced. These major museums should: develop outreach services underpinned by research, involving communities in the work of collecting and interpreting objects so that exhibitions tell their stories, interpret their experiences and contribute to local community issues; and undertake far more extensive loans of individual objects and of permanent and temporary exhibitions.

We also recommend that a 'Cultural Champions' programme is mounted in each region, specifically designed to increase the confidence and self-esteem of young people living in the most deprived areas. Statutory access improvements required by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 need to be tackled. And a new and comprehensive approach to visitor surveying should be developed to measure user trends and test visitor satisfaction.

- **To contribute to economic regeneration in the regions**

Museums act as catalysts for urban regeneration, as elements of specific redevelopment schemes or as part of the wider renewal of a city's profile. Museums in places such as Walsall, Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham are attracting national attention and are helping to develop a favourable image for their host cities. In the South West of England a study has shown that museum-related tourist spending has made a significant contribution to in the region's economy. Major museums could have a role in developing a clearer sense of regional identity – part of developing a sense of place. They need to work in partnership with the Local Learning and Skills Councils, Urban Regeneration Companies, local authorities and private sector interests to bring forward regional programmes to develop skills for young people focused on using museum collections.

- **To use collections to encourage inspiration and creativity**

The Creative Partnerships Fund – managed by the Arts Council of England – presents an opportunity for museums to work with others in a creative way, using their collections to reveal the links between past, present and future, and to create, gather and retain knowledge based upon cultural artefacts. Culture Online will help to make the resources of museums available through information and communication technology for the purposes of learning and enjoyment both at school and throughout life. Both will need a coordinated input from museums. However, in addition, to enhance the contribution of museums to the creative industries we recommend: a programme to take existing collections and give them contemporary meaning by using them to stimulate new designs for the twenty-first century. This would involve working with communities, designers and artists. In this way museums may encourage the development of skills which can contribute to the creative economy.

- **To ensure excellence and quality in the delivery of core services**

The diversity of museums in the regions is a real strength and the best contribute considerably to a sense of place. But inconsistency of provision dilutes the reputation of the 'brand' to the detriment of all. This can best be tackled through the development of centres of excellence which can develop and spread best practice.

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

4.1 Our report identifies many examples of excellence and innovation in the museums sector: places and occasions where the potential of what museums can do for society and people has been brilliantly demonstrated. They include:

- the Museum Fever project, funded by DfES, at Salford Museums and Art Gallery which helped young people to build confidence and

assertiveness by developing such skills as video and photography and through involvement in oral history interviews;

- the Making Memories project, funded by DfES, which has helped older learners to acquire new skills and develop their approach to learning, for example in the use of ICT to create a community archive;
- other DfES-funded study support projects which showed how museums could connect with and enrich the National Curriculum and help underachieving pupils;
- the Represent project, funded by DCMS, at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, which was managed by a New Deal officer and which offered young people, largely from the black community, personal confidence training and an introduction to the collections of the region and beyond – the numbers of young people participating in the project have risen steadily;
- persuasive evidence from the Science Museum of the learning impact of their new exhibitions;
- 38 projects – funded by the Designated Museums Challenge Fund – delivering public access to previously inaccessible collections information at regional museums;
- the same fund enabled: the Horniman Museum to provide schools workshops for 128 groups reaching 3,377 pupils from 6 London Boroughs; and the Courtauld Gallery to forge relationships with special and hospital schools and community groups through a programme of 46 outreach projects and 11 collaborative projects – funded by the IT Challenge Fund – which created learning materials online for a wide range of users; and
- the ‘Young Roots’ pilot project in Rotherham, Kirklees and the East Riding of Yorkshire, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, which assists young people in defining their own heritage; and
- Tyne and Wear Museums, which has doubled

the number of its visitors and increased the proportion of visitors categorised as C2DE from 20 per cent to 52 per cent in ten years.

It is significant that many of these projects only happened because of government intervention over the last three years. The funding made available has been very modest and these can only be seen as pilot projects; however the results have been impressive and signal the way forward for museums and galleries.

4.2 We have identified the following key strengths of regional museums:

- they hold spectacular collections of national and international importance and there is a huge public interest in these;
- they have many committed and imaginative people working for them;
- Lottery money has reinvigorated many buildings and displays. Since 1994-95 Lottery funding has contributed about £90 million to capital investment in major regional museums;
- the sector has developed sophisticated standards and the museums registration scheme – administered by Resource – is internationally admired. Today there are 1,860 museums registered as having met basic standards in museum management, care of collections and provision of services to the public;
- despite being discretionary services, museums in the regions have in fact been supported by local authorities who have recognised their social, economic, cultural and community value. In real terms, total core revenue funding from English local authorities was broadly the same in 1999-2000 (£118 million) as it was in 1995-96 (£107 million).

4.3 The last of these success factors needs to be qualified. There are considerable local variations in this situation, and services in the larger urban areas have suffered significant real cuts in expenditure.

4.4 One of the most positive developments of the past few years has been the role of central government

in supporting key regional museums through the Museums Designation Scheme. Traditionally governments have maintained that, except for the national museums and galleries, museums are essentially a local responsibility. However, for some time there has been an increasing acknowledgement by government that it has legitimate regional responsibilities in this sector. Between 1997 and 1999 collections held in 62 museums or groups of museums in the regions were identified as being of pre-eminent importance and were given 'designated' status under the Museum Designation Scheme. This was a major step forward for these institutions. It formally acknowledged the importance to the nation of these collections and laid the foundation for the development of a distributed national collection. Even more importantly, in April 1999 the Designated Museums Challenge Fund was created, offering £15 million over 3 years to provide support for the designated collections. In the course of the Task Force's consultation exercises there was almost universal praise for the benefits that the challenge fund has brought.

BARRIERS TO FURTHER PROGRESS

5.1 There are, then, many localised successes within the world of regional museums. But there seem to be just as many examples of missed opportunities and of failures to value what museums can offer. And excellence is often not sustained either in a place or over time. It seems to us to be too dependent on the circumstances in which museums find themselves or the chance of who is working in them at a particular time. Inconsistency of provision of museum services across the country discourages user support and investment by government, funding agencies, governing bodies and private enterprise. If we cannot guarantee consistently excellent and sustainable museum services across England we will ultimately fail to realise the potential of

museums to make a real difference to people's lives.

5.2 In addition to this problem of inconsistency, the Task Force identified a number of other weaknesses which are impeding the ability of museums in the regions to meet user expectations:

- this is a very fragmented sector with little encouragement for the constituent parts to work together to maximise the benefits of resources which are available to them separately. There is no national strategy for museums, regional strategies are in their infancy and there is an unclear focus to much of what is done in the sector. There is a lack of sectoral leadership in the regions;
- good practice is not sustained. Bright spots of excellence flare up, but many are soon extinguished. There is too much reinventing of the wheel and far too little sharing of best practice;
- there is considerable confusion over who should be doing what, where and for whom. There is a constant danger of duplication, failure to learn from the experience of others and inefficient use of resources. This is compounded by over-trading, the tendency for many museums to try to do everything (and hence do nothing really well). Most importantly, the absence of a framework, to identify roles and responsibilities, encourage collaboration and support and encourage the innovative and effective, is a critical weakness;
- morale is low and the sector is not attracting as many high-calibre entrants as it needs. Museum culture is resistant to change (though becoming less so) and there is an over-reliance on individuals to act as change agents;
- Local authorities, universities and other governing bodies are under increasing financial pressure. There is a serious resources deficit throughout the sector, and it is particularly acute in the major regional museums;

- central government support to regional museums has been very beneficial. But it is limited to a small number of institutions which are directly funded by government as a result of historical accident, and those who have designated collections;
 - expertise and scholarship is in decline, creating serious barriers to both access and getting the most out of collections. In many museums, collecting has stopped and there are no funds for acquisitions. This particularly affects modern (post-war) and contemporary collecting and is reflected in a certain reluctance to address modern and contemporary issues in exhibitions and other activities;
 - regional museums are underpowered in terms of ICT. The content they hold has enormous potential to feed learning networks and national initiatives such as Culture Online but little digitised learning content is available as yet;
 - a general lack of reliable performance data and rigorous evaluation means that achievements remain unquantified and, hence, not valued sufficiently by those who take the decisions about funding.
- 5.3 Collectively these weaknesses indicate that the localised successes in the fields of education, creativity and social inclusion are not sustainable. Over time the capacity of the larger regional museums to respond to these policy agendas has become weaker for the reasons set out above. Some museums have relied heavily on short-term project funding to develop new initiatives. These initiatives may respond well to national policy priorities in the short term, but will not be sustainable over a longer period.
- 5.4 If museums are to be valued by everyone and accessible to all, they need to be organised in the best way to achieve that objective. It is clear that the existing museums infrastructure with its diversity of governance arrangements and its multiplicity of representational channels

represents a barrier to regional museums achieving their full potential. The present way of doing things is not working well enough. Changes are needed in order to develop a mutually supportive environment in which museums can flourish.

A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR SUCCESS

- 6.1 In our view the existing fragmented structures have led to a lack of leadership for the museums community in each region, poorly articulated aims and objectives for the community, a failure to address government policy objectives in a consistent and sustainable way, decisions based on expediency rather than strategy, and an inefficient and ineffective use of resources. To make progress means making a break with the existing arrangements. To that end the Task Force has devised a new framework for museums in the regions based on the following principles:
- an integrated system;
 - identified leadership for the museums community in each region; and
 - defined roles for each element within the framework.
- 6.2 The key radical change proposed is the creation of a network of regional hubs. This involves developing the leading regional museums not only as centres of excellence but also as leaders of their regional museum communities. Regional hubs will consist of one museum and gallery service and no more than three satellite partners. They will be primarily based in our great cities, but not exclusively so. The regional hubs will respond dynamically to new agendas which put people and communities first. They will become examples of best practice and places where innovative ideas are piloted and developed with a view to wider application. The Task Force firmly believes that leadership of regional museums should rest with those who deliver services to users.
- 6.3 Regional hubs will be expected to invest in excellence. That means aspiring to – and

eventually achieving – the highest standards in exhibition content and presentation; learning, education and outreach services; collections management; and other key museum activities. Not all these goals will be achieved overnight. But the regional hubs must commit themselves to becoming beacons of excellence in exchange for investment of public money.

6.3 In pursuing the goals set out at paragraph 3.1 above, regional hubs need to work in partnership with other elements of the institutional framework which we propose should be developed. These include:

- the regional agencies. In recent years the Area Museum Councils have made an outstanding contribution to the raising of standards and dissemination of good practice and they have recently taken on responsibility for representation of museum interests on regional cultural consortia and engaging with the Government's wider regional agenda. But too much is now expected of them. We propose that in future they should remain as focused and lean organisations operating on a cross-sectoral basis (covering the domains of libraries and archives as well as museums). They should concentrate on their strategic regional role and on those development functions for which there are synergies across museums, libraries and archives, including learning support. In future there should be a clear distinction between responsibility for service delivery (which should rest with the regional hubs) and strategic and cross-sectoral development (which should rest with the regional agencies);
- the designated and university museums. The Task Force believes that the Designated Museums Challenge Fund has done much good and should continue as a means of strengthening key collections which are of importance to the nation. A number of designated and university museums may become regional hubs, but not all

pre-eminent collections will be serious contenders for that status. The regional hubs should look to the designated and university museums as their natural partners in raising standards and the quality of service to users. The designation process needs to be revised to admit a small number of additional museums;

- the national museums and galleries. They should be encouraged by DCMS to develop partnerships with regional museums, to enable greater access to the national collections and to help with the delivery of government objectives;
 - smaller museums will benefit from the new framework in the following ways. Resource and the regional agencies will: disseminate best practice information so that small museums too can deliver improved services to users; encourage them to participate in region-wide schemes to help solve professional problems; provide direct assistance (at no or very low cost) with learning and inclusion initiatives and external funding opportunities; and improved training and development opportunities. But it should be noted that the vast majority of regional museums would not receive direct government funding. As 'local' museums it is appropriate that their value and support should be largely local, whether they are governed by local authorities or are independent.
 - Resource will be responsible for ensuring that the new framework operates effectively. It will fund the regional hubs, set standards, monitor trends and promote cultural change within the sector. It should investigate the feasibility of creating a national collections centre to provide advice and support on collections-management issues to all museums;
- 6.4 These are not the only elements of the framework. Regional hubs will also have to work with universities, schools, learning and skills councils and with other DCMS sectors such as performing and visual arts, built heritage and tourism.

6.5 The framework we propose has the potential to transform public service delivery at those museums which are selected as regional hubs. It will provide strong sectoral leadership, clear roles and responsibilities and mutually supportive relationships for the benefit of users. The benefits of the regional hub system will be spread to the smaller museums by the regional agencies and the designated and University museums. The development of the framework also provides the means by which public funding support for museums may be rationalised and better value for money secured.

BUILDING THE NEW FRAMEWORK

7.1 Regional hubs will need to be selected on the following criteria:

- status (including registered status and having designated collections);
- location (to consider geographic proximity to other registered museums in the area, recognition as an administrative centre, population catchment and social deprivation indices);
- infrastructure (the knowledgeability and professional qualifications of staff, the size and width of collections, and physical capacity);
- capacity and commitment (i.e. the governing bodies' commitment to core funding, numbers of visitors, evidence of investment in staff development and training and ability to manage external partnerships); and
- endorsement and recognition of services (recognition of standards of good practice).

7.2 We propose that a financial offer would be made to the selected regional hubs for an initial period of 3 years. In response they would have to submit a strategic plan which would show how the regional hub would develop its regional leadership role. Funding would be based on a detailed funding agreement which would set out what the regional hub would deliver. The regional hub's governing

body would be expected to maintain existing levels of core funding and to use the prospect of government funding to lever in additional local support. In return for public money the governing bodies would be invited to consider ways in which governance arrangements should be modernised in order to release the potential of the hubs as agents for change and beacons of excellence.

7.3 In order to become fit for their new purpose, regional hubs would have to undertake a consolidation and transformation programme. The programme would include: a strategic stock-take to identify needs for capacity building; product development, including optimising access through ICT; business development, including income generation; market development, including genuine commitment to social inclusion and the placing of marketing and education at the heart of the museum's business plan; human resource development, including the adoption of new training policies and a commitment to professional development; and sectoral development, including meeting the developmental needs of other museums in the region.

7.4 Investment in change is clearly essential. Without additional resources it will not be possible to achieve the necessary progress. Lottery distributors, museum governing bodies, private sector companies and charitable foundations all need to play their part. But central government support is vital. In the past direct government funding in regional museums has significantly influenced the patterns of non-government funding. The presence of government funded museums in the regions has improved the regional museums' success rate in bidding for other funds. The achievements listed at paragraph 4.1 above were all made possible by central government investment. Strategic government support for the regional hubs would help to spread these benefits throughout the sector. It would achieve delivery of

current government objectives and, at the same time, enable the regional museums to be better equipped to form public-private partnerships to secure the long-term stability that is essential to the delivery of high quality services to users. Also, additional funding is needed for the specific purpose of enabling museums to provide the statutory access improvements required by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

7.5 But any public investment needs to be based on a clear understanding of what that investment is expected to deliver. Resource should therefore:

- develop a robust set of indicators to measure achievement of the social policy outcomes offered by museums;
- establish baselines against which future performance can be measured; and
- ensure that the organisations within the framework have the capacity (preferably electronic) to collect and disseminate data and information.

7.6 With the increase in grant-in-aid allocated by DCMS for 2002/3 and 2003/4 Resource will begin to build the new framework by investing in the development of learning and inclusion work in the regions. After that additional resources will be needed if the potential the sector is to be realised.

COSTINGS

8.1 The total sum required to meet the objectives and recommendations of this report is £267.2m. This can be broken down – by key outcome headlines – thus (£million):

<i>Outcomes</i>	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7
Education and Learning	4.5	8.5	15.1	21.4	29.1
Access and Social Inclusion	2.5	8.5	24.4	26.1	28.0
Economic Regeneration	–	–	9.5	9.5	9.5
Inspiration and Creativity	–	–	4.5	4.5	4.5
Excellence and High Quality (Standards)	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Modernisation	2.0	2.0	2.9	2.8	1.8
Cultural Change	–	–	2.0	2.0	2.0
ICT Investment	–	–	9.0	9.0	9.0
Rationalisation	–	–	0.5	0.3	0.2
Cross-cutting	–	–	2.4	1.8	2.4
TOTAL	10.0	20.0	71.3	78.4	87.5

8.2 Government funding intervention is essential to achieve our objectives but we anticipate that government will not be the sole provider and will look to work with other stakeholders to deliver what is required.

RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 A new framework for regional museums should be established, funded jointly by government, local authorities and other current governing bodies, Lottery distribution boards and the for-profit sector. This should be designed to transform the quality of services available to museum and gallery users in the regions and to ensure that the museums and galleries domain plays a leading role in contributing to the government's wider regional agenda.

- 9.2 With the funds allocated to it for 2002/3 and 2003/4 Resource should begin to give annual funding support to major regional museums and galleries that should form the hubs of the new framework. This support, which should be additional to existing core funding, would be to enable them, first, to rebuild capacity to become first-class services and, second, to act as focal points for developing and delivering regional museum services to the public.
- 9.3 Government should increase its grant to Resource from 2004/5 to enable it to extend annual funding support to this named group of major regional museums and galleries across England.
- 9.4 The new funding partnerships between government and the existing funders should lead to the creation of new governance arrangements for the major regional museums and galleries.
- 9.5 Additional resources should also be injected into major regional institutions – notably the regional agencies, the museums and galleries with designated collections and the national museums and galleries – in order to facilitate their new partnerships with the major regional museums and galleries named in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3 above.
- 9.6 The additional financial input should be accompanied by the setting of clear output and outcome targets, specified by funding agreements.
- 9.7 Longer-term core funding arrangements for regional museums and galleries should be preceded by consolidation and transformation measures to build the increased capacity necessary to enable museums and galleries to play their full part in meeting the government's regional agenda.
- 9.8 Recognising common interests in the cultural, educational and social benefits that the new framework would deliver, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport should work with the Department for Education and Skills, the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions, the Local Government Association, Resource, individual governing bodies and other key stakeholders to fully support this report's findings and recommendations.
- 9.9 The museums and galleries community should urgently address the issues of rationalisation highlighted in this report and – assisted by Resource – bring forward a national strategy which will lead to it being better equipped to meet the needs and demands of twenty-first century society.
- 9.10 Government should direct Resource to consider the scope for and cost of developing a national advisory service for technical and professional issues associated with the management of collections.
- 9.11 Government should direct Resource to hold detailed discussions within its sector and to bring forward a timetable and business plan for implementation of these recommendations.

1

A cause for concern

Our major regional museums and galleries

Our major regional museums and galleries

18 During 2000, growing concerns about the state of major regional museums and galleries were highlighted in a number of articles in the press and in a number of keynote speeches, including some by leading figures in the art world – notably Lord Rothschild, Sir Nicholas Goodison, Sir Nicholas Serota and Neil MacGregor. The debate, and the seriousness attached to it by cultural commentators and practitioners at all levels, reflected the importance of museums and galleries to society, both through the collections that they hold and through the social benefits delivered by their activities. The general tenor of the articles and speeches was to highlight that underfunding of the major regional museums and galleries had led to a lack of capacity¹ which was restricting their ability to use their collections to provide opportunities for learning, inspiration and enjoyment. Symptoms of this problem include not enough curators with appropriate expertise, high-quality exhibitions being mounted only infrequently, inadequate education services, and a general failure to meet governing-body and user expectations. Most prominent among the proposed solutions was a combination of an injection of substantial central-government funding support with new governance arrangements at local level.

These concerns were very much focused on the major regional museums and galleries – the limited number of large museums and galleries which, by virtue of their size (collections, staff and multidisciplinary nature), historical importance (foundation date, collecting hinterland and quality of collections) and status of location (regional capital, population size or economic hinterland), have a pre-eminent position in their region and an ability to deliver significant benefits to the people who live there. There are unlikely to be more than two or three of these in each of the English regions. They include the leading museums and galleries in Newcastle, Leeds, Manchester, Sheffield, Birmingham, Bristol, Oxford and so on. But there is no universally agreed list, and potentially any significant museum and gallery service could aspire to regional status.

England has some of the finest museums and galleries in the world. Their rich collections, imaginative public programmes, and staggering variety are a great national asset. Governments and museums throughout the world recognise our expertise and innovation in this area, and turn to us for advice. Using Lottery money, many museums and galleries (but by no means all) have reinvigorated their buildings and displays, often experiencing hugely increased visitor numbers as a result.

With imagination and resourcefulness, many of those who work for and govern museums and galleries have responded to government agendas on education, social inclusion and access, and have steadily raised standards in these areas and in collections care. However, it is difficult to be resourceful without resources. In recent years, revenue funding for regional museums has been unreliable, with the result that development has been uneven. Historically, too, the nation's system of museums has developed piecemeal, lacking clear policy or legislative frameworks. As a result, provision of museums is illogical: there are both gaps and overlaps. The resulting 'rich patchwork' of museum provision is sometimes presented as strength in diversity, but too often means that services are provided inconsistently. Valuable work undertaken in one locality is rarely replicated in other parts of the country. Worse still, good practice is often unsustainable. Bright spots of excellence flare up, but many are soon extinguished. The major regional museums and galleries struggle with inadequate core budgets and with challenge funding which appears only sporadically – and at short notice – from a bewildering number of sources.

There are other problems. Too many of the objects in museum collections are never seen. Certainly many are on display, and many more are legitimately kept for research. Some others find their way into temporary exhibitions, educational loan boxes, handling collections, and commercial loan schemes. But a great many – far too many – are underused. Too many people who work for museums regard their main

task as being to preserve their collections for some unspecified, indeterminate future.

There is also a serious scholarship crisis. Scholarship is not an ivory-tower luxury: it is the combination of knowledge and communication which underpins everything that a museum and gallery does. It is only by maintaining a high level of scholarship that museums and galleries can be authoritative – as the public rightly expects them to be – and can retain their links into national and international networks for loans and the top touring exhibitions. The weakening of scholarship means that the potential for learning, education and inclusion is significantly impaired.

Many major regional museums and galleries also feel that their asset base is being weakened over time. A museum's asset base is its collections. This is its currency which it uses to convert into social and economic benefits. To maintain and develop its collections it needs to continue to acquire. Opportunities to add historically and scientifically important pictures, objects, specimens and collections are usually unique and rare. Most of the major regional museums and galleries no longer have acquisition budgets to allow them to acquire or begin acquisitions appeals. As a consequence parts of our local, regional and national heritage are being lost for all time.

The symptoms of crisis are many but virtually all of the major regional museums and galleries and the smaller sub-regional bodies report serious problems. The following quotations are from regional museum and gallery directors:

'The museums that are not in trouble are either those who operate by barely breathing or who have attracted outside capital investment which has boosted their profile and endeared them to the community.'

'The Council is, like many major local authorities, in financial difficulty. Last year, the authority made concerted moves to reduce its revenue budget. The 2001-02 budget was frozen for departments at the 2000-01 level and voluntary

severance was promoted. Therefore pay and price inflation has to be absorbed within existing resources. As a result, museums lost two posts as part of the voluntary severance scheme – the Keeper of Conservation and the Museum Education Officer. The consequence is that conservation advice must be brought in from the private sector and museum education operates at a low level.... On a wider note, all controllable budgets within the service are very small – years of 'cheeseparating cuts' have seen to that. Therefore we have a very restricted ability to react to new agendas or to be creative because we cannot call upon enough funds to enable us to make an impact in any one area. Most of the service's budgets go on fixed costs such as power, rates, wages and maintenance.'

'The introduction of Local Management of Schools in 1995 resulted in our entire outreach and education service (budget of £260,000) being lost. At a stroke all outreach staff went and a generation's work was lost. We have tried to rebuild by charging schools but in 2001/02 our entire education budget for six museums and 250,000 visitors, for all working with all-age groups, in and out of term time, is £6,500. We are currently about to launch a staffing review which will create a band of 3 additional junior staff across the service and changing the job description of two more, to create an outreach and access team from existing resources. In order to do this three specialist curatorial staff posts (in fine art and natural sciences) will be deleted.'

'Our exhibitions and re-display budget fell to an all-time low of £27,500 last year for six sites. The situation was so dire that projects were suspended and a number of temporary exhibitions had to be cancelled. Re-direction of funds from elsewhere in the Council has brought the exhibitions budget up to £211,000 this year, although £150,000 of that is being spent on the refurbishment of one museum gallery alone – although even this is well below the industry standard for the space...'

‘In 1997 we ran eight museums, which were open Monday to Saturday 10-5.30 and Sundays 2-5.30 all year around. In 2001 we run six museums which are open Monday to Saturday 10-4 October to March and 10-5 April to September (when we are also open Sundays 1-4). The museums are staffed by six fewer assistants than in 1997, so there are fewer people to talk to the public.’

‘In our budget reductions last year we lost two marketing staff, including one with specialist expertise regarding the city’s ethnic minority communities.’

‘Our budget reductions last year resulted in the closure of two branch museums. One will certainly never reopen.’

‘Until the Designation Challenge Fund (DCF) we were existing with two documentation officers for collections of over 2 million items. DCF enable the employment of a team of 12 temporary staff to undertake retrospective documentation of designated collections, digitisation of images, creation of quality content, investment in IT networks and development of our web page. This will deliver collections information through new integrated displays, in our new Study Centre (funded by HLF) and via the Internet. It also enables active partnership in joined-up projects with libraries, record offices and the university. When DCF funding stops further development of this essential work will also stop until we can find other challenge funding to take it on to the next stage.’

‘There is growing evidence that people would like more flexible opening times – particularly evening opening and longer hours at the weekend. Unfortunately, with current budget restraints, to open in the evening we would have to close at other times. This results in no real improvement to services; our opening times have remained the same for the last 20 years!’

‘As one of the leading tourist attractions in the UK, temporary exhibitions are important income generators. Our principal exhibition space did have a

£100,000 development fund but this was lost to budget cuts soon after it opened and we have no curator primarily responsible for exhibition development.’

‘An interim report for District Audit – who are reviewing our protection of cultural property – has just been received and particularly comments on the lack of effectiveness of our inventories and the need for further detailed work in this area.’

‘We do not have adequate display spaces and a large proportion of our designated collections are not accessible to the public. These include numismatics, costume, ethnography, prints and drawings and social history. We are therefore not in a position to increase working with our communities and colleges in the interpretation and understanding of these collections.’

‘Loss of capacity can be traced to one particularly swingeing round of cuts. In 1996/97 we saw an overall reduction in staff from 102 posts to 70. This involved 50 per cent cuts in curatorial, education/learning and front-of-house staff, and 25 per cent in conservation and technical staff.’

These examples could be replicated many times over. They are the symptoms of a serious crisis in our major regional museums and galleries.

As a result of the concerns expressed – endorsed by all parts of the museums and galleries community – the Royal Academy organised a seminar to examine the issues, in December 2000. This was attended by the directors of many of the leading national and regional museums and galleries, who all agreed on the seriousness of the situation. The key address was given by Chris Smith, the then Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, who announced the formation of a Task Force to report back to government on how the problems identified might best be tackled. He invited Lord Evans of Temple Guiting, the chairman of Resource, to chair it, and ensured that the museums and galleries community would be well represented by experienced practitioners. This is the report of that Task Force.

The Task Force's objective is to create a long-term, self-sustaining programme which meets the needs (on several different levels) of the entire museums and galleries community and their users. This should be based on a plural-funding approach within a national framework, facilitated by a stream of centrally generated (and monitored) funding to key institutions. No assumptions should be made based upon the current funding status of any individual museum or gallery. This is an opportunity to review the logic of government funding to museums and galleries in the regions.

Government funding should be an investment to achieve the following objectives:

- to create a robust national framework for museums and galleries;
- to secure a long-term sustainable future for museums and galleries;
- to ensure that museums and galleries have a valued social purpose;
- to develop a well-managed national collection;
- to mobilise the resources of the museums and galleries community in the regions to achieve five main aims (see below).

A key outcome will be to ensure that – as a first stage in a longer-term ambition – the major regional museums and galleries are fully equipped to join the national museums and galleries in meeting the challenges of the new century.

In the twenty-first century, the UK's museums and galleries will have five main aims:

- to be an important resource and champion for learning and education;
- to promote access and inclusion – encouraging social inclusion and cultural diversity, acting as focal points for their local communities, and providing public spaces for dialogue and discussion about issues of contemporary significance;
- to contribute to economic regeneration in the regions;
- to collect, care for and interpret (on a foundation

of research and scholarship) the material culture of the United Kingdom and use it to encourage inspiration and creativity;

- to ensure excellence and quality in the delivery of their core services.

This report articulates these objectives and aims, and indicates how museums and galleries can achieve them.

¹ By 'capacity' the Task Force means sufficient resources (appropriate staff, materials, facilities and other resources) to achieve both their own objectives and those set by others.

2

Museums and galleries in context

2.1 Registered museums and galleries

Independent museums

Local-authority museums

National Trust and English Heritage museums

Armed-services museums

University museums

National museums and galleries

2.2 Regionalism

Area museum councils

Regional cultural consortia

Regional development agencies

Other regional bodies

Local authorities

The Core Cities and city-regions

2.3 Funding

The future of funding

Museums and galleries house collections from around the world and from just round the corner. They reveal the immediate locality and our worldwide links. They are direct evidence of real times, places and peoples: presenting real things, with authentic stories to tell.

The collections of museums and galleries belong to everyone. They are held in trust, on behalf of society as a whole. Collectively, the UK's museums and galleries are palaces for our imagination and homes for our memories. They care for some 200 million individual artefacts and specimens (Carter et al, 1999:2) – nearly four for every person in the country.

The mission of museums and galleries can be simply expressed. It is to make these collections readily accessible and useful to people today, and to preserve them so that they can be used by future generations. In the words of the Museums Association's definition of a museum, 'Museums enable people to explore collections for inspiration, learning and enjoyment. They are institutions that collect, safeguard and make accessible artefacts and specimens, which they hold in trust for society.' They are important to society not only because of their irreplaceable collections but also because of their educational, social and cultural value: the contribution that they make to improving people's lives and to the understanding of unfamiliar cultures and viewpoints.

The museums and galleries domain is one of huge variety in nature and scale, ranging from the biggest national museums to one-room institutions. Museums and galleries may be funded by central or local government, by universities, or through admission charges and commercial operations. They cater for a diverse range of users, from domestic and overseas tourists to local-community and scholarly audiences. This chapter describes these diversities and places them in a national and regional context.

Registered museums and galleries

There is no absolute or agreed figure for the total number of museums and galleries in the UK. Official sources estimate between 2,000 and 2,500 (DCMS, 1998; Carter et al., 1999: 5), depending on which of a number of definitions is used when counting. It has been suggested that there are probably between 1,250 and 1,500 institutions which 'realistically justify the title of museum in the sense that they deliver a certain quality of visitor experience, meet standards of efficiency and effectiveness, and satisfy the government's efforts to increase access and encourage lifelong learning' (Middleton, 1998: 15). But it is the Museums and Galleries Registration Scheme which provides the benchmark for identifying what is and what is not a museum, and that is the most useful starting point for an overview.

In 1988 the Museums and Galleries Commission introduced this scheme to register museums and galleries in the UK that had achieved certain minimum standards. Today there are 1,860 such institutions within Resource's Registration scheme, which means that they meet, or are working towards, basic standards in museum management, care of collections, and provision of services to the public.

In addition, between 1997 and 1999, collections held in 62 museums or groups of museums and galleries in the regions were identified as being of pre-eminent national and international importance and were given 'designated' status under the Designation Scheme for Museums and Galleries. This was a major step forward for these institutions. It formally acknowledged that not all the best or most important collections are held by the national museums and galleries, and laid the foundation for developing the distributed-national-collection concept in the museums and galleries domain.

Registered museums in England total 1,432 and break down into categories as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Number and distribution of English museums and galleries in the Museums and Galleries Registration Scheme (14 August 2001), by area-museum council region

	EMMS	NEMLAC	NWMS	SWMC	WMRWC	YMC	SEMS(E)	LMA	SEMA (a)	SEMA (b)	No.	% of total
Independent	35	21	51	119	49	48	73	66	66	37	565	39
Local-authority	49	29	71	56	62	78	51	33	46	52	527	37
National Trust	11	8	10	39	16	6	10	6	18	10	134	9
Armed-services	5	5	9	8	9	9	8	3	13	18	87	6
University	0	6	7	4	4	5	12	9	2	8	57	4
National	0	0	8	2	2	3	0	16	0	1	32	2
English Heritage	0	4	2	2	3	4	4	5	3	3	30	2
Total	100	73	158	230	145	153	158	138	148	129	1432	100

Source: Resource (a): Chatham (b): Winchester

Independent museums

Independent museums are managed outside the traditional frameworks of central or local government. Some receive annual grants from local authorities, but many have no public-funding support for their core activities. Almost all of them are set up and run as charitable companies. They range from small local organisations, mainly operated by volunteers, to large or national-scale operations. Their collections are very varied, covering the whole field of museum work, with a significant number being associated with historic, craft, industrial or transport sites. They have contributed much to the changing face of the nation's conserved heritage, focusing on visitor requirements, attractive presentations, and earned income to support the core activities of conservation and research.

Almost all independent museums have admission charges, and some operate only seasonally, deriving much of their income from tourists.

Local-authority museums

Most councils operate some form of museum service, though local-authority museums vary greatly in size, quality and importance. The larger museums are often run as part of a wide-ranging department such as leisure services. The major regional museums and galleries have encyclopaedic collections and serve large and often culturally diverse communities. Of all the institutions surveyed in this report, it is in most cases only these museums which achieve a critical mass sufficient to make them serious regional cultural players.

Outside the large conurbations there are hundreds of smaller institutions – local and community museums – which perform an important role by acting as a focus for the community and actively recording its history and environment. There is often little to distinguish a small local-authority museum from a small independent museum. In both cases the collections are

usually diverse, but most will have some direct connection with the district – perhaps examples of local rocks or fossils, tools and equipment, archaeological finds and assorted domestic and industrial artefacts. Although few artefacts are likely to be rare or valuable, they will usually have been made and used locally, or have important local associations. Such museums help to build community identity, are a resource for community activities, and are often an important part of local tourism.

National Trust and English Heritage museums

Many of the properties owned and managed by the National Trust house important collections. Typically these include furniture, fine and decorative art, costumes and antiquities, and often they were associated with the property when it was in private ownership. Similarly, some sites owned and managed by English Heritage also house collections.

The Museums and Galleries Registration Scheme was extended to include such collections in the mid-1990s. The English Heritage and National Trust sites that are registered as museums must have objects and a permanent collection; other types of site managed by these bodies – such as excavated archaeological sites, ruins, and coastline – cannot be registered as museums.

Armed-service museums

These museums cover the Army, Navy or Air Force. Most are regimental museums, and may preserve links back to units which are no longer active and to the places once associated with them. They are as much an important part of local history as of the history of warfare, and in many cases are integrated or associated with a local museum.

University museums

There are more than 300 university museums and collections in the United Kingdom. They range from large, internationally renowned institutions such as the Ashmolean, Fitzwilliam and Petrie museums (which

have collections with designated status) to smaller, special collections (often not arranged in a museum at all) that are known about only by specialists in a particular field. Their collections are perhaps among the least accessible.

National museums and galleries

The national museums and galleries are differentiated from the others by the fact that they receive their core funding from government, many of them have strong links with museums and galleries in the regions – usually through loans and exhibition tours – and developing these links is now embedded in their funding agreements. Some of them have also developed outstations in the regions – the National Museum of Science and Industry, for example, has the National Museum of Film, Photography and Television in Bradford and the National Railway Museum in York, and the Tate has created new galleries in St Ives and in Liverpool.

Regionalism

Since 1997, regionalism (like devolution) has re-emerged as a major political and constitutional issue. The creation of a parliament for Scotland and an assembly for Wales has been the most high-profile consequence to date. However, in England the establishment of regional assemblies and chambers, regional government offices, regional development agencies and the regional cultural consortia (see below) all point towards English regionalism being taken no less seriously. Development of the regional infrastructure is progressing slowly, but may be accelerated after the White Paper expected within the next few months. The Labour Party Manifesto included a commitment to holding referenda on the principle of elected regional assemblies, signalling that regional government was a serious agenda item for this government.

Regionalism brings with it clear implications and challenges: the desire to develop a regional voice; to think regionally; to be more integrated; to see new regional structures as presenting an opportunity to form a bridge between national policy and local delivery; to devolve more power and decision-making to the regions. While the picture is currently far from clear, museums and galleries will have to address seriously the question of how they should and could respond if the regional infrastructure is further strengthened.

Regionalism has already begun to impact upon the museums and galleries domain. The area museum councils (see below) have become markedly more regional and strategic in their policy and practice, seeking to work more closely with other regional agencies or developing agencies. English Heritage has created a new devolved regional structure, and the Heritage Lottery Fund is in the process of doing so through the creation of regional committees. There is a definite swing towards greater determination of cultural heritage policies, strategies and decisions at a regional level.

Strategic planning in the regions is developing through local and regional cultural strategies,² but mechanisms to implement strategies when they have

been agreed are emerging slowly. Additionally, there is a 'failure of fit' between regional and local cultural strategies (implementation of the latter being the clear responsibility of local authorities). With the local-authority museums and galleries subject to their governing bodies' priorities (as they should be), and independent museums focusing on survival, little consistency can be observed in the perceived place of museum and gallery services within these regional strategies.

Area museum councils

Within each region, an area museum council (an independent membership association) exists to support museum and gallery development. But the role of such councils is limited by resources³ and because, while they advise and support museum development, they do not deliver services directly to users. They often provide support for the regional federations – voluntary networking associations of museum and gallery professionals – and are highly valued by their membership.

Regional cultural consortia

Area museum councils are among the organisations that can nominate members of the regional cultural consortia (RCCs), which have been set up in each of the English regions outside London. RCCs aim to champion the cultural and creative interests in each region, forge links between these interests, and create a common vision expressed in a cultural strategy for the region (DCMS, 1999d). Seven of these strategies have now been published in the last few months and the final one will be published in November. It will then be for different members of the consortium to help implement particular elements of these strategies and this will involve area museum councils and local authorities' museums services working in partnership with other members. The consortia also work closely with RDAs (who have a seat on the consortium) particularly in relation to creative industries and tourism.

Regional development agencies

Business-led regional development agencies (RDAs) have the leading role in taking forward regional economic strategy. RDAs were formally launched in the eight English regions in April 1999. A ninth, in London, was set up in 2000 following the establishment of the Greater London Authority. RDAs' statutory roles are to further economic development and regeneration; promote business efficiency, investment and competitiveness; promote employment; enhance development and application of skills relevant to employment; and contribute to sustainable development.

RDAs' regional strategies were presented to government in 1999, and were broadly welcomed by the government in the following year (DETR, 2001b). The government's response to each of the individual regional strategies refers to the importance of the cultural sector in supporting RDAs' objectives, and the need to work with the regional cultural consortia (DETR, 2000). Some RDAs are now appointing cultural-sector officers.

A brief examination of regional economic strategies demonstrates the relevance of museums and galleries to RDAs' aims, which usually include reference to community regeneration and social inclusion and regional image and identity. To give just one example, the North West Development Agency's strategy contains objectives on developing skills, delivering urban renewal, tackling social exclusion, and placing communities and citizenship at the heart of growth and regeneration. Additionally, tourism and the creative industries are also among the sectors in the region that are targeted for action to make them more competitive (NWDA, 1999).

Other regional bodies

Regional chambers – voluntary groupings of councillors from local authorities in the region and representatives of the various sectors with a stake in the region's economic, social and environmental well-being (DETR, 2001a) – act to ensure that RDAs are responsive to regional views, with each RDA consulting its

chamber on strategies and other key documents (DETR, 2001b). Government offices – the agents of government in the English regions – also work closely with RDAs, and include Culture, Media and Sport among the government departments represented (DETR, 2001b).

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) publication *Creative Industries: Mapping Document 2001* (DCMS, 2001b) points to the importance of linkages between all the various regional agencies, emphasising 'the need for creative industries strategies to integrate with other related strategies, including regional development agencies, regional cultural consortiums, learning and skills councils and the small business service'.

Local authorities

While emerging regionalism may be a major factor influencing museums and galleries in the future, one must not forget the current importance of local authorities. They directly support and sustain about one third of museums and galleries in the regions and indirectly assist many more. They are the governing body for the majority of the major regional museums and galleries in England and their local policies and strategies in recent years have done much to prepare the ground for emphatic response to national priorities in education, learning, access and inclusion. The local democratic link provides a philosophical anchor into concepts of ownership, identity, diversity and a sense of place, even for services based in large cities with real or aspirational regional responsibilities.

The Core Cities and city-regions

The Core Cities group was formed in recognition of the shared agenda of a group of cities which represent England's largest city-regions. The original seven core cities were Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle and Sheffield. They have very recently been joined by Nottingham. Whilst co-ordinated in each city by the respective local authority, the Core Cities 'movement' comprises a wide range of

Funding

public, private and community interests. The Core Cities have come together to form a vision of the distinctive role that the big cities must play in national and regional life in the future. Culture is one of a range of key issues they aim to address. (Comedia, 2001).

In seeking to understand the dynamic of urban economics today we need to look beyond the current structure of local authorities to the interaction between central or core cities and their surrounding regions. Such an understanding can be achieved through the concept of the city-region. The city-region links the city to its hinterland of smaller urban centres and rural areas. The extent of a city-region is defined according to community and migration data, and can include a wide area. Birmingham's city-region, for example, includes Bromsgrove, Cannock Chane, Dudley, Lichfield, North Warwickshire, Redditch, Sandwell, Solihull, South Staffordshire, Tamworth, Walsall, Wolverhampton, and Wyre Forest. So while the city has a population of just over 1 million, the city-region has 3 million people within it. The original seven core city city-regions have a population of 14 million people – 30 per cent of England's population (Charles et al, 1999).

The core cities and city-regions agenda is expected to develop significantly over the next two years. (HM Government, 2000). The core cities should be the engines for the growth of the city-regions which are in turn vitally important components of the national economy.

² Local cultural strategies and regional cultural strategies have been stimulated by government initiatives. Details are available in *Local Cultural Strategies: Draft Guidance for Local Authorities in England* (DCMS, 1999b) and *Regional Cultural Consortiums* (DCMS, 1999d). Details are also available from the DCMS web site at http://www.culture.gov.uk/role/ndpb/ndpb_regional.html, and <http://www.culture.gov.uk/role/rcc.html>.

³ Revenue grants for 2001/2002 range from £243,882 to £1,238,484, and the total is only £4.1 million (Resource, 2001a).

Tables 2 to 7 illustrate the complexity of funding arrangements for museums and galleries in the regions. Funding comes from a number of different sources, and there is apparently little consistency in who gets how much. The key points to observe are the importance of local authorities in the funding of museums and galleries in the English regions (a contribution of £219 million in 2000/01), the leverage impact of the availability of Lottery money on both local-authority capital spending and business sponsorship, and the contribution made by government departments other than DCMS to all spending on museums and galleries (some £22.5 million in the UK in 1998/9).

A major issue is the difficulty of establishing reliable and comparable data over a long enough period of time to establish trends. In general, though, public funding for museums and galleries in the UK has not kept pace with inflation and has certainly not grown sufficiently to either meet rising service expectations from users or allow investment refurbishment, renewal and development.

The regional picture is skewed by the South East, which includes the national museums and galleries based in London, but DCMS investment does already exist in four other regions too. The other important observation about Table 3 is that the Arts and Humanities Research Board invest twice as much in the University museums and galleries than the Area Museums Councils do in all museums and galleries in the regions. Again, there is a heavy skew in favour of the South East (although the North West does very well too) but the level of investment – although certainly not adequate – is an indication of the importance of the university sector museums and galleries.

Table 2

Funding for museums and galleries in the UK, 1996/7–2000/01

£ million	1996/7	1997/8	1998/9	1999/00	2000/01
DCMS ¹	213.772	214.954	213.263	234.774	247.073
Heritage Lottery Fund	221.260	113.835	94.124	28.124	45.953
Local Authorities ²	160.000	169.000	186.000	186.000	219.000
Business Sponsorship	12.759	18.313	31.790		
Total	607.791	516.102	525.177	448.898	512.026

¹ Figure for 2000/2001 is an estimated outturn. Other central government departments also provide funding to museums and galleries – in 1998/99 this amounted to nearly £22.5 million

² Figures for England only. The 2000/2001 is an estimated outturn.

Source: Table 28.3 in Selwood, 2001b; DCMS; HLF

Table 3

Selected sources of funding for museums and galleries in the English regions, 1998/9

£ thousand	MOD	DCMS	AHRB	AMC	Total	% of Total
East Midlands	40	0	0	260	300	0.1
North East	35	975	218	332	1,560	0.7
North West	66	15,874	1,816	758	18,514	8.1
South East	10,420	178,473	6,512	1,324	196,729	85.8
South West	868	1,381	59	467	2,775	1.2
West Midlands	310	0	121	403	834	0.4
Yorkshire & Humberside	40	7,700	23	804	8,567	3.7
Total	11,779	204,403	8,749	4,348	229,279	100

Source: Table 28.7A in Selwood, 2001b

Table 4

Local-authority and Heritage Lottery Fund expenditure on museums and galleries by government-office regions 1998/9

£ thousand	Local Authority	HFL*	Total	% of Total
East	17,539	10,091	27,630	9.7
East Midlands	16,934	1,634	18,568	6.5
London	12,867	26,316	39,183	13.7
North East	11,303	1,568	12,871	4.5
North West	26,848	26,614	53,462	18.7
South East	32,247	5,643	37,890	13.3
South West	13,465	15,727	29,192	10.2
West Midlands	34,727	8,144	42,871	15.0
Yorkshire	20,779	3,494	24,273	8.5
Total	186,709	99,231	285,940	100

* There are considerable difficulties in calculating this figure, since the published accounts of actual spending in the plans and the estimates issued vary considerably.

Source: Based on Table 28.7B in Selwood, 2001b

There are some interesting mismatches between local authority and HLF spending although the figures relate only to one year (1998/99). The latter appears to be significantly under-represented in the East Midlands, North East, South East, West Midlands and Yorkshire

but over-represented in the other regions, assuming that established local authority spending patterns can be taken as a crude surrogate of expenditure needs in each region.

Table 5

Capital funding for museums and galleries in the UK, 1996/7–1998/9

£ million	1996/7	1997/8	1998/9
Central government*	2.171	6.785	25.299
Government agencies†	1.469	1.529	1.369
Lottery+	219.205	113.316	187.931
UK local authorities	29.855	34.693	62.928
Business sponsorship for capital projects‡	2.643	4.361	17.991
Total	255.344	160.684	295.518

Notes

*'Central government' includes DNH/Wolfson: Museums & Galleries Improvement Fund; DCMS: Acceptance in Lieu Scheme.

†'Government agencies' include MGC: purchase grant funds; MGC: capital grants; National Fund for Antiquities.

+ 'Lottery' includes Heritage Lottery Fund; Millennium Commission; ACE; SAC; ACW; ACNI.

‡ NHMF expenditure on museums and galleries could not be disaggregated.

Source: Based on Table 28.3 in Selwood, 2001b

Table 6

Capital expenditure by museums and galleries in England

£ million

1996/7	1997/8	1998/9	1999/2000	2000/01
65.02	104.5	170.24	200.04	156.08

Note

The figures refer to DCMS sponsored museums in England. Expenditure includes money from a variety of sources e.g. DCMS grant-in-aid, lottery funding and business sponsorship. Figure for 2000/01 is an estimated outturn.

Table 7

Business support for museums and galleries in England, by regional arts board areas, 1996/7–1998/9*

£ million	1996/7	1997/8	1998/9
East	0.116	0.022	0.190
East Midlands	0.089	0.061	0.119
London	8.774	10.076	22.005
North West	0.659	0.698	0.615
Northern	0.261	0.075	0.190
South East	0.058	0.009	0.069
South West	0.156	0.114	0.077
Southern	0.137	0.148	1.378
West Midlands	0.151	3.645	2.721
Yorkshire & Humberside	0.427	1.142	1.505
Total	10.828	15.990	28.869

Note

*This may include figures for the Pairing Scheme. A similar regional breakdown for the Pairing Scheme is not available

Source: Based on Table 28.6 in Selwood, 2001b

Capital expenditure fluctuates quite significantly from one year to another, largely dependent on HLF's awards. However it must be significant that both local authority and business sponsorship increased sharply at the end of the 1990s, probably indicating the leverage power of lottery money.

This table shows that although business support appears to be on the increase, in fact most of that increase (73 per cent) is concentrated in London with the West Midlands and Yorkshire being the only two regions outside the South East to register serious increases. This reflects a widely acknowledged problem: that it is much more difficult to raise sponsorship and other types of funding from the business sector outside of London (and the South East) than in the capital. Business wealth is polarised in

London and few major companies have their headquarters in the regions. This weakens the ability of the major regional museums and galleries to raise funds independently of the public purse and significantly increases the need for government intervention.

The future of funding

The imbalance between London and the other regions is clear from the above tables. Government, lottery and business sector funding sources all favour the capital. The regions are culturally rich but financially impoverished. In this context it is difficult for the major museums and galleries (and their governing bodies) to source funds adequate enough to unlock their potential and deliver social and economic benefits to a mass audience.

3

What museums and galleries can deliver

- 3.1 Education and learning**
 - Demonstrating the potential**
 - What can be achieved**
- 3.2 Access and inclusion**
 - Social inclusion as a priority policy**
 - What can be achieved**
- 3.3 Economic regeneration**
 - What can be achieved**
- 3.4 Collections for inspiration and creativity**
 - What can be achieved**
- 3.5 Excellence and high quality in delivering core services**
 - What can be achieved**
- 3.6 Modernisation and Rationalisation**
 - Organisational leadership**
 - Changing the culture of museums and galleries**
 - Rationalisation**
 - Information and communications technology**
- 3.7 Measuring outputs, outcomes and benefits**
- 3.8 Summary**

Education and learning

36 This chapter outlines the key benefits that the major regional and other museums and galleries can deliver if additional government funding is forthcoming. What are presented here are the Task Force's initial ideas, which would be finalised as part of detailed discussions with government and other stakeholders.

In this chapter we describe:

- what museums and galleries have already demonstrated that they can achieve when given the opportunity;
- what the Task Force believes museums and galleries can deliver if its recommendations are adopted – these deliverables (or outcomes) are the clearest indications that the proposed restructuring will bring about a transformation in the contribution that museums and galleries make to society;
- how achievement of the deliverables should be measured.

The chapter is organised around our five key aims for museums and galleries in the twenty-first century (see page 21), with additional sections on modernisation and rationalisation and on the measurement of outputs.

Demonstrating the potential

The success that museums and galleries have had in attracting learning and education challenge funding over the last five years might be considered sufficient endorsement of their potential to make a real and valuable impact in this area. In 1996 the Museums and Galleries Commission (MGC) published *Managing Museum and Gallery Education: MGC Guidelines for good practice*. The MGC and the Area Museums Councils encourage museums and galleries to adopt these guidelines and to use them to shape and direct their practice. In 1999 a two-year £500,000 challenge fund was set up by MGC/DCMS to fund projects which aim to improve museum and gallery education practice and provision. Also in 1999 the Clore Foundation launched a small grants programme for developing and extending education work in museums and galleries where successful education programmes are already taking place. £1 million was made available for the period 1999 to 2003. The first round was twelve times oversubscribed. In 2000 the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) set up a Museum and Gallery Education Programme, funded with £2.5 million over two years. In an open competition 286 museums and galleries bid and 40 projects were funded. Finally, although the Heritage Lottery Fund has no separate fund for learning and education, education and access are one of its key strategic priorities and since 1994 it has allocated over £100 million to "educational" projects.

All three challenge funds were launched only after a thorough investigation of the existing evidence. There is now also a very substantial body of evidence about the power of learning in museums and galleries which is international in scope. A recent review cited 172 books and papers on this subject, worldwide. The indisputable conclusion is that museums and galleries are important learning environments (Hooper-Greenhill and Moussouri, 2001), and a range of funding bodies recognise this and have targeted museums and galleries for their support.

With skill, imagination and flair, museums and galleries can transform the artefacts and specimens in their collections into learning and educational resources. As David Anderson says in *A Common Wealth: Museums in the Learning Age* (a recent comprehensive study commissioned and endorsed by DCMS):

Museums at their finest are educational institutions of immense expressive power and authority. They communicate with us across boundaries of language, culture and time, and suggest comparisons which illustrate our experience of the present ... Through museums we have direct contact with peoples of all ages and cultures, experience the unimaginable variety of the natural world and expand our understanding of what it means to be human. (Anderson, 1999: 7)

Many museums were originally created as educational institutions, and they have the potential to play a crucial role in supporting formal education, particularly at school level, where many teachers already often use them to breathe new life into pupils' flagging enthusiasm for a subject. Nothing else quite matches the experience of handling the genuine article – a Roman coin once used by a centurion; an ancient pot bearing the indentation of the maker's thumb – or looking directly at an Impressionist painting. However, museums need to be willing to present collections in new ways in order to link them with what is going on in education – and in particular the curriculum. Flexible approaches are necessary to cater for different age groups and aptitudes – the more participatory the better (Samuels and Sabin, 2001: 31, 39). In conjunction with the former Department for Education and Employment (DfEE), DCMS has produced guidelines to ensure that the learning power of museums is acknowledged by the educational community, and is reflected in that community's own policies, plans and mission statements (DCMS, 2000b).

Enhancing educational achievement and promoting lifelong learning

Nottingham Castle Museum approached the secondary school with the lowest league-table ranking in Nottingham with proposals about partnership with its inclusion unit. Initially, there was considerable scepticism. An artist was brought in to work with twelve-to-fourteen-year-olds. This is rarely easy: there can be clashes between approaches to formal and informal education, and even issues about using first names or surnames for staff can be difficult. Working together takes time.

A social-history and photography project was begun – for six weeks originally, but then extended to nine. The students were allowed to look around the Nottingham Goose Fair before it opened – a plan that involved the school's inclusion officer dressing as a goose. The students went off in all directions taking photographs that are still on display in the museum. This success led to searches for further funding and projects. As with many such ventures, one thing leads to another when the outcomes are as strong as these – above all, self-esteem for children who considered themselves failures.

Educationally, museums and galleries do much more than serve schoolchildren, however. They are places of informal learning for people of all ages and backgrounds, at all levels of capability and interest, and make learning enjoyable and entertaining. Modern museums provide activities for toddlers, and run reminiscence sessions for older people. They broaden people's horizons, as chance encounters with objects, stories and information ignite interest in previously unfamiliar areas, leading to more profound learning experiences. The informality, openness and flexibility of museum learning means that people can make their own discoveries and create their own meanings as they are inspired to begin to make sense of new subjects.

In 1999 the MGC/DCMS (now Resource/DCMS) Education Challenge Fund was established to build

capacity in small museums in advance of access and learning standards being incorporated into the Museums and Galleries Registration Scheme. External evaluation of the success of this fund has demonstrated the potential of small museums to deliver against the learning and inclusion agendas, but also the time and investment needed to enable small and underfunded museums to develop user-focused programmes (Hooper-Greenhill and Dodd, 2001). The challenge is substantially greater for the major regional museums and galleries, but the rewards and returns are likely to be significantly greater too.

Recent work, including projects funded through the Education Challenge Fund, has started to provide a clear demonstration of the positive learning outcomes associated with use of museums. These projects have, most often, focused on the impact on people participating in specific museum programmes. For example, CLMG (Campaign for Learning through Museums and Galleries) is involved with a number of specific projects focusing on museums' role in learning. CLMG's Museums and Galleries Lifelong Learning Initiative (MGLI), funded by DfEE, consists of three lifelong learning projects. Of these, the Making Memories project was unusual in that it targeted groups of older learners – one strand involved ICT training for older members of the community, to support the creation of a community archive. The overall evaluation of the project found that 'individuals have all acquired new skills and developed their approach to learning whether the topic be art, ICT or local history' (Yorkshire Museums Council, 2001, p.21). Similarly, the Learning Together project, which piloted and evaluated family learning activities in Gateshead, also identified skills developments (North East Museums Service, 2001). The third MGLI project, Museum Fever, which encouraged young people to become involved with Salford Museums and Art Gallery, had very clear and positive outcomes in relation to learning, for example around the suitability of museums as a learning environment. The final report on the Museum Fever project commented that:

One thing that came out of the many evaluations undertaken is that [participants] clearly see museums as a learning environment and noted that the project has helped them build confidence and assertiveness by developing and using such skills as video and photography. For example, they took an active and valid role in temporary exhibitions by undertaking oral history interviews. (North West Museums Service, 2001:4)

A particularly significant aspect of the Museum Fever project is that it will continue to have meaningful impacts beyond the period of the funded project. Its participants appear determined that the benefits of the project will be sustained in the longer term:

The group has and will continue to add material to the collections and archives. The group has also and will continue to influence and suggest ways the museum can attract young people. They have made it very clear that they want the project to continue so they can work directly with the museum's exhibition team and give a young person's viewpoint on future exhibitions ... A great measure of the success of this project is that all participants/partners do not want it to end – as they feel they are really at the beginning – this initial project being the preparation for a bigger, longer development. (North West Museums Service, 2001:6,10)

The recently completed Represent project, at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, which was funded through the MGC/DCMS Education Challenge Fund aimed to improve the confidence and communication skills of young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, by engaging them in the activities of the museums service (Martin, 2001). The following broad learning benefits were identified in the project evaluation (Pontin, 2001:29):

- 'increased confidence'
- 'increased motivation in their lives'
- 'increased skills base'

- ‘developed relationships and made new friends’
- ‘gained a wider cultural experience.’

A demonstration of the impact of museums on children’s learning is found in an evaluation of seventeen DfEE-funded pilot study support projects, undertaken by Education Extra, the Foundation for After-School Activities. The evaluation (Education Extra, 1999:3) found that successful aspects of the projects included the ways they could:

- ‘enthuse and motivate students’
- ‘promote confidence, knowledge and skills’
- ‘connect with and enrich the in-school curriculum’
- ‘create dynamic learning environments which were attractive to most pupils, including those who are underachieving and difficult.’

Positive impacts for pupils were seen not just in terms of new knowledge, but also new skills and new confidence and self-esteem. Once again, the evaluation report commented on the suitability of museums as a learning environment: ‘The report demonstrates that museums and galleries offer a creative, dynamic learning environment which can reinforce the strengths of study support as an effective learning experience for young people – helping to raise achievement’ (Education Extra, 1999:4).

Although learning outcomes are most readily associated with some kind of specific programme (although not always formal education programmes), there is also limited evidence of learning from museum visits unrelated to a specific programme. One piece of American research, based on a study of exhibition visitors at the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of Natural History, identified significant learning outcomes for visitors to an exhibition (Falk et al, 1998:114). Perhaps one of the most interesting findings was that, in terms of association with learning outcomes, a strong ‘entertainment’ motivation was as important as an ‘educational’ motivation:

As would be expected, individuals voicing a strong educational motivation showed significantly greater learning than did those expressing a low

educational motivation. Less expected, a similar relationship existed amongst those individuals voicing strong entertainment motivations...’ (Falk et al, 1998:114–5).

This is clearly a positive finding in terms of learning outcomes, as it suggests that these are still experienced even when the museum visitor is motivated by entertainment rather than education. In addition, as the authors of the study point out, this research showed that ‘most museum visitors see no apparent conflict between fun and learning’ (Falk et al, 1998:117). Similarly, those visiting museums and galleries for social or inspirational motivations might expect to derive learning benefits from their visit.

The following learning outcomes were identified in the evaluation of a recent exhibition at the Science Museum:

There was very strong evidence that learning was occurring on *Who am I?*. This learning consisted of not only the acquisition of individual facts, but also: the synthesis of complicated ideas; the consolidation of existing knowledge; the development of cognitive skills; challenging of beliefs and values; and inspiring interest in genetics and brain science. ... Learning occurred from all the interpretative media; interactive exhibits, Find Out More, Tell stations, object cases, gallery books, projections. Despite the perception that the interactives were for children and the cases were for adults, both these groups of visitors learnt from both these media. (Science Museum, 2001, not page numbered)

Publicly available evidence of these kinds of very general learning outcomes is now quite substantial and evidence from properly evaluated projects, like those discussed above, is helping to establish a clear picture of the learning impact of museums. The breadth of this impact is also clear: it extends to areas such as confidence and self-esteem, and relationships with

others, as well as acquisition of skills and knowledge. Museums and galleries have established their education and learning credentials – both in formal curriculum contexts and in lifelong learning – and their importance has been recognised by government departments and educational bodies. Further investment will bring even greater benefits.

Walsall Museum and Art Gallery developed an exhibition aimed at raising awareness of HIV and broader health issues, with funding from the Arts Council of England, Walsall Health Authority, and West Midlands Arts. The exhibition included works of art from the UK and abroad, and met with a strong favourable response, as well as resulting in a local rise in HIV tests of 30 per cent during the period it was on. An education programme evaluated by the health authority was developed for pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4.

Tameside Museums and Galleries Service has formed a partnership with the Hallé Orchestra, Manchester, to explore links between music and the visual arts. Museums and galleries within the service (Astley Chetham Art Gallery, Portland Basin Museum, and Ashton Central Art Gallery) will host a series of residencies over two years involving a visual artist and the coordinator of the Hallé's gamelan.

As a follow-up to a 1997 community-history project run by Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery, community members set up the Keyham History Group and worked with a freelance community worker (funded by the Single Regeneration Budget) and the museum outreach officer on reminiscence sessions and exchanges of research information. The group is now recognised as an authority on local history, and has worked with and advised other community groups. Funding has been secured from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Single Regeneration Budget to continue the project. Plymouth City Museum staff have also worked with elderly people on a series of reminiscence sessions through the city council's sheltered-housing unit.

What can be achieved

Investment in the learning and education capacity of museums and galleries in the regions can deliver a number of outcomes. Some of them will be general but we recommend also that there should be some very targeted objectives too. The Task Force has identified the following objectives:

- Increased access to learning and education resources;
- A comprehensive and integrated service;
- Teachers better skilled to use museums and galleries;
- Museums as learning centres;
- Putting objects into classroom learning.

Increased access to learning and education resources

The Task Force believes that giving people increased access to a network of collections which can be used to support formal and informal education, will enable them to experience museums and galleries in a different way. They will have access to exhibitions which cater for a whole range of learning styles – going beyond simply transmitting information in the tradition of ‘We put on exhibitions which tell you things, and you walk around and absorb (or don’t absorb) the information we provide.’ Access will also be increased through online services, especially the promotion of study and classroom materials. The result will be the transformation of museums and galleries from popular but intermittently effective learning spaces into key learning centres for the twenty-first century.

Access can be improved and achieved in many different ways. Access to the resources of a museum or gallery is an essential prerequisite of maximising the educational and learning value of collections. Access may be facilitated by scholarship (increasing our knowledge and understanding of the collections), documentation (cataloguing that knowledge in a way that makes it accessible to those without specialist knowledge) and interpretation (explaining the meaning of the collections through exhibitions and learning

materials). None of the major regional museums and galleries – which should be our priority target – have full access even to key collections. Investment is needed to achieve this.

A comprehensive and integrated service

The first objective is to ensure that the major regional museums and galleries provide a comprehensive service to schools. Once achieved, this will act as a beacon for others to both learn from and aspire to. Government aid will be needed to create learning and education teams sufficiently resourced (trained/experienced staff and operational budgets) to:

- Conduct a needs analysis of all schools (including curriculum mapping) in the region (in partnership with the single regional agency);
- Access every school in the region and secure visits to either the major regional museum or gallery or redirect to a local museum with the capacity to meet the school's requirements;
- Develop universal support materials necessary to run learning and education programmes effectively;
- Develop a range of informal (but structured) learning materials and contact sessions for a variety of adult users;
- Offer training and support (including materials) to staff in smaller museums who want to develop a hands-on learning experience or a direct teaching service.

At present, there is far too much duplication in effort and use of resources within each region. Everyone seems to be doing similar things with the same sorts of schools, but using uniquely originated materials and methods. The concept of a National Curriculum is now well embedded, and it should not be beyond the museums and galleries community to standardise and coordinate its efforts – on the basis of what is most appropriate to each region. Each service should be unique in its local connections and in style and presentation, rather than in content and materials, which can to a large extent be standardised. This will

leave time and resources for the major regional museums and galleries to cover the more specialist areas of the curriculum which only they may be able to resource. The resultant efficiency gains and quality guarantees will surely be welcomed by all in the museums and galleries community.

Teachers skilled in using museums and galleries

Resource currently administers the Sharing Museum Skills Millennium Awards Scheme, which provides opportunities for museum staff to spend three to eight weeks working in a different institution; the seconded staff then take back to their own organisation new skills and experience for use in improving both their own practice and the services provided for users. The Task Force would like to see this scheme extended and broadened, to enable teachers and curators to share their knowledge and understanding of each other's learning environments and to develop their own teaching skills. The aim is to improve the use that schools and teachers make of collections and to improve the recruitment and retention of teachers in the region. The major regional museums and galleries could both provide the placements for teachers and advise on curatorial participation.

Museums as learning centres

Innovative education and learning services made possible by project or challenge funding have been documented in a number of recent assessments in addition to those already discussed above (for example, GLLAM, 2000; DCMS, 2000b; and Dodd and Sandell, 2001). But such successes and achievements are not consistent and are often not sustainable – because of lack of capacity: insufficient skilled and experienced staff, together with inadequate facilities and operating budgets. They are also frustrated by a hugely inefficient system.

All major regional museums and galleries should develop permanently accessible learning centres and provide advice, support and resources to enable other museums in the region to build on best practice and

develop their own capacity to deliver learning initiatives. The new learning centres should work closely with libraries, archives, local universities and colleges to develop an integrated approach to learning within local communities. Museum and galleries must see themselves as part of a collaboration to achieve increased learning benefits for people.

Putting objects into classroom learning

Major regional museums and galleries should provide every primary school in the region with units which combine handling and display material (replaced after one to three years). These will be designed to support the teaching of core history curriculum areas such as the Romans, the Victorians, or Britain since the 1930s. Creation, distribution and coverage should be coordinated by the major regional museums and galleries in each region. The purpose of these units is to give all children of primary-school age the experience of working with objects as part of their core curriculum entitlement. The scheme will add value to children's learning, and will also help them to understand the use and value of objects and introduce them to using a museum or gallery for learning purposes. It will also encourage children and teachers to understand how museum collections connect the past to the present.

A pilot scheme along these lines has been devised by Reading Museum Service in collaboration with local teachers, which means that costings and methodologies have already been developed. Reading has begun to evaluate the impact that taking loan items into schools can have, and on children's attainment and engagement with learning, and preliminary findings indicate the power of objects in the learning process across curriculum subjects and their effectiveness in motivating children to want to learn. As part of its DfEE-funded Loans for the New Millennium project, Reading Museum Service also has tailor-made loans consultancy days to suit the needs of twenty institutions interested in creating or improving their theoretical knowledge and practical understanding of

loans and services. Participants have included museum-studies students from University College London and staff from Ditchling Museum and Walsall Art Gallery. A new development has put details of objects in the loan boxes onto the museum's website, where they can be reserved online.

Access and inclusion

Social inclusion as a priority policy

Alongside learning, the two biggest challenges that museums and galleries need to address in their community are social inclusion and cultural diversity. The government is leading a nationwide drive to confront these issues. In the foreword to *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: National Strategy Action Plan*, Tony Blair describes his vision for Britain as 'one nation, not separated by class, race or where people live' (Social Exclusion Unit, 2001: 5). Museums and galleries in the regions should share that vision, and should endeavour to realise it in their work. Many people working in museums and galleries believe in the principle of social inclusion. However, effective and sustainable action needs leadership, commitment and resources. The current infrastructure tends to discourage or hold back those governing body members and professionals who are eager to see change.

The government has embodied its principles in two policy documents: *Libraries, Museums, Galleries and Archives for All: Co-operating Across the Sectors to Tackle Social Exclusion* (DCMS, 2001d) and *The Learning Power of Museums – A Vision for Museum Education* (DCMS, 2000b). It considers that the present provision of services to address social exclusion and education is inconsistent, and ranges from the outstanding to the nonexistent. It has therefore identified a number of key objectives which should be central to the ethos of all museums, regardless of their size, location or origin, and which should form the basis of mission statements and strategic and operational plans. The overarching objective is that 'social inclusion should be mainstreamed as a policy priority for all libraries, museums, galleries and archives'. Other objectives include aiming for the widest possible access to collections and knowledge, and outreach / audience development, with outreach activities being seen as 'an integral part of the role' of museums and galleries. The policy objectives also refer to museums and galleries acting as 'agents of social change', through partnerships and projects focusing on socially excluded people. (DCMS, 2001d:8)

There is already a significant literature (and it is growing all the time) describing projects which demonstrate how museums and galleries can help combat various forms of social exclusion (DCMS, 2000; GLLAM, 2000; Dodd and Sandell, 2001). Most of these focus on individuals or small groups and seek to improve the quality of life or increase opportunities for social interaction. The approach and reach of such projects is shown to be valuable by evaluation and mirrors similar successes in the arts (Matarasso, 1997). But although many museums and galleries have engaged with the social inclusion agenda through challenge-funded projects or by setting aside small ringfenced budgets, hardly any have actually mainstreamed social inclusion as a policy priority.

One museums service that has done so is that of Tyne and Wear, and the results are impressive. Tyne and Wear Museums Service has declared its mission to be 'To help people determine their place in the world, and understand their identities, so enhancing their self-respect and their respect for others'. This ethos is central to all its activities, as demonstrated by the recent 'Making History' project. The museums service approached hundreds of community groups, residents associations and support agencies to find volunteers to put together a new social-history collection which tells the story of individual lives today. The exhibition provided a clear demonstration to the community that their lives are important to everyone. Being involved in creating an exhibition helps to develop individuals' creative ability, and enables them to develop a greater understanding of themselves and society in general; this is a particularly beneficial experience for those at risk of exclusion.

The success of Tyne and Wear's work may be measured by its changed visitor profile. In 1990, 80 per cent of the services visitors were categorised as ABC1 and 20 per cent as C2DE. Ten years later, 48 per cent were ABC1 and 52 per cent C2DE, (Fleming, 2000), contrasting with, for example, 89 per cent ABC1 and 11 per cent C2DE among a group of eight national museums and galleries assessed by DCMS (Selwood,

2001(b)). Nationally, on average, 55 per cent of museum and gallery visitors may come from ABC1 categories, but this can obscure significant variations which are dependent upon the dominant subject matter or the admission charges policy (Davies, 1994: 56-7).

What has been achieved in Tyne and Wear demonstrates that pursuing an ambitious social and education mission does not have to be at the expense of knowledge or quality – you can have a museums service with both excellent scholarship and diverse audiences. Indeed, unless social and educational agendas are formally founded on knowledge, in turn based on collections which are well cared for and accessible, then what museums and galleries do becomes ill-informed and superficial. The success of Tyne and Wear is the result of the following (in no particular order and not necessarily with more importance attached to one factor than to another):

- strong, visionary, leadership;
- a vision of a popular, relevant, accountable, accessible museums and galleries service, fuelled by a belief in the museums as a social, cultural and educational powerhouse, a democratic institution valued by the whole of the public;
- a culture of challenge, change and achievement;
- thinking and planning strategically;
- developing new audiences and encouraging existing visitors to come more often so that the number of visits doubles between the end of the 1980s and 2000;
- increasing opening hours;
- making major investments in infrastructure (new displays and facilities), especially with help from the Heritage Lottery Fund;
- investing in making the collections more accessible for educational and other users – better research, more documentation, new stores;
- developing a positive attitude towards local authority sponsors and partners.

Because many major regional museums and galleries are located in areas of the highest social deprivation, they are ideally placed to play an important

role in community regeneration. Their neutrality allows for the development of non-judgemental programmes. They are a political, social and moralising tool of authority, and by promoting respect for all peoples and all nations – without discrimination – they can promote understanding, tolerance and friendship, thus encouraging those who may feel that they are on the fringes of acceptable society to play a full part in community life. To be effective ‘agents of social change’, regional museums and galleries will need to do the following:

- place social inclusion and learning as a mainstream policy priority and re-direct resources accordingly;
- be prepared to work closely – and often as a junior partner – with others who are experienced and better resourced;
- develop fully resourced outreach services to ensure that they are reaching the entire population;
- change the content and presentational style of what is displayed – to make collections more interesting and accessible to a wider range of people;
- change the professional culture within the museums and galleries themselves.

The benefits to users and participants have been demonstrated. According to research carried out for Resource into neighbourhood-renewal and social-inclusion work in museums, archives and libraries, 89 per cent of respondents stated that their projects had made a difference to individuals involved in the project, and 33 per cent stated that projects had had an impact on the community as a whole (IMRI, 2001). Respondents reported a range of benefits to participants, including:

- new skills leading to employment;
- increased self-esteem;
- broadened horizons;
- help with learning difficulties;
- increased trust in public services;
- a sense of involvement and being part of history;
- an enhanced feeling of inclusion in the community.

The best museums and galleries are inclusive

public institutions, serving and attracting diverse communities. They are a key part of the public realm, providing safe, open, spaces for dialogue and debate – a social meeting place and an intellectual marketplace. They are places in which to debate contemporary issues on the basis of knowledge of the past and aspirations for the future. They encourage civic pride. They create a shared sense of belonging by acting as a mirror to society, representing and validating a wide range of histories and experiences. As David Fleming, President of the Museums Association, has written: ‘Countering negative perceptions and turning museums into powerful examples of social change are central aims of many museums, especially in our big cities – how could they be otherwise?’ (Fleming, 1991: 31) The best museum and gallery social-inclusion work has been inspirational, creative and life-enhancing for those involved (GLLAM, 2000).

Personal growth and development: neighbourhood wardens’ reminiscence work with elderly people

Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery has worked closely with Plymouth City Council’s sheltered housing unit on reminiscence work with elderly people who are often isolated from social activities. A good example is the Stonehouse district, where older members of the local community were involved in a series of thematic reminiscence sessions. This approach places emphasis on the people and the skills and experiences they can contribute. Hence people are brought together by theme, not by social group – an approach that is considered more sensitive and socially inclusive. This ethos marks all the outreach work carried out with communities. The museum is dependent on people and what they can offer. Emphasis is given to projects that validate people’s skills and experiences, making individuals feel valued and their stories and lives appreciated.

A very important piece of research/evaluation is just being completed as the Task Force report goes to press. It is an assessment of the impact of the influential

Open Museum in Glasgow, initiated in 1990 by Glasgow Museums as an innovative and inclusive project that takes museum collections out to those communities that the museums had failed to reach. It is a longstanding project that has developed for over a decade, from the initial, experimental pilot through to a more adventurous period of consolidation, recently remodelling itself in pragmatic response to local government changes.

In that ten-year period, Open Museum designed and delivered a portfolio of projects targeted at specific groups, with outputs for participants ranging from new self-directed action groups to improved standards of school pupils’ work, to SVQs (Scottish Vocational Qualifications). It enabled the museums service to amass considerable information on its communities and their needs, on outreach service design and delivery, and the two-way basis on which museums can learn from their outreach work. As a model of best practice, the project has gained considerable respect from the museums profession.

The project’s performance means it is now an important contributor to the city council’s broader social policy-making (e.g., Anti-Poverty Strategy, city-wide Youth Strategy) and forms an increasing part of the city’s corporate initiatives. New relationships have also been forged with Housing Associations, which has delivered new resources for Open Museum work.

A multiplicity of new opportunities, higher levels of motivation and energy levels, and greater self-confidence resulted for participants in Open Museum. Projects acted as a catalyst that propelled people into a new and more productive life phase. Open Museum has successfully opened up public perception of museums and history – previously regarded as stuffy and irrelevant – making these come alive through project animation and direct linkage to people’s lives. In particular the evaluation highlighted stimulation: increased understanding of others’ views and beliefs; improved communication skills; and enhanced learning as four tangible outcomes from the museum’s programmes (Dodd and O’Rain, 2001).

Quotations from interviewed participants in Open Museum projects

'It's changed my ideas about myself. [...] Knowing that you can do something [...] with a professional environment – just feeling that instantly makes you more confident, you feel better about yourself. [...] Basically it teaches you ... you can turn your hand to anything.' (Diverse Groups Placement Scheme)

'It was a huge change in my life. [...] I was able to express myself for the first time. [...] The project has made me realise I have potential and other people think I have potential, whereas I thought it didn't matter to anybody. [...] It's given me opportunities and what that brings.' (Project Ability)

'It's given me confidence ... interviewing other people and meeting other people. It's given me skills I didn't think I had. [...] Museums are not as stuffy as they used to be [...] it is fun now and an experience.' (2000 Glasgow Lives)

'The aim was to stimulate – it improved their mood; to communicate – which increased their feeling of wellbeing. It was also good for checking powers of memory and concentration. [...] The familiar objects gave them confidence to communicate more freely. Patients with poor vision could touch and hold. Boxes with smells went down really, really well, especially with two blind patients. [...] Patients were bright and alert when they used these things.' (Reminiscence box work with elderly hospital patients)

'We use the things so the kids feel they are theirs. It's really important to say – "This is yours but you have to look after it. You've paid for it so you use it." [...] When I've shown the boxes to colleagues out of Glasgow they are desperate for them but they can't have them. There'd be no point in doing it if the kids didn't get better grades. At the end of the day that's what we get assessed on. The fact that we use it as an integrated part of our course

means it's working. 4.5 years of heavy use of material has contributed to rising grades. This is only possible with real objects.' (School-based Museum Kit projects)

However, although a significant number of innovative and successful projects have been designed to support government objectives, and many museums and galleries have used available challenge funding to make a contribution in this area (GLLAM, 2000; DCMS, 2000), such contributions have usually been neither coordinated within a clearly defined strategy nor evaluated against any agreed industry norms or benchmarks. These three factors – no core funding, no strategy and no evaluation – suggest that even museums' and galleries' current activity in social inclusion is not sustainable.

In summary, collections held by museums and galleries in trust for society must become more accessible both physically and intellectually. And in becoming more accessible they must also be democratised. In the past, access to collections and interpretation of them have been tightly controlled by a curatorial caste. In the future, this will change: controllers will become facilitators, and connoisseurs will become educators. A consequence of making collections accessible to more people will be that society will find new uses and users for them, place new values on them, and insist on having a greater say in their use, management and future.

Community empowerment: high-rise project

Sheffield City Museum worked in partnership with tenants' associations, councillors and other local organisations and individuals to set up a photographic exhibition documenting life in two blocks of flats in Sheffield: Park Hill and Regent Court. Both blocks are examples of mass public housing in post-war Britain. They were designed on the 'streets in the sky' concept, in which wide, continuous decks were seen as 'a way of recreating the community spirit of traditional streets'. At the time they were built, they were seen as a most

ambitious inner-city development and a social experiment, and as such they attracted a lot of attention – both positive and negative. Park Hill was the more frequently in the spotlight, and was recently listed as a Grade II building of architectural and historical importance by English Heritage. Park Hill tenants found it hard to cope with the attention this attracted. This was one element that affected the project directly, as there were trust issues to be resolved.

The museum worked at engaging people from the local areas by involving and consulting with them from the early stages of the project development. The research and the photographs taken both by a professional photographer and by individuals living in the blocks of flats were included in an exhibition organised at the museum. The project was partly funded by Engage, which provided support for workshops, transport for participants, and the fee of a part-time educator to work with schools. The museum is currently looking at ways of continuing the project after the exhibition has finished – by working with people in their own area, setting up social-history groups, running video projects, and helping participants apply for grants for similar projects.

What can be achieved

The Task Force has identified the following achievable outcomes in relation to Access and Inclusion:

- Increased usage
- Change of visitor profile
- Outreach services and audience development
- Cultural Champions Programme
- Inclusive places for learning and inspiration

Increased usage

An increase in the numbers of visits and visitors to the regional museums – both in general and specifically from areas of the highest social deprivation – must be a priority outcome. It is suggested that – if the recommendations of this report are accepted – the numbers of visits each year to the major regional museums and galleries could be substantially increased.

To meet the demands of all potential users, museums and galleries must make their research collections properly available to professional, leisure and commercial researchers, with the ultimate aim that all collections of value to research should be available through booked visits and online. New purpose-built stores – often shared by institutions – should be designed to be fully accessible and open to the public. The emphasis must be on how to reach the user. This will mean changes to the way in which material is collected and interpreted, as well as changes to the structure or internal design of buildings and facilities (Croft, 2001).

Changing visitor profiles

The perception, among journalists and other commentators, is that museums and galleries can be lumped with opera, ballet, etc. as a high-brow activity pursued by a relatively small elite social group. Research allegedly supports this view. In fact, the picture is much more complicated than this suggests. Perhaps the better educated visit more often, but they certainly don't have a monopoly on visiting. Nevertheless there is room for improvement. We need more relevant and contemporary exhibitions which are pitched at attracting a more educationally and culturally diverse audience. (Museums consultant, quoted in Selwood, 2001b:358).

Being inclusive means creating that 'more educationally and culturally diverse audience', and one important deliverable will be to measure changes in response to strategic initiatives designed to ensure that the profile of museum visitors more closely reflects the profile of the region's population, especially in terms of social class and ethnicity. This will require baseline research to measure progress towards meeting this objective.

With specific regard to disabled people, research commissioned by Resource has shown that 25 per cent of museums interviewed have never had a formal

disability audit, and of the 75 per cent which have had an audit less than half have carried out any of the recommendations made in it (SOLON Consultants, 2001). The research has concluded that there is a need within the profession for disability-awareness training which will draw attention to the range and types of actions which museums can take to improve access for disabled people. When interviewed, museum staff identified three priorities for improving access for disabled people: physically improving the buildings (22.1 per cent); developing collections, displays and exhibits that relate to everyone (13.2 per cent); and technological innovation (8.4 per cent).

It is hoped that the Department for Work and Pensions might fund the statutory access improvements required from 2004 by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. These will not only enable museum and gallery buildings to be inclusive for all, but will also ensure that existing and enhanced education and learning services can be delivered. Without government intervention most museums and galleries will struggle to remain accessible and meet the requirements of the Act.

Outreach services

The buildings in which collections are housed may be intimidating, or may not be conveniently located for all potential visitors. To maximise their social value, museums and galleries need to reach out into their local communities and take the knowledge of their collections out to people who are not regular users of their services – in effect, the majority of the community.

To do this effectively (and professionally), they will need trained and committed staff to work with other agencies and carefully nurture links with community organisations of all sorts, both formal and informal and buildings-based or not. These will include schools, community centres, libraries and a myriad of self-help and learning groups.

Outreach services may include helping community groups to study their own history, build exhibitions, prepare publications and generally enhance their own

quality of life through access to the museums' and galleries' expertise and collections. Touring exhibitions could be organised to a range of venues, designed to suit the needs of people using those venues. Objects could be loaned to schools, libraries and other public places. A consequence of outreach services will be audience development: non-users will be attracted into museums and galleries, or enabled to become users without necessarily going over the threshold of the museum or gallery building. (Website access may be considered as part of outreach, but many would argue that personal contact is much more effective.)

The proposed new framework (Chapter 5) will offer museums and galleries the opportunity to deliver Resource's nationwide outreach targets (Resource, 2001a), which have strong objectives for social inclusion. Major regional museums and galleries will be tasked with developing a fully resourced outreach service, in collaboration with smaller museums in the region. This service should be designed both to involve communities in the work of collecting and interpreting objects and to take exhibitions out of the regional museum to the places where people will see them and use them. The aim is to encourage communities to feel a greater sense of involvement with the collections, and to build relationships which will encourage them to see that the museum can help them to tell their own stories and interpret their experiences. The major museums and galleries will provide objects, resources and expertise to support the local and community museums in their role as community and learning centres.

Cultural Champions programmes

A logical extension of improved outreach services is a 'Cultural Champions' programme for each region, specifically designed to increase the confidence and self-esteem of young people living in the most deprived parts of the region and to train them to act as ambassadors for the museum to their extended family group and to their peers. The Cultural Champions initiative will build upon Birmingham's Represent project. This project was aimed at young people aged

between fifteen and twenty-five, drawn largely but not exclusively from the black community. A New Deal officer was employed both to recruit young people into the scheme and to develop and manage it. The project offered the young people personal confidence training as well as introducing them to the collections of the participating museums and others in the region and beyond. The numbers of young people participating in the project has risen steadily, and external evaluation of the project has identified the powerful impact it has had on their lives (Pontin, 2001).

Inclusive places for learning and inspiration

To enable the major regional museums and galleries radically to transform themselves into inclusive places for learning and inspiration, the Task Force proposes that a number of changes be introduced.

First of all, detailed baseline research should be conducted to enable the measurement of quantifiable changes over a three-year period (2004/5–2006/7). This should include the testing of visitor satisfaction as part of a new and comprehensive approach to visitor surveying, and should be the responsibility of Resource.

Many museum and gallery displays and exhibitions are less than fully inclusive and do not encourage or attract a wide audience. To make access easier without ‘dumbing down’ is not always easy, but is never impossible. Exhibitions and displays should be stimulating and exciting, using, where appropriate, innovative techniques and state-of-the-art technology which modern audiences familiar with cinematic special effects and theme-park technology respond to. Museums and galleries should explore new and challenging methods of displaying artefacts which impact on a variety of senses (Croft, 2001).

Attention must also be directed to improving organisational inclusiveness. Objectives with regard to people and attitude changes might include:

- meeting Investor in People standards;
- greater use of person-to-person interpretation;
- retraining existing attendants and recruiting new ones;

- training and using more volunteers;
- ensuring that all exhibitions and activities are user-focused.

The Task Force feels that the major regional museums and galleries should be responsible for the development of specialist learning, education and inclusion programmes focused on specific coordinated campaign areas, creating a greater collective contribution to key policy objectives. Programmes might be planned around a limited number of themes such as:

- skills development for unemployed males over fifty;
- creative working with young black people in the arts;
- partnerships with groups of disabled people to improve accessibility in museums and galleries;
- literacy skills in inner-city schools.

The emphasis should be both on access and on making the most appropriate use of collections. Links should be made to other programmes, such as the Heritage Lottery Fund’s Museums and Galleries Access Fund, and every attempt should be made to avoid reducing the programmes to unsustainable short-term projects. Indeed, achieving sustainable outcomes should be a condition of access to funding.

A key deliverable will also be improvement of the extent and level of museums’ and galleries’ involvement in their local community. This will require some research and the establishing of baselines, but it is necessary to be confident that over a three-year period local and community museums will engage more with local communities, tailoring their projects to meet specific local needs and involving people from the community in the planning, delivery and evaluation of those projects.

Neighbourhood-renewal research has suggested that many museums and galleries have difficulty in fund-raising for and disseminating work in this area (IMRI, 2001). They should be seeking out the agencies already engaged in such work and establishing how collections can be used to give added value to existing projects. Unlike most museums and galleries, agencies

Economic regeneration

50 involved in this area have the specialist skills to work with vulnerable and excluded communities; they will also carry on working with those communities when the museum or gallery has moved on to a different project. However, the major regional museums and galleries will be responsible for developing the partnerships and for drawing other museums into projects aimed at contributing to local community issues. Recent research (Research Centre for Museums and Galleries, 2001) has shown that there is a need for this sort of support. They will provide the leadership and best-practice evidence needed to make the case to stakeholders and funding bodies for the role that local and community museums and galleries can play.

Museums and galleries will have an increasingly important impact on such standard economic indicators as employment, sales, incomes, and the balance of payments.

They are a major reason for tourism to the United Kingdom – in 2000 a third of overseas visitors to the UK cited museums and galleries as a major reason for their visit (Marketscape Ltd, 2001) – and they encourage much tourism within the UK. They also function as catalysts for urban regeneration, either as anchor elements of an area-specific redevelopment, such as Albert Dock in Liverpool, Castlefield in Manchester, or Digbeth in Birmingham, or as part of a wider renewal of a city's profile. Increasingly the presence of a museum or gallery – or any cultural facility – is being claimed as an asset for a community, through attracting expenditure by visitors or by contributing to significant decisions such as the relocation of businesses. And especially in large cities, they can enhance the attractiveness of their location as a place to live: a thriving cultural scene which attracts national attention through the excellence of its exhibitions and activities will encourage and develop a favourable image. Museums and galleries are already involved in the current City of Culture applications, and their contribution to the overall economic strength of their regions seems set to grow.

The contribution made by smaller local and community museums must not however be overlooked. Analysis of this year's foot and mouth crisis on the rural economy illustrated how the large number of small local and community museums do make a significant contribution, socially and economically.

The most recent large-scale regional study (Brand et al., 2000) provides much useful data to indicate the potential contribution of regional museums and galleries to economic success. The report presents the results of a study into the economic contribution of museums in the South West. Survey responses were used to construct models of the direct economic contribution of museums and to amend the South-West Economy Centre's input-output model of the

South West region. This allowed an analysis to be made of the 'indirect' economic contribution of museums due to their purchases of locally produced goods and services and the consumption expenditure associated with salary payments by museums to local households.

Key findings can be grouped under seven headings: visits, income, capital funds, employment, purchases, GDP, and indirect contributions. The survey found that museums in the South West received over 4.8 million visits in 1998, and that museum-related tourist spending made a significant contribution to the region's economy. Museum income during this period was around £29.1 million, with 39 per cent coming from UK public-sector grants; other important sources of income included admission charges (8 per cent) and retail operations, gifts, donations and sponsorship (11 per cent). The survey found that large museums generated on average £7.50 per visit, compared with £5.48 for medium-sized museums and only £1.53 for small museums. South West museums received capital funding of around £17.4 million in 1998, of which £15.2 million was provided by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Gifts, donations and sponsorship for capital projects amounted to around £1.4 million during the same period.

During 1998, more than 4,800 people worked in South West museums, around 73 per cent of whom were volunteers. Total employment in the domain was equivalent to around 1,270 full-time jobs, 75 per cent of which were paid. Total wage and salary payments amounted to almost £13.3 million, while voluntary work was worth around £4.4 million to the domain.

The capital expenditure of South West museums amounted to £4.9 million in 1998, most of which was associated with one-off projects. Operating expenditure was around £23.6 million; around 71 per cent of this went to suppliers within the South West region, as compared with an average for all South West industries of around 63 per cent. South West museums are estimated to have contributed around £18.6 million directly to the GDP of their region during 1998. Taking into account the value of the voluntary work within the domain raises the total GDP contribution to almost £23

million. Overall, GDP per paid employee in the museums domain in the South West was slightly higher than in recreation services and in hotel and catering, but was somewhat lower than in other 'knowledge-based' sectors such as education and health.

The survey found that each £1 of output from South-West museums generated an additional £0.74 of output in other South West industries. Each full-time-equivalent (FTE) job in museums supported 0.43 additional jobs elsewhere in the region. During 1998, South West museums supported around £50.7 million of output, around £20.5 million of household income, 1,367 FTE jobs, and almost £30 million in GDP in all sectors of the South West economy. Museum-related tourist spending was around £27.5 million in 1998, and this spending supported 680 FTE jobs in the South West – just over half the total for museums.

In the East Midlands, the tourism sector accounts for 7 per cent of the region's businesses. Public museums account for about 11 per cent of all visits to tourist attractions in the region. The economic value of the 690,000 visits to the region's museums (including accommodation, meals, travel costs and other purchases) is estimated to be around £34–£50 million per annum – some 3–5 per cent of the regional tourist spend of approximately £960 million (EMMS, 2001: 28–9). Museums and galleries will continue to deliver construction- and service-industry benefits where major capital works are involved or the turnover of individual businesses is significant. It is likely that they will make a modest contribution to employment (Selwood, 2001b).

What can be achieved

Local tourism initiatives

In the regional tourism infrastructure, local and community museums often have an important role to play in providing a network of attractions for domestic and overseas tourists. Although the importance of museums to tourism is acknowledged there is rarely any focused financial support. The Task Force feels that investment in independent museums in particular

would be repaid in terms of economic benefits through tourism. This investment could be achieved through a joint initiative between the single regional agency for libraries, museums and archives, and the regional development agency in each region. This might take the form of a challenge fund supported by DCMS, but administered jointly.

Skills for young people initiative

Major museums and galleries should enter into a partnership with Learning and Skills Councils, Urban Regeneration Companies, local authorities and private sector interests with a stake in regional economic and community regeneration to bring forward a regional programme to develop skills for young people focused on using museum and gallery collections.

Collections for inspiration and creativity

In the future, museums and galleries will continue to make available objects of historical, artistic, scientific and technological importance, for learning, inspiration and enjoyment. But the ways in which this is done will need to be more flexible, stimulating and responsive: for example, in the use of buildings or spaces owned by other institutions, or in the planning and delivery of exhibitions in six months rather than two years.

The Task Force believes that significantly larger resources for producing exhibitions would have a number of outcomes in addition to improving the quality of exhibitions mounted. It would give museums and galleries more status and (with proper promotion) stimulate more visits. It would encourage freelance curators to join museums and galleries to create exhibitions, and it would facilitate the growth of a healthy community of freelance curators who could enrich and re-energise museums and galleries which commission them to produce new work. And it would enable museums better to explore issues and themes of significance and interest to people in their regions.

An innovative project at Bristol City Museum, for example, addressed the hotly debated issue of transatlantic slavery and Bristol's part in it. With community and academic help, an exhibition (which has subsequently become a permanent display) was created which signalled city-council acknowledgement, for the first time, of transatlantic slavery as a significant part of the city's history. For many this had been a shameful aspect of the city's development, and among the black community there was a perception that history was being deliberately concealed. The exhibition showed how slavery was a regional issue, for almost all the South West had some involvement, and demonstrated that the issues are not confined to the past, but have clear relevance to the multicultural Bristol of today.

The Creative Partnerships Fund – managed by the Arts Council of England – presents an immediate opportunity for museums and galleries to work with others in a creative way. There is also enormous potential for museums and galleries to integrate their

own objectives and activities with online and broadcast activities. Culture Online (DCMS, 2001c) – the working name of a new body created by DCMS to use information and communication technology to widen access to the resources of the arts and cultural sector – is one obvious candidate for collaboration. Broadcaster-led initiatives, high-profile co-productions, and local interpretations of high-interest themes need not be limited to the obvious factual programming: interest could be stimulated not only by television but also by live comedy and drama – presenting opportunities for collaboration with other media partners. These initiatives could attract new visitors from a broader sector of society. The challenge for museums is to think creatively about how they can use their content to add value to such partnerships.

Museums and galleries can forge stronger links with all the ‘creative industries’ – the miscellaneous group of industrial sectors including advertising, architecture, the art and antiques market, crafts, design, fashion, film and video, interactive leisure software, music, the performing arts, publishing, and radio and television. They can be patrons of performing and visual arts as well as architecture, and their collections can connect with creative businesses in a number of ways:

- by inspiring creative people and designers;
- by providing reference material for art and production design in television and film;
- by presenting stories and context for radio, television, publishing, film and video;
- by creating interactive online learning resources and leisure software.

Such connections already play a part in stimulating the increasingly significant clusters of creative businesses in major cities, but museums have not marketed their potential. Many museums believe that they lack expertise to play a part in these businesses, and are cautious of inadvertently losing control over their property rights (mainly copyright and reproduction rights) in their collections. As things stand, few regional museums and galleries have sufficient capacity to address these issues.

Cartwright Hall Art Gallery, Bradford

Key Stage 2 pupils from eight Bradford primary schools have been working with painters, printmakers, poets, dancers and other artists to create work which is to be displayed in the gallery in spring 2002. The work has been inspired by eight works of art ranging from painted textiles to abstract sculpture. The gallery is also developing a self-contained unit for use in various parts of the gallery, featuring the work created by schools as computer screen images.

Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield

The gallery developed a project targeted at A-level students and non-users of the gallery. Between April and August 2000, students worked with artists on a touring exhibition (‘Babel: Contemporary Art and the Journeys of Communication’) which enabled them to explore issues of identity. Information on teacher-training opportunities in post-sixteen art education and a resource pack were also features of the scheme.

Leicester Museum and Art Gallery

The gallery ran a two-year project with African poet and writer Wolde Selassie and major black performance artists such as Tony Graves and Gaylene Gould. The project culminated in an exhibition, guided walks with groups of community elders, a community procession, and commissioned pieces of contemporary dance. The exhibition ran from October to December 1999, and showcased artefacts unearthed on the continent of Africa to highlight African achievements.

Excellence and high quality in delivering core services

54 | What can be achieved

Creativity Fund for Objects

To create a significantly higher profile of the contribution that can be made, the Task Force proposes that the major regional museums and galleries, in partnership with others – including perhaps the Crafts Council, the Design Museum and the Victoria & Albert Museum – should create a major programme around a ‘Creativity Fund for Objects’. The aim would be to take existing collections and give them contemporary meaning by using them to stimulate new designs for the twenty-first century. There would be scope for working with communities, designers and artists, and the process could itself be documented, both as a historical record and to increase our contemporary understanding of the processes of creativity and design.

In terms of enjoyment and appeal to visitors, the diversity of museums and galleries in the regions can be a strength. However, that diversity may also be a weakness if the quality of the visiting experience is variable from one museum to another, and poorly performing museums may dilute the reputation of the ‘brand’ to the detriment of all (Middleton, 1998). Achieving consistent quality in all museums and galleries in the regions and encouraging the major regional museums and galleries to achieve excellence in at least most of their core activities is a high-priority outcome of the Task Force’s recommendations.

Those whom the Task Force consulted were very clear that at present the regions lack museums and galleries in which a consistently high standard – comparable to that of the nationals – is being achieved in the delivery of services. The vagaries of local funding – often dependent on factors completely outside the control of governing bodies, directors and service managers – combined with cheque-chasing and initiative overload, have led to a situation in which it is difficult to identify any single museum or museum service which is consistently performing well. Even where good practice can be identified, it is rare for it to be sustained over long periods – and when it is this is usually a result of stability among key posts rather than of corporate commitment to a shared vision and long-term strategic goals.

To address the problems of uneven standards, the museums and galleries community has developed quite sophisticated performance standards, and the registration scheme is regarded as a success. Additional resources everywhere would help to address quality issues, but at least equally important is the development of centres of excellence which can develop and invest in best practice – including high-quality exhibitions and innovative approaches to learning – for their own users, for smaller museums, and through them for all the people who live in or visit the region. Excellence may be defined as ‘surpassing others in some good quality’. All museums and galleries must aspire to produce high-quality services – services that are fit for the purpose

they are intended for. But the major regional museums and galleries in each region must be resourced and equipped to be better than this: to be standard-bearers for their domain.

To disseminate best practice, an effective mechanism will be required. To a certain extent Resource can contribute through its website, case studies, database, mapping and publications. But more important is dissemination through experience or observation, and advising and supporting smaller museums so that they too can deliver improved services to users, and this can be organised only at regional level. Some advisory and support activity currently occurs through area-museum-council training seminars or federation meetings, but it is not comprehensive, or harmonised with similar activities in other domains. No framework currently exists to give an explicit indication of how best practice can both be delivered to users and flow between museums and galleries.

What can be achieved

Mapping

The regional mapping of museums and galleries – already piloted by four area museum councils (SMA, 2001; South East Museums, 2000; SWMC, 1999; WMRMC, 2000a) and covering the content, scale and importance of collections and the standard of public services – is an essential tool for assessing quality of services and service delivery.

Completed mapping projects have established standards for collections management, access and other services, and show the way forward for a sophisticated approach to measuring quality and then monitoring its improvement over a period of time. Typically employing a score system of ranking (for example from 1 to 5, where 1 is inadequate and 5 is excellent), mapping can be a powerful tool for setting quality targets and measuring progress towards them, once current problems of consistency in approach between regions are resolved.

The Task Force therefore recommends that the regional mapping process should be taken forward,

extended to cover the whole of the UK, and be subjected to rigorous common standards and methodologies. Resource is to be responsible for implementing this.

Visitor-services grading scheme

The Task Force also recommends that Resource picks up the idea (generated by the Association of Independent Museums) of creating a visitor-services grading scheme on the lines of schemes operated for many years in tourism to ensure the quality of accommodation and facilities. This will be a major quality-assurance scheme both to guarantee quality standards to users and to encourage improved standards among museums and galleries.

Education and learning standard

An education and learning standard has been developed by Resource and is currently being consulted upon. The development and implementation of that standard will be a crucial step in guaranteeing consistent standards of service delivery for users, and the Task Force recommends that the final agreed standard should be investigated as a model for other quality standards.

Audience-development standard

The Task Force recommends that Resource should investigate the development of such a standard as soon as possible, to provide a means to ensure regular audience testing, coordinated regionally by the appropriate regional agency, to ensure the efficient use of resources and gathering of data. Without this, no museum or gallery can know exactly what its users or non-users want, or what users think about what the institution is currently providing. To support this development, Resource should produce standardised audience-development packages to simplify the collecting of audience data and to ensure that the collection of core data employs common protocols and uses similar terminologies.

All of the above are deliverable means for raising quality in museums and galleries in the regions. In

Modernisation and Rationalisation

56 | some cases the same approach can be used for identifying excellence: for example, the top score in mapping assessments should equate to excellence; a level 3 (the top level) in the education and learning standard also equates to excellence; and five stars (or whatever symbols might be employed) in the grading system would signpost a similar achievement.

Excellence may of course also be recognised by other means – notably by peer review. The Designation Scheme relies upon this. The Task Force feels that there is probably insufficient use of peer-review techniques in the museums and galleries domain (though it recognises their limitations and inadequacies in some conditions), and it recommends that Resource investigate how these techniques might be developed and merged with the ranking- or scoring-type assessments used in mapping and the other schemes described above. Together, peer review and these other assessments could produce a strong means of encouraging and assessing quality and excellence.

For government intervention to be effective, the museums and galleries domain must be prepared to reform itself, to modernise and to rationalise. Outstanding leadership and excellent management are required to set clear objectives, motivate a whole-hearted commitment to the necessary reforms, and address the issue of rationalisation – both of collections and of museums.

Organisational Leadership

At present, with obvious exceptions, management and leadership are thought to be of an insufficient quality to deliver on expectations. Other personnel issues are involved: there is currently an undeniable malaise throughout the non-national museum community, and a leaching away of disillusioned, able people. Staff in museums and galleries in the regions are frustrated – particularly those in the larger local-authority museums. Ensuring that appropriate training programmes are in place is essential in reassuring external funders that their money will be well spent and in securing the sustainability of regional museums.

It should be said that these issues, and many others, have been recognised, though not resolved, by the Cultural Heritage National Training Organisation (CHNTO). Since its creation in 1997, CHNTO has had a key role in providing training for the museum workforce. In 1997, while still the Museums Training Institute, the organisation proposed a national strategy for training in the domain (Museums Training Institute, 1997). In the same year the Holland report, the *Review of Management Training and Development in the Museums, Galleries and Heritage Sector* (CHNTO, 1997) identified four main issues which set an agenda for the domain: management among leaders could be improved; management development is not always pursued beyond a basic level; the professional culture in the domain gives a low priority to management; and many future managers have little exposure to good management practice.

One positive outcome from the Holland report was that area museum councils organised management-

development networks, targeting middle-tier managers. Some of these networks have proved to be very successful: one London-based group established in 1999, for example, is now self-organising and meets on a monthly basis for training and issue-based problem-solving. The associateship course of the Museums Association has also spawned several groups that meet regularly for learning and support. Opportunities for management learning should be made available to all staff, not only to those who have already reached management level.

The Task Force would like to see management-development networks operating across the UK, based around the major regional museums and galleries, the existing area museum councils, or regional cultural consortia (thus extending the networks to other cultural industries, such as the performing arts). Funding for these could be provided in the first three years by several different partners, including regional development agencies.

For senior leaders in museums and in the organisations that support them, what seems to be required is a combination of exposure to external thinking, updating on current leadership practice from within and outside the domain, and an opportunity to exchange experiences with peers through a process of co-mentoring. Leadership development at other levels would benefit from a multi-layered approach involving mentoring support and formal training opportunities such as the Museum Leadership Programme at the University of East Anglia. New skills and learning can be integrated within organisations only if there is an effective culture with leadership encouragement for risk-taking and experimentation, and if people at all levels develop their own capacity and confidence as project and programme leaders.

A rolling leadership programme should be established which includes the following:

- A residential working conference for around twenty museum leaders, involving national and regional museum directors and those occupying senior administrative roles in museum-support and

policy-making agencies. This would be supported by a one-day follow-up, six months on, and an element of peer mentoring/coaching in small learning sets. An annual event of this type with the same group over a period of three years would help to establish the networking capability of the group. Initial estimates suggest that this would cost a maximum of £150,000, including development and coordination costs. All participants would be expected to contribute to the cost of the programme according to their organisation's means.

- Mentoring for aspiring leaders. Based on a model researched by the Museums Association as part of the Sector Challenge initiative, this would target aspiring leaders and senior mentors possibly drawn from the programme above. The scheme would be launched with an intensive residential event attended by both aspirants and mentors. Mentoring relationships would last for approximately two years. It has been estimated that the programme would cost in the region of £100,000 to operate effectively.
- The continued encouragement of a range of peer-support models such as the long-standing, informal Directing Change group, building on networks established as part of the leadership-development programme.

CHNTO has provided labour-market information on museums and galleries to the Learning and Skills Council in the form of a skills foresight model (CHNTO, 2000). This identified that the domain needs urgently to acquire a range of skills and competences additional to the traditional curatorial and technical skills. The skills required fall into four categories: leadership and business skills; administrative and personnel skills; new-technology and foreign-language skills; and miscellaneous skills (research and analysis, education and training, and self-management).

Also requiring attention is the management of volunteers, in order to make the most efficient use of their contribution. Volunteers made up 62 per cent of

the staff listed as working in museums in 1998.⁴ Work currently being piloted in the West Midlands is aimed at developing a volunteer-policy handbook/toolkit for museums managers which should address these issues.⁵ A project which will provide a demographic study of volunteers is also under way.

An announcement will be made in Autumn 2001 by DfES on its review of NTOs, which has proposed that the formation of up to 25 Sector Skills Partnerships in place of the current 73 NTOs. It is intended that the larger SSPs will be more effective and sustainable and attract more funding. In response to the DfES consultation document, Resource has replied that it favours a broader-based cultural sector NTO than at present, with a greater critical mass, and with sufficient core funding to allow it to fulfil its remit.

A coordinated, supportive network of expertise with a remit for advocacy, lifelong learning and providing funding would not only support skills development but also improve the morale of the profession (Millar, 2001). Within the proposed new framework discussed in Chapter 5, the regional agencies would be well placed to establish such a network (page 102).

Changing the culture of museums and galleries

Eldridge and Crombie (1974) define culture in organisations as ‘the unique configuration of norms, values, beliefs and ways of behaving that characterises the manner in which groups and individuals combine to get things done’. But defining museum culture is a complex if not an impossible task. Museums are not homogeneous, and it would be inappropriate to list characteristics that purport to define all museums and the people that work within them. For every museum that appeared to meet such a description there would be many others that did not. ‘Old-style’ curators are not identical, and nor is there a stereotypical museum-studies graduate in terms of background, education, skills, attitudes and values.

Yet museum culture has been identified as one of

the main barriers to change. If the product is to change, the culture must change too.

Creating new governance models and providing healthy funding streams will go some way to supporting a new management culture that will have the following characteristics:

- a clear organisational purpose that is understood by all staff;
- values that are made explicit and clearly aligned with the purpose of the organisation;
- a flat and non-hierarchical staffing structure;
- teamwork;
- empowered staff, with decisions being made close to the point of service delivery;
- an imaginative and creative working climate, which encourages risk-taking;
- transparency;
- staff who are able to operate flexibly and responsively (which does not necessarily mean being multi-skilled);
- orientation towards projects and a focus on outcomes;
- a habit of importing new skills and new people to work within the organisation, so that the organisation changes size and shape as need dictates;
- diversity within the core staff and volunteers;
- demonstration of a professional approach – being organised, being reliable and meeting others’ expectations, and investing time in individuals’ development.

Although some museum organisations claim to be committed to working in this way, few really achieve this in practice. To help bring about the culture outlined above, it is recommended that major regional museums and galleries should consider setting up ‘change champions’ – groups of staff perhaps occasionally assisted by outside facilitators – who will lead on change from within. Clear objectives for change would be developed as part of a tailored change programme for each institution, to permit evaluation of outcomes over two to three years. The facilitator will

work closely with the change champions, director and senior staff, and his or her role will encompass the following:

- acting as a sounding board and mentor for the museum director and the senior team;
- facilitating planning activities;
- facilitating teams and introducing new ways of working;
- being a mentor and coach for other managers within the organisation;
- being a mentor and coach for senior managers in the regional museum network;
- facilitating a board-development programme;
- running internal development programmes aimed at introducing new behaviours and practices at all levels in the organisation.

Creating a more diverse workforce

The staff profile at curatorial and management level is still predominantly white and middle class. It would appear that the majority of museum employers have not yet recognised the value of a socially and culturally diverse staff group in their recruitment practices. There has been some positive action to address this situation – most notably the Museums Association/Hamlyn Foundation bursary scheme, which so far has supported three ethnic-minority applicants through the Leicester University postgraduate museum-studies course. Further investment would increase the impact of this programme.

However, something more is needed if institutional prejudices are to be challenged effectively. As has recently been highlighted in *Museums Journal* (Carrington, 2001), class and educational barriers to museum careers are still firmly in place. This situation is perpetuated by the assumption that new entrants to the profession must hold first and postgraduate degrees in a related subject discipline even to get started. The quasi-academic image of the domain, which can be alienating for those who have not been brought up as museum visitors, in addition to the lack of career opportunities and poor pay, is seriously limiting the

range of potential talent that might find its way into museums. There is a need to discover how to inject talent and diversity into museums in ways that do not necessarily involve a deliberate career choice or change.

The Task Force recommends the following measures:

- *Traineeships*. New traineeships should be established, targeting ethnic-minority applicants and involving postgraduate museum-studies programmes working in partnership with the major regional museums and galleries. The purpose of these traineeships would be to draw new people from ethnic-minority groups into the domain. It is estimated that a tax-free bursary in the region of £20,000 over two years towards living expenses and course fees would launch one person on a museum career. Similar models have been run successfully in the arts sector during the past ten years, and the Museums Association/Hamlyn Foundation bursary model might be emulated with other museum-studies programmes. To make a significant impact, at least nine traineeships should be launched each year between 2004/5 and 2006/7. The Museums Association, working with course providers and regional museums, would be well placed to organise this scheme.
- *Different Voices programme*. The Task Force proposes a programme of paid contracts or short-term attachments to museums from communities that are not traditional users of museums and from the creative industries – including film, advertising, TV, etc. Over a period of three years, it suggests that around 300 contracts of say £5,000 each should be funded, attached to specific projects. For example, museums might advertise in non-museum publications such as *The Stage* for a writer to work on an exhibition text or a theatre designer to help with creating a new gallery. Experience and learning from the Sharing Skills millennium programme will be invaluable in planning this initiative.

The principal benefits of this programme would be:

- exposing museums and their staff to a variety of people with different social, ethnic and career backgrounds who can inject new thinking and skills;
- challenging and shifting organisational culture;
- opening up museums to their users and making them more transparent in their practices.

Rationalisation

A sharp distinction should be drawn between crisis-led change and planned rationalisation. The first has often been seen as an unacceptable reason for the closure of a particular museum or the disposal of a collection, and is frequently triggered by a crisis in funding or a clash over deaccessioning.⁶ Planned rationalisation is an aspect of the proper stewardship of resources, when public objectives can better be served by consolidation across a city, region or field of collecting. It should also be recognised that a cycle of natural change may result in the opening and closing of smaller museums. Many of these may not be subsidised and may call on very little public support. A more complex issue arises when a medium-scale or larger museum is proposed for closure. Regional leadership is then essential to lead a strategic assessment of the case for rationalisation.

Some of the difficulties faced by a number of local-authority museums – and especially the longer-established urban services – may have their roots in the period of substantial museum growth that took place between 1965 and 1990. The establishment of branch museums led to the total number of museums increasing by a third from its 1960 figure (Babbidge, 2001: 19–20). The expansion of branch museums later created increased pressures when budgets were cut, and this ought to be a key target area for rationalisation.

It should be noted that although museums have more visits than any other category of visitor attraction as defined by the tourist boards (see page 000), this is at least in part because there are more organisations that call themselves museums than there are institutions in any other category. There has been some concern that there may be too many, and that large numbers of

poor-quality underfunded museums both spread too thinly the modest public funding available and ‘dilute the brand’.

Two sets of criteria should be considered when assessing whether a museum is really still required within a region. The first set focuses on the specific conditions which may apply:

- easy access to similar or better conditions;
- replicated collections;
- low visitor numbers;
- services not valued by local people.

The second set comprises broader criteria including the following factors:

- cultural significance;
- contribution to the economy/tourism;
- community value;
- educational value.

Many of these issues are likely to become the focus of attention under Best Value.

Another problem is ‘over-trading’ – trying to do too much with the available resources. Museums and art galleries have a limited and normally fixed funding base, but they are full of bright people who would like to be able to do things. And what they have to offer is popular with visitors. Unfortunately, creativity and demand are not linked to funding. Governing bodies and managers must focus on what can be delivered, and must not be afraid to say that at present they can only do this and cannot do that.

Reducing fixed-asset costs to ensure sustainability and a viable future for the core service is essential, but change through rationalisation needs enormous care. Issues concerning collections need to be disentangled from those concerning museums and galleries as institutions, as well as from the frequent complication of the proper use of historic buildings. Differing demands of local users will mean that one solution will not fit all situations. Notwithstanding the difficulties, the climate across the domain is now very much more conducive to well-considered change than in previous years (Nairne, 2001).

Information and communication technology

Information and communication technology is already transforming every facet of museum activity, and the change is not confined simply to doing traditional things in a new way: the transformation wrought by ICT extends to the very heart of the museum, challenging its fundamental nature. Museums are being reinvented as both physical and virtual spaces in which people interact with objects, discover their stories, and learn. Interweaving the real and the virtual creates a powerful brand, enabling museums to occupy centre stage in cultural cyberspace.

The use of technology can enrich visitors' experience in many ways. It can enable people who cannot physically visit the museum to learn about its collections online. It can join regionally dispersed physical collections to create national assets. It can enhance school visits by providing pre-visit preparation and post-visit follow-up activities online. It can be the catalyst for online learning communities, supporting multiple channels of communication between learner and learner as well as between learners and museums.

Technologies have already revolutionised the UK's museums and galleries in ways which would have been unthinkable less than ten years ago. Examples include:

- museums which had a virtual presence before a physical one (the River and Rowing Museum)⁷ or a virtual presence while the physical space moved (Hackney Museum);⁸
- the museum which is solely virtual (the 24 Hour Museum);⁹
- the museum which has a far greater number of virtual visitors than physical ones (the Museum of the History of Science, Oxford);¹⁰
- booking loans of artefacts to schools on the Internet (Reading Museum);¹¹
- WAP guided tours (London Canal Museum);¹²
- live links to museum conservation work (the Conservation Centre at the National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside).¹³

The potential of museums underpins a key

government ICT initiative currently under development. Culture Online proposes making 'the riches of museums, galleries and other cultural organisations available at the fingertips of anyone who want[s] to learn from them ... build[ing] a digital bridge between culture and learning, to allow learners, both children and adults, to travel into the vast assets and deep know-how of cultural organisations'.¹⁴

The 1999 report *A Netful of Jewels: New Museums in the Learning Age* (NMDC, 1999) reflected the aspirations of the whole domain when it proposed the museum as a centre for digital learning. The implementation report ('Building the Digital Museum') outlined the concept of

a UK-wide digital museum in which sets of images, texts and activities from across the country, connected by subject and theme in an integrated learning environment, are linked together. Interactive services will enable participation and engagement with museums' communities. Museum content and interactive services will be made relevant and accessible to diverse audiences, enabling a rich new dialogue to develop between museums and the public. (Smith, 2000)

It described how 'the seeds for future development are already present in today's museums' in the form of:

- relevant, participatory galleries and digital exhibits;
- digital cameras and other media for use during a visit;
- content created by visitors as well as by museum staff;
- facilities for searching the collections in ways that are relevant to visitors;
- trained staff to help visitors learn;
- interactive web sites and online services;
- online information to help in planning visits;
- connections between the actual and virtual museum, and with other cultural resources locally and worldwide.

New audiences will use museums in ways which

will dissolve traditional barriers between different kinds of organisation, placing the emphasis on the user rather than the institution. Expressions of this new world are found in various official documents, including *Culture Online*¹⁵ and *Power of Place*.¹⁶ *A Netful of Jewels* also provided evidence of technologically enabled museums reaching audiences far beyond their traditional constituencies. Content, a resource which museums possess in abundance, will be the driver of learning networks such as 'Distributed Electronic Resource for Further and Higher Education' and the National Grid for Learning.¹⁷ Information and communication technology will enable museums better to respond to the needs of current and new users, thereby helping to address the government's learning and social inclusion agendas. Connections will be at the heart of ICT's potential, enabling the development of sustainable regional networks which build on the specific nature and needs of diverse local communities.

Currently, however, little digitised learning content is available, although some museums do have websites on specific topics drawing on a range of relevant collections. The vision statement for *Culture Online* notes that 'Many of our museums and galleries are pioneering work with websites. However, many are well behind the leaders. Without more concerted investment we are likely only to scratch the surface of the opportunity to make the assets of the cultural sector available for learning' (DCMS, 2001c).

Online challenges include creation of new resources in collaboration with specialists and interest groups outside the museum and the integration of these into existing collections-management systems. Within the museum, visitors can benefit from a combination of online and on-site activities (accessing additional museum content via the Internet to inform the physical visit, for example). Back at home, visitors can extend their learning by further online activities. There is similar scope for a combination of online and on-site activities in museum outreach.

Training and development are crucial. Museums are often building innovative and exciting projects on

the enthusiasm of a single self-trained member of staff, but these projects cannot be sustained with limited resources. To enable the development of such work, fresh skill sets need to be developed which do more than focus exclusively upon generic software training. The 'People's Network' initiative for training all library staff should be extended to museum and gallery staff. As those in museums develop new skills and evaluate the success of their projects, they will play a key role in raising standards throughout the domain.

Local autonomy to innovate within a national framework of standards and best practice will result in an exchange of specialist expertise and the dissemination of new skills. Technologies will connect collections of local, regional, national and international significance, and will act as the glue between the twin imperatives of museums: the care of their collections and engagement with their communities.¹⁸ Museums and galleries will not be forced to choose between addressing 'the basics' and rising to the challenges of access. For example, compiling so-called 'basic documentation' (both retrospectively and ongoing) is a prerequisite for the accountability of collections. Comprehensive electronic catalogues of museums' holdings will enable informed decisions to be made on separate and joint collecting policies and bring the potential for rationalisation across regional collections, as well as facilitating access to these collections.

The evolving digital environment is a complex one in which change is a constant. An infrastructure solution which addresses only museums is not viable. Instead a distributed sector-wide model is required which builds on the existing resources and expertise of museums and other cultural and learning organisations. It is essential that established networking initiatives, including the People's Network, are extended to provide the infrastructure necessary to make museum content and activities more accessible.¹⁹

Broadband networking for museums, along with schools, colleges and other learning institutions, could form an important element for the aggregation of public-sector demand for broadband connectivity

currently being investigated by the Office of the e-Envoy.²⁰ Indeed the need to deliver 'joined-up' services is beginning to be well served by the provision of cross-sectoral standards, including the e-government interoperability framework (e-GIF)²¹ and the NOF-digitise technical standards.²²

Investment for the future

Museums are keen to play their part in the ICT revolution, but they are underpowered and their present practice is inconsistent. As an indicator, approximately 350 museums have websites, but only 15 per cent of these are linked directly to the National Grid for Learning.²³

There is widespread recognition that the content held by museums and galleries is important and valuable. It is equally understood that there are a number of routes which these institutions could go down in order to make the digital museum a reality and make collections infinitely more accessible than they are at present. Government initiatives such as Culture Online will over time offer real opportunities to all regional museums and galleries to produce rich new content to support the national curriculum and for wider audiences. However, to be in a position to exploit these opportunities, the major museums and galleries must be adequately e-enabled. This will mean planned investment in infrastructure and kit to enable visitors, including those with special interests, to enhance and extend their visit through virtual access to exhibits not on display and all the supporting information on the Internet. Investment in ICT is also needed to enable museums' staff to communicate and share information, if the goal of developing the sector as a whole through the example of the best is to be realised. Some specific initiatives – such as the provision of a national one-stop shop of information and standards, e-learning and professional development – are potentially exciting but need much more thorough investigation. Much of this is a task for Resource. When the picture clarifies, the Task Force is confident that a major investment may be needed – though not all, or even the greater part of it,

from government. But the Task Force does see it as important to allocate £9 million per annum from 2004/5 to enable the museums and galleries domain to take full advantage of the Culture Online initiative and enable further content accessibility (Smith, 2001).

4 Carter et al. (1999: 16): 25,206 volunteers, compared to full-time permanent and temporary equivalent staff numbers of 15,365 and 853 freelance staff.

5 The project, *Accessing the Mainstream*, is funded by Resource and is being carried out by the West Midlands Regional Museums Council.

6 See, for example, the history of museums operated in Kirklees Metropolitan Council, which reflects that of many local-authority museums in the second half of the 1990s (Davies, 2001).

7 See <http://www.rrm.co.uk>.

8 See <http://www.hackney.gov.uk/hackneymuseum/>.

9 See <http://www.24hourmuseum.org.uk/Home.htm>.

10 See <http://www.mhs.ox.ac.uk>. The site receives about 100,000 individual virtual visits a year (about 1.5 million hits), compared with 35,000 actual visitors (NMDC, 1999).

11 See <http://www.museumofreading.org.uk/EducationLoans.htm>.

12 See <http://www.canalmuseum.org.uk/wapsite.htm>.

13 See <http://www.nmgm.org.uk>.

14 DCMS, 2001c (Culture Online).

15 'Digital technologies have the potential to open up our artistic and cultural resources to new audiences in new ways. They communicate images and ideas with ease and speed; they allow individuals to make their own journeys and tailor experiences to their own interests; and they facilitate communication between individuals and communities with interests in common. In the cultural sphere they can provide access to places, collections, exhibitions and performances normally experienced by only a few; they can draw new audiences in by presenting things in exciting and engaging ways; they can provide direct contact with artists, directors and curators; they can turn users into creators; and they can bring communities of all kinds together to create their own art and document their own history' (DCMS, 2001c (Culture Online)).

16 'No-one should be excluded from benefiting from the historic environment. It has the potential to be both inclusive and unifying. But people feel excluded from decisions affecting it. Involvement, far from creating opposition to change, enables views to be exchanged and radical options to be considered rationally' (English Heritage, 2000 (Power of Place)).

17 The £0.5 DCMS/Resource IT Challenge Fund funding from the Joint Information Systems Committee and the £50m NOF-digitise programme are demonstrating the potential that museums can deliver. The National Grid for Learning (<http://www.ngfl.gov.uk>) is the UK focal point for online learning.

18 Illustrated in three Resource strategies on ICT, learning and stewardship: see <http://www.resource.gov.uk>.

Measuring outputs, outcomes and benefits

64 Measuring the social and economic benefits of investment in culture is notoriously difficult. (Selwood, 2001c; Matarasso, 1997). The conventional direct economic yardsticks of employment and turnover are poor surrogates for a more rounded understanding of the contribution of the arts and culture in general, as well as museums and galleries in particular. But measurements – quantitative or qualitative – are essential. Unfortunately, not only is there no appropriate model available, but also the general quality of data and information capture and analysis in the museums and galleries domain is notoriously poor (Selwood, 2001b).

The Task Force therefore recommends that Resource should take responsibility for:

- creating an appropriate model which will include a robust set of indicators to measure achievement of the deliverables offered by museums and galleries (which should be negotiated around the suggestions made here);
- establishing baselines against which future performance can be measured;
- ensuring that those organisations within the framework which will have to collect and disseminate data and information have the capacity (preferably electronic) to do so.

The result should be a reliable body of data and information which will demonstrate to government that museums and galleries in the regions can deliver against key policy goals.

Most standard performance indicators are currently determined by DCMS, the Audit Commission, or museums and galleries themselves. The Best Value process recommends the development of local performance indicators for services, and the Task Force endorses the suggestion that users and visitors are involved in the process of defining success. This could be the most potent way of shifting the focus of services away from professional values and objectives and towards user-based values and objectives. The need for external intervention to help this shift happen has recently been illustrated by

research into the low level of senior-management commitment to user-driven change in museums and galleries (Fisher, 2001).

A key deliverable might therefore be for the museums and galleries community – in collaboration with QUEST (Quality Education and Standards Team, DCMS)²⁴ and Resource – to develop user-based performance indicators which will be reviewed at the end of three years. In addition, impact-evaluation indicators certainly need to be developed to address the contribution that museums and galleries make to skills development and to tourism.

¹⁹ As recommended in Resource, 2001b.

²⁰ Office of the e-Envoy (2001).

²¹ See <http://www.e-envoy.gov.uk/publications/frameworks/egif/execsum.htm>.

²² See <http://www.peoplesnetwork.gov.uk/nof/technicalstandards.html>.

²³ Number of links to museums at <http://www.ngfl.gov.uk/museum> as of June 2001.

²⁴ See <http://www.culture.gov.uk/role/index.html>.

Summary

The proposed programmes and the outcomes they will generate are summarised in Tables 8 and 9 below.

Table 8 A Summary of Key Deliverables at the major regional museums and galleries

Programme	Outputs	Outcomes	Measures	Capability Evidence
1.0 Increased access to learning and education resources	More collections become available for learning and education use	Improved learning and education benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Degree of accessibility •Frequency of use 	Anderson, 1999
1.1 Developing a comprehensive learning and education service	Significant increase in capacity leading to a greater range and volume of services on offer	More collections and other museum and gallery resources better used by more schools and people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Measure actual use of collections (other than visiting exhibitions and set targets •Measure which schools use resources and how often, and set targets 	Anderson, 1999 DCMS, 2000b
1.2 Teacher Training initiatives	Training materials and participation in events	Teachers better skilled to use museums and galleries as an effective teaching resource	Offer service to all teachers in catchment area over a three year period	
1.3 Museums as learning centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Museums and galleries increase the range and quantity of learning opportunities •They develop new partnerships to achieve this 	Museums and galleries are more fully integrated into the new local learning strategy and environment	Request evidence of collaborative working based on a business plan	Hooper-Greenhill and Dodd, 2001
1.4 Providing objects to schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •More objects to more schools •Each school receives a mini-museum or 'cabinet of curiosities' 	Objects become an integral part of innovative and imaginative teaching techniques in all classrooms	Comprehensive ran service to be available to all schools in catchment areas of MRMGs.	Martin, 2001 Pontin, 2001
2.0 Increased usage	50% increase in numbers of visitors (physical not virtual) to main site of each MRMG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Greater use of museums, galleries and collections •More efficient use of resources and better cultural return of investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Validation of data collection at each MRMG •Measurement of volume of usage and cost per usage 	Fleming, 1999 Fleming, 2000

Table 8 continued

Programme	Outputs	Outcomes	Measures	Capability Evidence
3.0 Change the profile	More C2DEs visiting galleries	Benefits of investment spread more evenly across entire population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmarking of profiles to a single model conducted by Resource – subsequent surveys to test changes over time • Evaluate effectiveness of different programmes 	Fleming, 1999 Fleming, 2000
4.0 Outreach services	50% increase in number of people reached through outreach services	Benefits of investment spread more evenly across entire population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers of people reached • Numbers persuaded to visit museums and galleries • Numbers who use collections independently afterwards 	GLLAM, 2000
4.1 Cultural champions	Target % increase in young people using museums and galleries for personal development programmes	Increased skills and confidence among young people	Evaluation impact on young people in short and long term	Pontin, 2001
5.0 Inclusive places for learning and inspiration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased usage • Increased visibility and community satisfaction 	Museums and galleries integrated with other public services to collectively meet a community's needs	Resource to establish baseline targets	Hooper-Greenhill and Dodd, 2001; Dodd and O'Rain, 2001
5.1 Skills for young people initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More young people acquire skills through museum and gallery programmes • More accessible displays and exhibitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people helped to increase career and lifestyle opportunities and prospects • And to contribute to regional economy 	Long term evaluation	GLLAM, 2000

Table 8 continued

Programme	Outputs	Outcomes	Measures	Capability Evidence
6.0 Creativity Fund for Objects	New designs for the twenty first century	Increased appreciation of the importance of historical collections to contemporary design	How many designs are created and go into production	
7.0 Change Champions	Organisational purpose and value understood by all staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Empowered staff •Flexible and responsible staff •Imaginative and creative working climate 	Outcome evaluation plans embedded in tailored change programme	<p>Millar, 2001</p> <p>Murch et al, 2001</p>
7.1 Creating a more diverse workforce: Traineeships	Targeted traineeships established and run by museums association, regional museums and course providers	Increased number of museums staff from ethnic minority groups	Criteria of broad staff socio-demographic data	Murch et al, 2001 Carrington, 2001
7.2 Creating a more diverse workforce: Different voices programme	Increased involvement of non-traditional users and the creative industries in museums	New thinking and skills developed by museum staff		Murch et al, 2001 Carrington, 2001
8.0 Developing leadership potential	Increased training opportunities (of a number of different types) for museum and gallery leaders and aspiring leaders	Better leadership, more user-focused services and improved utilisation of resources		CHNTO, 1997
9.0 Information and communication technology	Increased use of ICT in all appropriate MRMG activities	Greater efficiency and effectiveness in accessing collections and expertise and delivering services	Regular surveying of ICT capacity within MRMGs	Smith, 2001

Table 9

A Summary of other deliverables

Programme	Outputs	Outcomes	Measures	Capability Evidence
1.0 Local tourism initiatives	Range of projects and improvement programmes designed to encourage tourism	Increased tourism at both individual museums and to region a whole (with associated spending)	Increase in number of tourists	
2.0 Mapping	Mapping exercises completed for all English regions to one format and one set of standards	Improved knowledge of collections, service and performance leading to greater benefits for users	Completion of mapping exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •SMA, 2001 •South East •Museums, 2000 •SWMC, 1999 •WMMRC, 2000a
3.0 Visitor-services	A functioning visitor services grading scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Greater quality in visitor services •Comprehensive guidance to users about quality of services 	Creation of the scheme Acceptance and use by the public	
4.0 Educational learning standard	Publication of the standard	Improved quality and consistency of services to children and other users	Meeting targets set by performance indicators attached to the standard	Resource, 2001a
5.0 Audience development standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Publication of the standard •An agreed set of data Protocols adapted by whole domain	A robust and rigorous baseline for meaningful trend analysis in the future		
6.0 User-based performance indicators	Publication and acceptance of agreed indicators	A robust and rigorous set of PIs, accepted by all stakeholders		

Table 9 continued

Programme	Outputs	Outcomes	Measures	Capability Evidence
7.0 Management Development Networks	Increased cross-fertilisation of ideas and experiences among museums and gallery manager	More informal and effective managers		
8.0 Rationalisation of collections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Number of objects moved to a new home •Creation of regional stores 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •More objects better used- or available for use •More efficient and effective care of and access to collections 		
9.0 Rationalisation of museums and galleries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Guidelines for rationalisation •Number of unwanted museums closed •Number of museums with access to public funds increased •Number of new museums opened 	A more efficient, effective and highly regarded museums and galleries domain	Resource to create baseline as part of new approach to data collection in its sector	ABL, 2001c

4

Diagnosing the problem

4.1 Preliminary analysis

4.2 Key weaknesses

A fragmented infrastructure

A leadership vacuum

A lack of capacity

4.3 User expectations

4.4 The case for government intervention

What government intervention can achieve

Preliminary analysis

72 The decision to establish a Task Force was taken by the Secretary of State in the light of a review by DCMS in summer 2000 of the issues facing local-authority museums (DCMS, 2000c) and an analysis by Resource (Resource, 2000) which paralleled concerns raised by the museums community (see Chapter 1). Both concluded that there were indeed a number of problems that needed to be addressed if the major regional museums and galleries were to make a full contribution to meeting local, regional and national social- and economic-policy goals. The scale and nature of these problems were, however, likely to vary in detail among these institutions – and certainly between these and the rest of the museums and galleries community in the regions.

Analysis of the issues was not easy. It is widely acknowledged that there are serious gaps in data and information on all the important criteria that might measure the role of museums and galleries in society and their use of public funding (Selwood, 2001c; Middleton, 1998: 8). However, although detailed trend analysis is particularly hampered by this problem, both DCMS and Resource found that it was possible to assemble sufficient evidence to identify some key factors at work (though much of this evidence was necessarily qualitative rather than quantitative).

The principal conclusion was that a number of factors have together created the situation widely described as a crisis. They include changing local-authority priorities, spending restraint, local-government reorganisation and modernisation, more explicit policy expectations from government, governance arrangements, and the public services expanding beyond sustainable funding bases. This is not a sudden crisis, but rather the regional museums and galleries domain changing as a result of progressive financial pressures and changing stakeholder priorities.

With regard to resources, Lottery funding has contributed about £90 million to capital investment in major regional museums and galleries since 1994/5, but more is still needed. And, in real terms, total core revenue funding from English local authorities was

broadly the same in 1999/2000 (£118 million) as it was in 1995/6 (£107 million) – although there are considerable local variations in this situation, and services in the larger urban areas have suffered significant real cuts in expenditure.

The headline figures also conceal some important underlying problems in addition to the variations in local experience. In fact the major burden of expenditure cuts has tended to fall on those parts of the budget generally regarded as ‘controllable’ – acquisitions, exhibitions, educational programmes, and staffing costs. In other words, the impact has been greatest on the creative aspects of museums. Consequences identified four years ago (Davies and O’Mara, 1997) continue to be relevant today: reduced opening hours (Carter et al., 1999), fewer exhibitions, and a shift from specialist to generalist curatorial staff. Establishment costs may rise disproportionately, and the museum may find it impossible to maintain previous years’ levels of exhibition and learning programmes and other professional activities which are directly aimed at providing users with high-quality experiences. Ad-hoc surveys have identified increases in freelance staff (Hasted, 1996) and decreases in the conservation staff whose work is fundamental to increasing access to collections (Winsor, 1999). Overall, staffing levels in the major regional museums and galleries have fallen by 7 per cent, and the number of specialist curatorial posts has declined.

Ironically, this has been happening at a time when specialist community-based teams are experiencing ever greater demands to help broaden the social base of people interested in the work of museums and galleries. Without assistance from knowledgeable and experienced curatorial and conservation staff, those involved in community-outreach learning and inclusion projects struggle to access collections and the associated information effectively – and without such access the benefits of learning through collections will be lost. Access to inadequately understood collections risks a form of learning based on inaccuracy and ignorance, which should be as unacceptable in

museums and galleries as it is in the classroom.

There have never been adequate resources to do everything, and museums and galleries have had to review their own priorities in response to stakeholder needs and expectations – usually without additional money.

In the regions the market is becoming more competitive. Lottery-funded attractions which do not carry collections overheads – science and discovery centres, for example – compete for visitors with even the largest museums and galleries. And, although the latter are responding with Lottery-funded refurbishments (Davies, M., 2001), the level of investment is often significantly less than that of their new competitors. The major museums and galleries hold large, precious and fragile collections, displayed in historic buildings. The associated overheads are an acute problem, and under-investment is seriously threatening these institutions' long-term ability to use those collections for the public good and to preserve them for future generations.

Nevertheless, many museums and galleries have – through inspired local leadership, effective management and staff commitment – continued to deliver some outstanding services. The contribution that some of the larger ones have been making to the government's social-inclusion agenda is just one impressive example (GLLAM, 2000). But over time their capacity has become weaker, and museums and galleries are now less able to respond both to the government's major policy agendas – such as education, social inclusion and creativity – and to significant new opportunities (including challenge funding). Some have relied heavily on short-term project funding to develop new initiatives, which will not be sustainable over a longer period.

Policy and structural issues also need to be considered, in view of the unplanned way in which the domain has developed – leading to the conclusion that rationalisation of the whole structure of museums and galleries could prioritise what is important, focus resources in order to ensure sustainability, and ensure

that users benefit much more from museums, galleries and collections.

All of the institutions of importance to museum and gallery development in the regions – the museums themselves and their governing bodies, the national museums and galleries (through collaborations with museums in the regions and the placing of outstations), and the area museum councils – have done good work. But new government agendas and the growth of regionalism are focusing attention on the efficiency and effectiveness of the rather ad-hoc existing arrangements. If museums and galleries are to be valued by everyone and accessible to all, they need to consider if they are currently organised in the best way to achieve that.

These observations formed the starting point for the Task Force's analysis.

Key weaknesses

74 There was a widespread expectation that the Task Force would focus on the relatively small number of major regional museums and galleries. However, it soon recognised that underlying the serious difficulties facing these institutions were three key weaknesses which affected all museums – the fragmented nature of the non-national museums and galleries domain; a lack of leadership in the regions; and a general lack of capacity in the major regional museums and galleries.

A fragmented infrastructure

The museum and gallery landscape in any given region is multi-layered, and may include one or more of the different types of museum described in Chapter 2. There is a similar diversity in governance arrangements: 41 per cent of museums and galleries in the UK are governed by local authorities, 39 per cent by independent trusts, 7 per cent by the armed services, and 5 per cent by universities (Selwood, 2001b: Table 28.1). Different governance arrangements tend to lead to or to reflect different objectives and different management methods.

This diversity is continued throughout the domain, each type of institution having its own advocacy organisation – the Group for Large Local Authority Museums (GLLAM), the Group for Small Local Authority Museums (GoSLAM), the Association of Independent Museums (AIM), the University Museums Group (UMG), and so on. A positive view of these – and of the myriad other museum and gallery associations and specialist groups (over eighty are listed in the *Museums Year Book* and elsewhere) – is that each one reflects healthy networking. Unfortunately, networking within each group is accompanied by a tendency to be quite competitive towards other groups, and not a little suspicious of their priorities, practices and personalities. Further, there is little consistency in the extent of networking within regions, although some area museum councils and regional federations have a good track record in providing encouragement and support to curators – paid and voluntary – working in small museums in isolation from professional

colleagues. The only bright spot in all of this is the enormously successful Museums Association, the professional association for members of the industry. It alone has managed to provide something approaching a single authoritative voice for the whole museums community.

Fragmentation has been recognised as a barrier to regional museums and galleries achieving their full potential, and has seriously hampered the achievement of even some basic objectives. Why, for example, nearly half a century after the importance of documentation and information-retrieval systems was first widely understood and accepted in the domain, are curators still complaining about lack of adequate collection data and information? Why, after several reports and research studies, are learning and education apparently peripheral to the core activities of so many museums and galleries in the regions? Fifty per cent of museums make no deliberate provision for education, and only one in five museums has specialist educational staff (Anderson, 1999). Why, again after numerous reports and the establishment of the Cultural Heritage National Training Organisation in 1997, are training and development in museums and galleries widely acknowledged to be in such a parlous state?

The museums and galleries community in the regions is a relatively small one. Historically, museums and galleries have come low down in public-spending priorities, and where they rely heavily on admissions income (and sponsorship) they find themselves in intense competition with other tourist attractions and other cultural organisations. There is a need to develop a supportive environment in which these fragile organisations can flourish. External assistance through grant programmes may obviously help. But a more sustainable approach is to encourage partnerships, collaboration and networking – both for the benefit of users and for the more efficient and effective use of public money.

At present, the fragmented nature of the infrastructure is itself a barrier to the forging of partnerships (Arnold-Forster and Davies, 1998). Those

partnerships which do develop are rarely sustained, and some area museum councils (for example Yorkshire's) have found that incentives to stimulate further collaborative working in their regions have not been taken up. Fragmentation also leads to inefficient use of scarce resources, and it has been suggested that it endangers the long-term sustainability of the regional museums and galleries (Middleton, 1998). The regional museums and galleries domain is unstable; it is unable to deliver high-quality services to its users or the wider goals of the government's agenda in a consistent and sustained way, even though it clearly has the potential to do so, particularly in partnership with others.

Adrian Babbidge has described how this fragmentation exists alongside 'disconnected policy and strategy' (Babbidge, 2001: 4) and in particular the lack of a national museums strategy, which has led to the creation of an unplanned infrastructure of government support to museums in the regions (Babbidge, 2001: 12).

A leadership vacuum

A consequence of the fragmented nature of the regional museums and galleries domain is an absence of clear leadership among its constituent organisations. This compromises attempts – both from within each region and from outside – to aspire to and achieve excellence, focus resources, raise standards, and deliver high-quality services to the region. Also, at a time when it is expected that devolution of administration to the regions will be enhanced, it is important to ensure that the value of museums and galleries is represented to key decision-makers through a clear vision in each region.

In the absence of other credible candidates, the area museum councils have partially filled the leadership role in the past. As independent membership organisations, they have been able to develop an 'honest-broker' role, and recently they have become more 'strategic', doing more to engage museums and galleries with emerging regional-government structures. However, their role is essentially supportive rather than directive, and they do not have the resources to take on

all the functions required for effective leadership. More importantly, it emerged during the consultation that many believe that strong leadership should rest with those who deliver services directly to users. For reasons set out in the following chapter, the obvious candidates to provide such leadership are the major regional museums and galleries: if they were to be supported in such a way that their potential were released, they could achieve an excellence to compare with that of the national museums and galleries, and fulfil the leadership role in a dynamic and innovative way in the years to come.

A lack of capacity

All the available evidence indicates that a lack of capacity in the major regional museums and galleries is a significant reason why they are unable to meet their obligations not only to government, regional and local political agendas, but also to their users and to those who might wish to use them. Museums and galleries should be naturally inclusive cultural bodies; without capacity-building, they will be unable to realise their potential and extend current intermittent project-based successes into the sustained delivery of an effective core purpose.

The museums and galleries domain is aware of the need to adapt to change and to respond to new agendas, and opportunities have been actively pursued when resources have been made available. For example, the DCMS/Resource Education Challenge Fund focused on such work in small museums, and the DfEE Museums and Education programme has funded new approaches to working with schools and young people. However, a business profiling of fourteen museums and galleries (McCann Matthews Millman, 2001) has made it clear that the leading regional museums and galleries suffer greatly from unfulfilled capacity to respond and to innovate. Many even lack the conservation, scholarship and research staff who can ensure that collections are accessible and capable of being used to support people's learning and leisure requirements. Many currently lack development posts

for fund-raising operations. They do not have enough specialist outreach and lifelong-learning posts to establish links with communities and individuals and develop services and resources to support their learning requirements. Most are unable to invest properly in visitor research, marketing and evaluation.

Because of the almost universal shrinking or disappearance of funds for making acquisitions or for rigorous, active collecting programmes, some museums and galleries are in danger of becoming static collections, unable to reflect modern and contemporary issues but still responsible for looking after the results of the collecting foibles of previous curators. Initiatives such as the Museums and Galleries Registration Scheme have led to improvements in care and management of collections, and the major regional museums and galleries have attempted to produce creative outputs (exhibitions, educational programmes and innovative projects) related to key government and local-authority policy areas. However, in diverting resources to meet these new policy requirements, the traditional core activities of acquisition, scholarship and collections management may be neglected, which has an impact on access and use.

Capacity deficits are difficult to measure, but if one compares the staffing levels of the twenty-two members of GLLAM and of the National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside (NMGM) an alarming picture emerges. NMGM's eight sites (compared with an average of seven for each GLLAM member involved in this study) are staffed by 530 full-time-equivalent posts, compared with an average of 108 FTE posts for each GLLAM member.

Bristol and Liverpool make an interesting comparison (Table 10). As cities they are of comparable size – with populations of 400,000 plus, and serving urban and rural areas which boost this figure to 1 million and 1.4 million respectively. Historically they are very closely connected: by the end of the seventeenth century Bristol had achieved second-city status and had built a strong economy based on an international trade transporting vast numbers of

enslaved Africans to work the Caribbean sugar plantations owned by Bristol merchants; during the eighteenth century Liverpool emerged as a rival and the eventual successor to Bristol as the chief port of the transatlantic slave trade. Both cities, through their museum services, have recently acknowledged this part of their histories, and both have won praise for the sensitive and balanced approach taken in presenting what for many is a controversial subject.

In the early nineteenth century, as slavery was abolished, the two ports developed new markets, and their merchant elites helped to establish cultural institutions including museums which now house some of the most distinguished collections in the regions. These museums developed first on the model of independent philosophical and literary societies, and later became part of the civic responsibilities of their city councils. In 1974 Liverpool City Museums was transferred to the then newly created Merseyside County Council; in 1986, as that authority was dissolved and the future of the collections had become uncertain, government created the National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside (NMGM). The new organisation, with a staff of 530 and eight sites, receives grant-in-aid of £15 million in the current year (2001/02) from its sponsor department, DCMS. Meanwhile Bristol City Council has continued to fund the running of its museums service – a function it has performed since 1894. Between 1974 and 1996 Avon County Council contributed financial support of around £150,000 per annum for the museum service's education activities, but local-government reorganisation brought that source of external help to an end. The museum service now operates on a net revenue budget of £2.2 million per annum. Like those of the museums on Merseyside, the Bristol collections are distinguished by their quality and their encyclopaedic nature, covering arts, humanities and science. Their importance to the national heritage was recognised by government in 1998, when designated status was awarded to substantial parts of the collections across many disciplines. Since 1999, designation has brought

Table 10 Comparing Bristol and Merseyside (2001)

	Bristol	National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside
Population	402,300	461,500
Population of conurbation	999,300 (former Avon authorities)	1,409,300 (Merseyside metropolitan districts)
Ethnic minorities as % of city population	6	4
Total number of staff	81* (+4 DCF posts until 31.3.02)	530*
Curatorial and collections staff	8.5 (+4 DCF-funded until 31.3.02)	129
Fine and decorative-art staff	2	18
Conservators	6	58
Education/outreach	5	35 (plus part-time events facilitators and demonstrators)
Development	0	10
Marketing	1	13
Front-of-house attendants	24	135
Volunteer coordinator	0	1
Size of collections	1.7 million	1.9 million
Main site responsibilities	6	8
Attendances, 1999–2000	450,000	791,535
Educational group visits	25,000	110,000

* Human resources, ICT, cleaning and finance staff are not included, as at Bristol they are covered centrally.

an additional stream of funding – averaging £90,000 per annum – via the Designation Challenge Fund.

The achievement of the National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside represents a handsome response to government investment. Since 1986 NMGM has increased the range and quality of its services, and three new public buildings have been opened: the Museum of Liverpool Life (1993), HM Customs and Excise National Museum (1994), and the Conservation Centre (1996). The last has been recognised and praised throughout Europe as a major pioneering venture, combining international-class conservation facilities with public access and education. In 1998 it received the European Museum of the Year Award. In the past ten years, MNGM has won 17 national and international awards for education, tourism, architecture and scholarship.

NMGM's capacity and impacts include:

- Holds in trust multidisciplinary collections of worldwide origin made up of 1.9 million objects and works of art;
- Provides education programmes and activities for school children, young people and adults, serving 150,000 students a year through formal learning activities;
- Opens to the public seven days a week, 360 days a year;
- Employs 550 people;
- Handles more than 20,000 collection enquiries each year;
- Restores and conserves 3,000 objects and works of art;
- Provides more than 100 loans, involving up to 1,500 objects and works of art each year.

Investment has facilitated progress on many fronts. Collection management in general has improved. The

Table 11

Benchmarking selected regional museums and galleries services (1998/99)

	Birmingham	Bristol	Cambridge Fitzwilliam	Leicester	Leeds
Population	1,018,000	400,700	110,400	290,000	727,389
Total no. of staff	149	69.4	84	83.5	114
Senior management	4	4	23 ¹	7	3
Collections care/access	28	16.5	20	21	21.5
Front of house	76	27.8	20	35.5	60.5
Administration and support	12	7.1	17 ^{2,3}	6	11
Outreach/education	3	4	1	2	3
Exhibition and design	21	5		4	1
Marketing			3	2	
Fundraising and development					
Other (e.g. Arch Unit)	5	5		6	14
Size of collections	750,000	1,700,000	500,000	2,000,000	3,000,000
Main site responsibilities ⁴	6	6	1	7	7
Total visitors including educational visitors	1,005,733	456,841	276,175	278,371	401,640
Current expenditure (£m)	6.60	3.34	n/a	2.25	3.29
Visitor profile (if known)					
From within LA boundary	45%		17%	42%	50-92%
From region e.g. 1 hour's drive ⁵	50%		29%	41%	77-92%
Rest of UK	4%		19%	12%	
International	1%		35%	5%	<5%

1 Figure is for 'Senior Management and administration'

2 Figure is for 'Technical and maintenance'

3 Figure is for 'Marketing, fundraising and development'

4 'Directly managed' number used.

5 But outside LA boundary

Manchester City Galleries	Manchester Museum	Oxford (Ashmolean)	Sheffield (Trust)	Tyne and Wear	NMGM
427,700	427,700		530,400	1,123,500	461,500
83	63.7	120	52.1	188.2	
6	2	10	4	7	
20	14.7	285	11	38	
30	17	43	21.5	65	
16	4	13.8	11.3	12	
6	7	2.5	4.3	13	
5	2	8.2		11	
	0.9	0.5		5	
	0.1	0.5		2	
	16	13		28	
46,881	6,000,000	unassessed	675,000	1,611,000	1,900,000
5	1	1	5	9	8
282,773	96,934	200,000	322,533	1,035,827	
2.85	1.25	n/a	1.77	5.68	12.70
49%	59%	34%		70%	
80%	30%	13%		16%	
18%	10%	30%		10%	
2%	1%	23%		4%	

Table 12

Benchmarking selected regional museums and galleries services (1999/2000)

	Birmingham	Bristol	Cambridge Fitzwilliam	Leicester	Leeds
Population	1,018,000	400,700	110,400	290,000	727,389
Total no. of staff	143.65	73.4	84	75.64	106
Senior management	6	4	23 ¹	7	3
Collections care / access	30.6	16.5	20	20.53	22.5
Front of house	69.45	27.8	20	33.11	49.5
Administration and support	11.2	6.1	17 ²	2	11
Outreach/education	6.5	4	1	2	3
Exhibition and design	19.9	5		4	1
Marketing	0	1	3 ³	2	
Fundraising and development	0				
Other (e.g. Arch Unit)	0	9		5	16
Size of collections	750,000	1,700,000	500,000	2,000,000	3,000,000
Main site responsibilities ⁴	6	6	1	7	7
Total visitors including educational visitors	778,272	455,352	254,000	301,994	370,251
Current expenditure (£m)	7.00	3.30	1.86	2.44	4.47
Visitor profile (if known)					
From within LA boundary			17%	42%	
From region e.g. 1 hour's drive ⁵			29%	41%	
Rest of UK			19%	12%	
International			35%	5%	

1 Figure is for 'Senior Management and administration'

2 Figure is for 'Technical and maintenance'

3 Figure is for 'Marketing, fundraising and development'

4 'Directly managed' number used.

5 But outside LA boundary

Manchester City Galleries	Manchester Museum	Oxford (Ashmolean)	Sheffield (Trust)	Tyne and Wear	NMGM
427,700	427,700		530,400	1,123,500	461,500
83	74.2	124.3	56.9	181	530
6	2	10	4.3	7	
20	19	32.8	11.5	38	129
30	5	43	25	65	135
16	6	13.8	10.4	12	
6	2	2.5	3.3	13	35
5	2	8.2		11	
	0.9	0.5	2.4	5	13
	0.1	0.5		2	10
	22	13		28	
46,881	6,000,000	unassessed	675,000	1,611,000	1,900,000
5	1	1	5	9	8
282,773	96,935	200,000	195,105	960,982	791,535
n/a	1.30	3.38	1.91	5.95	13.71
49%	59%	34%		77%	
31%	30%	13%		7%	
18%	10%	30%		15%	
2%	1%	23%		1%	

proportion of storage space deemed adequate improved from 76 per cent in 1995/96 to 90.5 per cent in 2000/01 and is targeted to improve to 92 per cent by 2003/04. The number of conservator hours and the number of objects conserved nearly doubled between 1996/97 and 1998/99. The initiation of a major capital improvement programme – the NMGM 2001 project – funded by HLF (£23.9 million) and ERDF (£3.6 million) will deliver a transformation of the Liverpool Museum and Walker Art Gallery, as well as new phases of the Museum of Liverpool Life and improvements to the collection store. An outreach-officer post was re-established in the mid-1990s, with funding from sources which included the Peter Moores Foundation and the European Commission, to raise the profile of the Maritime Museum among local people in Liverpool. Community consultation identified that the museum's displays paid insufficient attention to the place of black people in Liverpool's history; in response, a temporary exhibition space was used to mount exhibitions on subjects such as black slavery and African people in Liverpool.

It is very unlikely that any more than a very small proportion of these achievements would have been managed if the museums and galleries on Merseyside had remained in the care of local authorities.

This comparison between Bristol and Merseyside starkly reveals the gap that has developed between the major regional museums and galleries and the national institutions. One would expect some degree of differential between the Bristol and Merseyside institutions, but this gap indicates a real underfunding of the regional institution that only drastic action will remedy.

Reference to Tables 11 and 12 shows that Bristol is not alone. Although some do a little better, none of the major regional museums and galleries approach the capacity that the National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside are able to draw upon in order to make collections accessible and use them to deliver social and economical benefits. If we want all our regions to have successful museum and gallery services then

investment is urgently required and the leadership of government intervention will be critical in achieving that.

The level of spending across museums and galleries in the regions is inconsistent and unequal, as can be clearly seen by looking at GLLAM's benchmarking data for some of the larger museum services (see Tables 11 and 12). Spending on museums and galleries by local authorities is discretionary: there is no statutory protection for these institutions. Many services have experienced severe cutbacks in recent years. There is evidence that more sharply focused policies (articulated through improved strategic management at government and local-authority level) have shifted resources towards large statutory services (such as education and social services) and away from discretionary services such as museums and galleries, even though many of the latter have demonstrated how they can contribute to the statutory agendas. As noted above, revenue expenditure on local-authority museums is now broadly the same in real terms as it was in 1995/6. This picture is uneven across the country: in real terms, London borough museums have experienced a fall in core revenue spending of 24 per cent; metropolitan, county and district museums a fall of 2–3 per cent (Resource, 2000). Across the regions, capital funding is scarce, although the creation of funding streams through the National Lottery has led to significant investment in many locations – about £90 million in the major regional museums and galleries since 1994. However, many institutions are insufficiently resourced to take advantage of funding opportunities.

In addition, many require significant capital funds to maintain existing premises and displays. GLLAM, for example, has identified that some £220 million needs to be spent on eighteen of the largest services in the UK (see Table 13), and the Heritage Lottery Fund's own needs assessment, currently unpublished, suggests that the total for all museums and galleries may be four times that amount. This is a daunting sum. The Task Force hopes that the Heritage Lottery Fund will

continue to support good projects emerging from the major regional museums and galleries, but it is clear that the capital-investment needs of these institutions cannot be met by the HLF alone, and there is a case for seeking a plural-funding approach to this problem.

Museums and galleries used to attract highly motivated, committed people. However, salaries are low (see Table 14), and training is rarely a high priority, making retention of these same people an increasingly important issue. In many local-authority museums, scholarly research is felt to be in retreat and under threat (Gunn and Prescott, 1999: 78–9). There has been a loss in curatorial expertise: Bristol City Museums and Galleries, for example, had its curatorial base reduced by half in two phases between 1993 and 1997, leaving 8.5 curators responsible for the core, documentation, research and interpretation of 1.7 million objects, specimens and works of art. And, although the numbers of voluntary and freelance staff are increasing, there is widespread concern about the training and management of volunteers and the availability of qualified freelancers.²⁵

The issues relating to staff in museums and galleries include serious barriers to change. One of these is that focusing on professional interests leads to a lack of focus on the user and on audience development; another is that the museums and galleries domain is widely perceived as increasingly unattractive to visionary and creative people. Relatively few beacons of excellence, low salaries, and a continuing low profile and poor image of museums and galleries among politicians have all contributed to this situation. Even when there is a willingness to change, professional inertia – combined with lack of resources and inadequate leadership – can seriously inhibit progress. It also leads to apathy, low morale, and a general lack of aspiration among people working in museums and galleries. Pessimism about the future saps creativity and breeds cynicism.

There is no consistency in the placing of museums and galleries within local-authority structures. Many of these structures have been subject to numerous

Table 13

GLLAM capital-needs analysis, May 1999

Museum service	Total estimated shortfall (£ million)
Birmingham City	24.00
Bradford MDC	18.3
Brighton and Hove UA	11.08
Bristol City	18.76
Coventry City	0.50
Derby City	0.80
Hull City	3.56
Leeds City	29.40
Leicester City	9.25
Manchester City	14.05
Nottingham City	5.12
Southampton City	5.20
Stoke-on-Trent City	6.49
Tyne and Wear (Newcastle + others)	43.00
Wolverhampton MBC	1.35
Edinburgh	0.07
Glasgow	31.00
Swansea City and County	0.76
Total	222.69
Totals for England	190.86
Totals for Scotland	31.07
Totals for Wales	0.76

1 GLLAM represents the museum services of large local authorities with a population over 100,000 and multiple museum sites.

2 The above figures are based on the returns received by 14 June 1999.

Table 14

The pay for the job, 1973 and 1998

		Average	1998 value*	Comparative	Sources of comparison
Starter	1973	1,433	14,014	1,305	Average starting salary†
	1998	11,610		17,500	
Junior	1973	1,760	17,213	1,653	Average salary progression after two years†
	1998	12,892		20,604	
Middle	1973	2,178	21,300	2,363	Graduate schoolteacher*
	1998	16,771		23,193	
Senior	1973	2,975	29,095	2,700	Accountant after five years*
	1998	24,183		33,200	
Director	1973	4,072	39,824	6,528	University professor (including new universities for 1998)*
	1998	33,247		41,000	

Note

*Applying multiplier on Average Earnings Index

Source: Babbidge, 2001: 31: Table 1.16, based on *The Economist* (1974, 1999) or †IRS (1998)

reorganisations, in some cases with the status of museums and galleries being progressively reduced. The widespread introduction of cabinet models of governance has also reduced the opportunities for museums and galleries to make the case for their contribution to the authority's objectives. Some major regional museums and galleries have explored independent-trust governance options. Initiatives such as Best Value,²⁶ though beneficial in highlighting the role of museums and galleries in improving the quality of life in a community, have also proved to be a threat to smaller museums starved of funding. Many senior managers within local government are unsure where museums and galleries 'fit' and what their role should be.

Best Value investigations are destined to expose the capacity failings in the major regional museums and galleries in England in the same way that they have in Glasgow (Glasgow City Council, 2000). The Audit Commission, which audits and inspects the Best Value process, has established three characteristics that define

the top services. They are that the service:

- adopts professional standards and recognises good/best practice for each service component (including curatorial and collections management, visitor services, education, and information services);
- performs well against five critical success factors: awareness, choice, access, audience development and visitor participation, and quality;
- influences, responds to and adopts government and national policies, priorities, guidance, initiatives and legislation.

The agenda set by these characteristics of excellence represents a huge challenge to services under-resourced over a long period and perhaps suffering from a legacy of poor documentation and collections care, combined with short-term-project responses to external policy priorities. Budget savings have often been at the expense of 'doing' money, reducing expenditure on collections care, documentation, marketing, events,

temporary exhibitions, and education and outreach work. Certain parts of the budget – building maintenance, central establishment recharges and sometimes staffing – are protected, leading to all the burden of the cuts falling on operational budgets. The trend to maintain staffing and premises budgets while reducing operating budgets is highly dangerous over a period of time (Babbidge, 2001: 21–4). The end result is a serious loss of capacity to focus on access, inclusion and other local, regional and national priorities. In practical terms, this means fewer (and poorer-quality) exhibitions, little or no outreach work, reduced services to schools, and a general reduction of services to users.

Lack of capacity is the major issue. This has been underlined by government and funders requiring museums to develop a much closer relationship with users and potential users – as expressed, for example, in the DCMS report *Centres for Social Change*.²⁷ In the bidding culture that currently prevails, there is limited capacity for museums to continue to pursue project-based funding initiatives or to sustain these initiatives beyond their initial project funding. These problems may be illustrated by looking at the particular capacity problems associated with learning and education.

Learning and education

The most authoritative report on the state of education and lifelong learning in museums and galleries (Anderson, 1999) reveals a daunting lack of capacity to carry out such work. It found (in 1997) that approximately 50 per cent of museums (usually, but not always, the smaller institutions) made no deliberate provision for education, 15 per cent made almost none, and provision in the remaining 35 per cent ranged from basic to comprehensive. Where it existed, such provision was sometimes available to only a small percentage of audiences in a particular category. Furthermore, only one in five museums had an education/lifelong-learning specialist on its staff. In 1996 there were only about 755 established education posts, and 30 per cent of those were part-time (Anderson, 1999: 46). Most museum managers said that

education was in the second rank of their priorities – after collections management and display. Some audiences (such as schools, children in family groups, and local adults) were more likely to receive education services than others (such as students, young people, minority communities, tourists, groups with disabilities or special educational needs, and unemployed people). ‘In most museums, provision for lifelong learning remains an aspiration rather than a reality’ (Anderson, 1999: 3).

Lack of funds and in-house skills were the principal reasons given for not providing services. But other deficiencies were also identified. Provision for museum and gallery education was ‘characterised by the absence of any underlying rationale’, leading to museums with similar types of collections and potential audiences offering significantly different education services – if any. Too often the reasons could be traced to arbitrary factors such as the nature of a museum’s governing body, or even the personal preferences of individual staff members. Also, the fragmentation of museum-education leadership (between, for example, the Group for Education in Museums (GEM), Engage: the National Association for Gallery Education, and area museum councils) had ‘inhibited a coordinated response in England to national developments’ (Anderson, 1999: 44).

Information from regional studies not only reinforces this bleak picture but also illustrates that provision is even weaker in regional museums and galleries than in the national institutions (Anderson, 1999). For example, only 33 per cent of museums and galleries in the East Midlands employ education-and-learning staff, although almost as many (largely the same ones) also use freelance workers and volunteers. Only 52 per cent have an education policy, and only 31 per cent an identifiable education budget. Only 13 of the region’s 49 local-authority museum services (26 per cent) have ‘top-line’ education budgets, and these (excluding staff and overheads) amount to no more than £26,000, or £2,000 each (EMMS, 2001: 23–5). Half the museums and galleries in the South West have

User expectations

86 learning facilities which have been graded 'basic' or worse (SWMC, 1999: 9).

Similarly, a recent Southern Museums Agency analysis revealed that, although 93 per cent of museums in the region had 'made contact with' the formal-education sector, and 82 per cent had provided support material for it, only 55 per cent produce material that is compatible with relevant curricula. And, while 45 per cent of museums plan targeted sessions for groups, only 22 per cent evaluate these. Twenty-eight per cent have a dedicated educator to develop and manage the service, but only 9 per cent employ such a person full-time (SMA, 2001: 49).

The situation with regard to informal and lifelong learning initiatives is even worse. Only 20 per cent of museums in the SMA region provide a variety of learning materials and interactive elements that create learning opportunities for a range of ages and abilities, and only one in four of these museums produces learning materials or events programmes with the involvement of an education specialist. The lack of expert and professional input is confirmed by evidence that only 8 per cent of museums in the region undertake research into lifelong-learning needs and use the findings of this research to inform their programmes of events, exhibitions and activities, as well as permanent displays (SMA, 2001: 51). On a scale from 0 to 6, museums and galleries in the Southern Museums Agency region barely scraped an average score of 3 for their formal- and informal-learning provision and expertise – indicating that they are providing, at best, only a basic service to people in the region (SMA, 2001: 48–51).

The message that the Task Force has heard is simple: museums and galleries are an underused resource for learning and education. Numerous short-term projects have demonstrated what can be achieved. Now investment in core resources is needed to make such achievement sustainable in the long term.

Museums and galleries are among the United Kingdom's most popular attractions. Over 77 million visits (and perhaps as many as 114 million) are made to them each year (Sightseeing Research, 2000: 33; Selwood, 2001b) – more than to any other category of visitor attraction as defined by the national tourist boards. National museums and galleries, particularly in London, are a major draw for overseas visitors, a third of whom are motivated to visit the UK because of them (Marketscape Ltd, 2001). These overseas visitors account for 23 per cent of the UK's museum visits, but most of them visit only museums and galleries in London (Sightseeing Research, 2000: 59).

Nearly a third of adults resident in the UK claim to have visited a museum or gallery in the past year, and between 20 and 30 per cent describe themselves as regular visitors. However, it appears that less than 5 per cent of the population makes almost half (44 per cent) of all visits (MORI, 2001). The visitor profile is skewed by social class and educational achievement, and the ethnic minorities are under-represented, significantly so in the case of the black population.

Visiting museums has been described as 'a social activity with an educational motive' (Samuels and Sabin, 2001). Many factors may influence whether or not visits take place. They include perceptions of how interesting a museum might be, marketing effectiveness, temporary exhibitions and events, opening hours, cost of admission (if any), and whether there is anything different from the last time a visit was made (Selwood, 2001b). The best experiences bring heritage (and the museum's collections) to life, and involve the visitor by means of either high- or low-tech interaction with the display or by having knowledgeable and friendly people available to help visitors enjoy the experience. While virtual museums offer the public a new way to visit, and potentially could appeal to some current non-users, awareness of museum websites may be patchy (Samuels and Sabin, 2001).

Almost two-thirds of museums involve volunteers – between 19,000 and 25,000 volunteers were active in

1999 (Sightseeing Research, 2000: 47; Selwood, 2001b), and over half of the UK's museums are supported by friends organisations, of which there are some 730 (Carter et al., 1999: 18), with an estimated total of around half a million members (Selwood, 2001b).

Available trend data has been variously interpreted as evidence that attendances are falling or that they have plateaued, or that supply of museums and galleries now exceeds demand (ETC, 2001).²⁸ The latest year-on-year attendance comparisons confirm a downward trend (Selwood, 2001b) – all the more serious in the regions when one takes into account that Lottery-funded new or refurbished exhibition space in London is helping the capital's museums and galleries to buck this trend for the time being. As with other public-sector organisations, public expectation of museums and their services – especially their educational services – continues to grow. Good services stimulate increased demand.

The users who were consulted as part of the task-force study displayed a strong sense of place and a commitment to their city and region. But they also felt that, while it was important to preserve local heritage, there was a 'need to broaden horizons' as well. High-profile exhibitions in the regions and access to high-quality national collections were important to them. The idea of touring exhibitions strongly appealed, and it was said that these would be an important reason for visiting a museum or gallery. Their strong local and regional affinities were tinged with some resentment towards London and a feeling that the capital was unfairly advantaged (Samuels and Sabin, 2001: 13–14).

Users also have strong views about what they want from both museums and galleries (although their expectations seem to be a little different for each). They want their museums to tell a story, and usually it is their story – the story of the locality told through the experiences of its people.²⁹ The Task Force's own research (Samuels and Sabin, 2001) confirms the findings of many other studies: most people put a high value on preserving their heritage, and feel a strong sense of identity with their museums and galleries.

Museums and galleries can act as a focus for local history and heritage, and help to generate community pride.

Those who use museums and galleries regularly are highly appreciative of them, and all the people that the Task Force consulted agreed that these institutions have a lot to offer lifelong learning from school onward. There is strong endorsement of the idea of pro-active programmes with schools, and of the use of museum and gallery resources as an integral part of delivering the curriculum. However, museums and galleries have a poor image among those who do not use them or who use them only infrequently. This image is cloaked by large (albeit declining) visit numbers and a lack of detailed information about visitors. In some cases the image lags behind reality. In others the image is uncomfortably accurate. As one focus-group participant said, 'The museum business needs livening up.'

To change preconceptions, there is a need for improved marketing. In 1998 only one in five registered museums had a marketing policy, and fewer than half had carried out visitor research in the previous five years to establish what users and potential users need, as a basis for developing and publicising projects which meet those needs (Coles et al., 1998). Professional marketing staff working only for a museum or gallery are very rare. And at the same time as improving marketing, museums and galleries must ensure that the content of displays is appealing, accessible, and supported by appropriate high-quality facilities. This will make the marketing task easier, and will enable museums and galleries in the regions to get the local media behind them.

The Heritage Lottery Fund has done and is doing much to help renew tired museums and galleries, and many collections are now imaginatively and accessibly displayed in elegantly refurbished, welcoming buildings. Thanks to Lottery funding, museums have been able to commission leading UK and international architects – from Norman Foster and Michael Hopkins to Caruso St John and Rick Mather – to provide some of the most imaginative examples of contemporary

architecture in the UK. Several museums creatively re-use otherwise redundant historic buildings, opening them up for the public and bringing them back to life. New museum displays appeal to and engage visitors of all ages and a wide range of interest levels. However, the job is far from complete: unpublished research for the Heritage Lottery Fund concluded that £800 million of further funding will be required to meet outstanding capital needs across the UK's museums and galleries – and there has not been a matching increase in core revenue funding by governing bodies. Finding the revenue funding to maintain new developments remains a considerable challenge to most museums and galleries, and there is usually insufficient additional revenue support available to improve the marketing of revamped sites or to make collections more accessible to users. Unless the two go together, the negative images of museums and galleries will simply persist. But equally important is the need to ensure that exhibitions and activities are so imaginative and well researched that they attract and retain current and new users. If the product is not exciting or rewarding, users will not return.

The case for government intervention

Central government has in the past been reluctant to extend its remit beyond the national museums and galleries. Successive governments have maintained that regional museums are essentially a local responsibility (even though museums and galleries are not a statutory requirement of local government). Government currently assumes direct sponsorship responsibility for only a limited number of national museums and galleries and others that it has acquired under special circumstances. This excludes many excellent collections of international and national significance in the major regional museums and galleries which are at least as important as some of those directly sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport or the Ministry of Defence.

Comparisons with the performing arts are instructive. There has been substantial indirect funding for theatres and orchestras in the regions (through the Arts Council) for many years on a scale that the major regional museums and galleries have never enjoyed, despite being entitled to be regarded as cultural institutions of equal status in the regions. The major regional museums and galleries have justification for feeling that they have been left behind, overlooked and neglected by government.

Nevertheless, for some time there has been slow movement towards a different landscape, in which government acknowledges that it has legitimate regional responsibilities. Since the 1960s, with the assistance of central-government funding, the area museum councils have developed to provide modest financial assistance and considerable advisory services to all the museums and galleries in a region. The abolition of the metropolitan county councils and the Inner London Education Authority led to the need for transitional funding of some museums and galleries in Tyne and Wear, Manchester and London (the Geffrye Museum, the Horniman Museum and the Museum of London). Municipal uncertainty and civil disturbances led to the creation of a new national museum from existing local-authority museums – the National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside. Meanwhile,

some of the national museums and galleries were creating outstations in the regions.

Many of these arrangements have been ad hoc, and have subsequently been regarded as creating an unsatisfactorily uneven funding pattern. Babbidge (2001) has recently argued that the presence of direct government funding has significantly influenced patterns of non-governmental funding, there now being a correlation between the absence of government funding and low investment from other quarters.

The creation in 1997 of the Designation Scheme (followed by the Designation Challenge Fund in 1999) was an innovation designed to bring government support to a rationally identified group of major regional museums and galleries and a number of smaller institutions. The rationale for support was based upon peer-review assessments of the importance of the collections, rather than upon the number of museum users or the benefits delivered. That aside, the success of designation in improving collections care and management encourages the Task Force to believe that funding relationships between government and the major regional museums and galleries should continue to be developed.

Partnership with the national museums and galleries can also bring new opportunities and benefits for visitors and users, as a number of experimental partnerships in recent years have shown. Most national museums and galleries already loan individual items to museums and galleries in the regions, and there is much personal contact between curators and conservators. Many staff in the national institutions act as curatorial advisers to smaller museums in the regions, and there are strategic and long-term alliances in existence or being developed. There is clearly potential to do more.

The collections held by all museums and galleries are part of the distributed national collection, a hugely significant and important national asset. Government should recognise that it has responsibility for the maintenance and development of this asset, albeit in partnership with those bodies who have immediate

responsibility for the care of individual collections, including local authorities who hold collections in trust for the public good.

Building capacity to respond to change is not simply about injecting large amounts of money: certainty of funding (which, in effect, government intervention would achieve), combined with a modest degree of growth, can itself bring about an enormous improvement in morale and performance. Small-scale government interventions through challenge funds (such as the Designation and Education Challenge Funds) have proved valuable in producing case studies which demonstrate the ability of museums and galleries to contribute effectively to education, learning and inclusion agendas. The evidence to date shows that government intervention results in significant changes and progress, and there are therefore good reasons to believe that greater government intervention could deliver more benefits sustainable over a long period.

Partnership schemes

The post of Curator of Eastern Art and Culture at Bristol is jointly funded until April 2002 with the South-West Museums Council. At present the curator has an enlarged regional role, offering advice to museums and galleries throughout the South West. She has also raised the profile of these collections by developing international and community links through Chinese, Japanese and Asian art, history and culture. A partnership has been developed with the Victoria & Albert Museum, supported by the Designation Challenge Fund. Specialist staff in the V&A's Far Eastern and Education departments advise on the significance and potential of Bristol's designated collections of eastern art, providing a channel of expertise into the region. For Bristol, the partnership provides training opportunities and stimulus for a post-holder in a specialist subject who could otherwise feel isolated with little support in the region.

The National Railway Museum in York is working with

Sedgefield Borough Council to develop a new reserve collections centre as an extension to the borough's Timothy Hackworth Railway Museum at Shildon in County Durham.

The National Railway Museum is also collaborating with five transport museums in a project called Learning on the Move. It has also produced a joint leaflet with two of these museums – the National Tramway Museum and the London Transport Museum – on their archive and library resources for researchers. The director of the National Railway Museum is the curatorial adviser to the National Tramway Museum.

Subject networks

The Pilgrim Trust has awarded the National Gallery a grant to run a programme that will enable art curators in regional museums to carry out research on their collections.

The National Maritime Museum is leading the United Kingdom Maritime Collections Strategy (UKMCS), which looks to share expertise and coordinate the collections policies of UK maritime museums. UKMCS fully involves the Maritime Curators Group, which will help to disseminate information to, and get input from, the smaller regional museums.

Joint ventures

The Imperial War Museum and Trafford Borough Council are working together to create the Imperial War Museum of the North. The National Maritime Museum (NMM) is collaborating with the Cornwall Maritime Museum to produce a new museum – the National Maritime Museum Cornwall – due to open in June 2002. NMM is providing expertise and support, along with the national small-boat collection (on a long-term loan) and associated objects for the development of the new museum. This initiative combines the collections and strengths of both national and regional institutions.

Access initiatives

*There are a number of examples of traditional approaches to making the national collections more accessible to the regions. Loans and touring exhibitions are both commonly and regularly used. An innovative bid to the Treasury's Invest to Save budget may help to enable other approaches. The British Library is proposing to work with the North-East Libraries, Archives and Museums Council, Birmingham City Council, and the Libraries Partnership – West Midlands to 'establish a model for locally driven user focused collaboration between the regions and a national'. [REF?]***

The National Gallery has initiated a project to develop a catalogue of all the old-master paintings held in public collections in England and Wales. It has commissioned a consultant to carry out a feasibility study on the production of an illustrated and searchable catalogue that would be in the public domain. Initial mapping work has been completed, and over eighty regional collections have expressed an interest in collaborating. Further work is being carried out to identify sources of funding.

What government intervention can achieve

Government intervention could potentially first save and then radically transform our major regional museums and galleries. It would achieve delivery of current government objectives and equip the regional museums and galleries to form public-private-sector partnerships to secure the long-term funding stability essential to the delivery of high-quality services.

Adrian Babbidge's recent assessment of the UK museums domain included a rigorous and incisive analysis of the impact of different levels of government spending on museums and galleries in the various regions (Babbidge, 2001). In the course of his argument he identified a number of benefits that government spending in the regions (either through national museums or in other ways) has brought to regional

museums and galleries. As he says, ‘government spend brings other influences that affect all of a region’s museums’:

- the greater local profile for museums that comes with better-funded institutions recognised by government;
- increased awareness among local authorities of museums’ potential;
- promotion of standards between museums;
- opportunities for sharing the specialist expertise of museums with other local institutions;
- the availability of help-in-kind for other local and community museums;
- better opportunities for career development and progression, and staff recruitment and retention.

Babbidge went on to suggest that the presence of government-funded museums improved the regional museums’ and galleries’ success rate at bidding for challenge funds. He also noted that the House of Commons Committee on Culture, Media and Sport, in the report of its inquiry into the Heritage Lottery Fund, suggested that the absence of a nationally funded institution in a region might result in ‘heritage need’ (Babbidge, 2001: 15–16).

The Task Force endorses Babbidge’s analysis. If funding is made available in the ways this report recommends, the Task Force believes that the benefits that Babbidge identifies will indeed flow into all the museums and galleries in each region. Government funding combined with strong local leadership has already worked very successfully in Tyne and Wear and Merseyside; extended to a clearly defined framework of major regional museums and galleries, it would introduce a significant volume of additional funding which is not going to come from anywhere else, and it would be a mechanism for supporting the implementation of government policy in the regions.

25 In 1998, there were 12,590 permanent staff, 2,775 temporary staff (both FTE), 25,206 volunteers and 853 freelance staff. These figures are based on survey responses from just 1,188 museums (Carter et al, 1999: 16).

26 Details of Best Value can be found at <http://www.bestvalueinspections.gov.uk>. Also available is a 1998 Museums & Galleries Commission publication: *Museums and Best Value: A Guidance Note*.

27 ‘Museums, galleries and archives should undertake outreach work within the community. Central aspects of outreach should be consultation and involvement with underrepresented groups and potential audiences’ (DCMS, 2000a).

28 Figures quoted indicate a drop in attendance of between 1 per cent (Sightseeing Research, 2000) and 7 per cent (MORI, 2001).

29 Not all learning is about narratives, however. Learning directly from objects and works of art is an equally valid experience in a museum and gallery, albeit perhaps needing greater intervention (between object and learner) by the curator or educator.

5

New framework for success

- 5.1 Regional hubs: concentrating benefits for users**
 - A focus for investment**
 - Forging new partnerships**
- 5.2 Roles and responsibilities within the framework**
 - The regional hubs**
 - The regional agencies**
 - Designated and university museums**
 - The national museums and galleries**
 - Local and community museums**
 - The role of Resource**
- 5.3 Summary of responsibilities**

Having identified the main structural weaknesses – fragmentation, a leadership vacuum, and a lack of capacity – the Task Force devised a new framework for museums and galleries in the regions. The principles upon which this was based were:

- an integrated system;
- identified leadership for the museums and galleries community in each region;
- defined roles for each element within the framework.

Six key elements were identified:

- major regional museums and galleries;
- regional agencies;
- designated and university museums;
- national museums and galleries;
- local and community museums;
- Resource.

These are not the only stakeholders – one might, for example, have included universities, schools, regional development agencies, learning and skills councils, and others – but the Task Force believes that it has identified those groups within or close to the museums and galleries domain which can make a significant contribution to addressing user needs, either directly or indirectly.

The present way of doing things – a rather loose federation of interests and uncoordinated aspirations – is not working effectively and needs to be replaced. The fragmented nature of the museums and galleries community and the several – often competing – foci within it have led to a lack of leadership for the community in each region, poorly articulated aims and objectives for the community, a failure to address government policy objectives, decisions and direction being based on expediency rather than on strategy, and an inefficient and ineffective application of the inadequate resources available, resulting in poor-quality services delivered to only a limited audience. The Task Force has looked at a number of options for change and has been urged to develop one or more of the existing elements. But most of the suggestions from within the museums and galleries community have been too

closely linked to the present and the past. They hope to achieve success by building on failure. The Task Force has rejected this approach and has decided to recommend a new concept which looks to the future.

Its thinking has been shaped by its observations not only of the UK scene but also of European experience. It has been impressed by the way in which sensible national–regional–local collaboration (facilitated by plural public funding) has achieved an enviable standard of museums and galleries in some European cities. Examples include the Guggenheim in Bilbao,³⁰ the Delta Plan³¹ in Holland, and the Portuguese Museum Network.³² These services show what museums and galleries can achieve and deliver; they are organisations that museum and gallery professionals aspire to work in; they make a full contribution not only to their local and regional communities, but also to the economy of the regions through their role in tourism and (indirectly) by creating an ambience and sense of place that are attractive to people considering working in the regions, which in turn aids recruitment and retention of staff in regionally based commercial companies. Governments in Germany, Spain and Holland have all invested substantially in their regional museums and galleries, turning them into major cultural institutions with, in many cases, international reputations. Their English equivalents cannot compete and are being overshadowed. Something needs to be done.

Regional hubs: concentrating benefits for users

30 The choice of Bilbao as the venue for one of the Guggenheim European Centres is best understood in the context of the initiatives implemented by the Basque authorities as part of the process of revitalising the Basque Country's recession-plagued economic structure. The new museum has contributed successfully to this, as was noted by Lord Evans in his 2001 *New Statesman* Arts Lecture: 'museums, galleries and libraries play an absolutely critical role in social regeneration: from the Guggenheim in Bilbao æ...' (Evans, 2001: 5).

31 Known as the Delta Plan, Holland's national action plan for cultural-heritage preservation drew attention to the need for coordination between museums and for demarcation of their fields of activity. A series of government policy papers devoted much attention to such topics as conservation, cataloguing, and the coordination,

32 Created in 2000 by the Portuguese ministries of Finance, Culture, State Reform and Public Administration, the Rede Portuguesa de Museus is a system of mediation and coordination for museums and kindred institutions, aimed at promoting communication and cooperation between them, in order to bring about the upgrading of museums in Portugal. Two of its objectives are to maximise logistic, specialist, scientific and financial resources, and to encourage and strengthen the relationship between museums and the surrounding community, as well as their role in serving society.

The key radical change recommended by the Task Force is the creation of a clear framework for museums and galleries in the regions, at the heart of which are regional hubs. These regional hubs will consist of one lead museum and gallery service and one, perhaps two, but no more than three satellite partners. They will be strategic alliances capable of working effectively together and receiving investment from outside to deliver new outcomes. They will be primarily based in our great cities, but not exclusively so. The Task Force feels no need to apologise for this: our cities are major engines of social, cultural and economic growth, serving millions of people within and beyond their boundaries.

The regional hubs will respond dynamically to new agendas which put people and communities first. Their lead services (at least) will have new governance arrangements which respect and embrace the strengths of their existing governing bodies but inject fresh life into them by involving government in a vital new partnership. To sceptics who question whether some of the present-day city museums and galleries services can fulfil the new regional role envisaged for them, the Task Force responds that it is adamant that its recommendations will not be driven by history, but will be visionary and look to the future.

The Task Force feels strongly that those who deliver services to users should be put firmly in the driving seat of regional developments. This is not to diminish the achievements of others who have aspired to this role – or by default have been expected to assume it. The area museum councils have made an outstanding contribution to the raising of standards, networking and the general dissemination of good practice, especially in small and medium-sized museums and galleries. More recently they have taken on responsibility for addressing the opportunities opened up by developments in the regions, where museums' and galleries' lack of critical mass makes them vulnerable to marginalisation. But too much is now expected of them. As stand-alone bodies, they would have to grow very considerably and would

become larger bureaucratic organisations, reducing one of their great strengths – the ability to respond quickly to new external initiatives or new information relevant to the domain. The Task Force agreed, therefore, that the AMCs should evolve into cross-domain single regional agencies (covering museums, libraries and archives), concentrate on the strategic role – acting as conduits between regional government and the regional museums and galleries community – and allow the regional hubs to take responsibility for leadership of the museums and galleries community. In this way the regional agencies will remain focused and lean organisations.

Museum and gallery development in each region will be the joint responsibility of the single regional agency and the regional hub. The hub will be invested with primary responsibility for building high-quality user-focused activities and services throughout the region; the single regional agency will retain the existing AMC role of needs analysis and supporting development (and improvement) through advice and a small grants programme, and will be responsible for representing the interests of museums and galleries in the wider cultural sphere, and for identifying strategic priorities.

While adhering to the principle of a separation between strategic development and service delivery, the precise details of the division of responsibilities between the regional agency and the regional hub cannot be prescribed: they will need to take account of local circumstances such as specific regional needs and pre-existing arrangements and resources, and will probably vary from region to region. The new framework as a whole will be focused on nationally agreed objectives; decisions on exactly how these are to be achieved will be made locally, with each region determining its own priorities.

It is envisaged that this new leadership role will have two major implications for the regional hubs that contract to fulfil it. The first is that the director of the leading partner in the hub will also have specified regional responsibilities within his or her job

description. Second, there will be a need for some posts to be specifically dedicated to the regional dimension – though it is imperative that those who fill these posts are not divorced from the work of their colleagues in the regional hubs: the idea is to build on synergies and cross-fertilisation, not to create a ‘regional office’ within a regional hub.

The regional hubs will be expected to aspire to – and eventually achieve – the highest standards in exhibition content and presentation; learning, education and outreach services; collections management; and all the other key functions of a major museum and gallery service. They must commit themselves to an investment programme commensurate with such expectations. A condition of acceptance as a regional hub will be committing to an agreed and measurable progression towards excellence.

A focus for investment

There are a number of reasons why the major regional museums and galleries that will be at the centre of the regional hubs are the most appropriate targets for investment. Mostly based in cities or large towns, and often established as symbols of civic pride during the second half of the nineteenth century (though some have been in existence since the seventeenth century), these institutions have built up great multidisciplinary collections that represent an amazing cultural inheritance – an eclectic resource, capable of being used in many different ways. These collections include historical, artistic, scientific and technological artefacts, paintings, instruments and machines, and reflect changing views of the world over time as well as retaining intrinsic interest even when interpretations have moved on; they also form a record of a city, its cultural and scientific aspirations, and its citizens. Such collections have enormous potential for learning, inspiration and enjoyment across the full spectrum of the population. And the museums and galleries which house them are well placed to build capacity both to serve their immediate audiences and to support other museums and galleries in the regions to do likewise.

Cities are made up of many communities of interest, and in the past twenty years the major regional museums and galleries have done much to recognise that and to refocus their activities to take account of this. Combining traditional collecting of objects with oral, photographic, video and film recording, they have developed expertise in working with communities to help local people actively record their history, life stories and environment. In this way, the major regional museums and galleries have helped foster social cohesion and inclusion by enabling communities to develop a pride in their own histories and achievements and a respect for those of others (GLLAM, 2000).

Most museums and galleries in the regions are small and have very localised audiences, though sometimes significantly supplemented by domestic tourists. Over 50 per cent of museums attract fewer than 10,000 visits per annum (but still account for about 10 per cent of the total market), and 66 per cent attract fewer than 20,000 visits each (Sightseeing Research, 2000). In contrast, although not specifically funded and

mandated to do so, some of the larger museums and galleries already have a sub-regional or even regional role. Their collections often reflect region-wide collecting over many decades, and their location has given them a pre-eminence among museums and galleries in the regions. Many of their visitors come from beyond their local boundaries.

So, although there are 1,860 museums and galleries in the UK registered with Resource, significant spending power and audience reach are concentrated in a very small number of them. In the local-authority arena, for example, the 22 museums and gallery services (including 4 from Scotland and Wales) that make up the membership of the Group for Large Local Authority Museums (GLLAM) between them manage over 120 museums and galleries, attract over 12 million visits per annum (about 16 per cent of the UK total, and about 30 per cent of the total visits to regional museums and galleries), and currently have an annual revenue spending power of about £70 million (nearly 50 per cent of the total UK local-authority revenue spend

Table 15

Audience location in large local-authority museums

Service	No. of visits 1998/9	% visits from outside local-authority boundary
Birmingham	1,005,733	54
Bradford	320,785	45
Brighton	643,933	80
Bristol	431,841	48
Hull	225,000	40
Leicester	278,381	43
Southampton	154,659	70
Stoke-on-Trent	270,000	45

Source: GLLAM, 1999

on museums and galleries). They also (along with two or three university museums) hold the great encyclopaedic collections, many having designated status and numbering millions of individual objects, specimens and works of art. They are the only museums and galleries which have sufficient critical mass as a foundation upon which to build investment.

Table 15 lists data for eight large local-authority museum and gallery services. (None of the other fourteen members of GLLAM was able to produce equivalent data.) This shows that, in this sample, at least 40 per cent of visits came from outside the local-authority boundary – and in one instance the figure was double that. In total, over 1.8 million out of over 3.3 million visits to these eight services (an average of 55 per cent) came from beyond the service's local-authority boundaries. This substantiates the claim made by the large city services that they serve a regional population and can claim a regional role through this as well as in other ways. (Other data suggest that most visitors from beyond the local boundary came from the region rather than from further afield.)

Other museums and galleries outside the great cities may lay claim to sub-regional status. The obvious candidates are the long-established museums and galleries in the county towns, but in recent years these have been joined by independent museums which were established to reflect regional history – the Ironbridge museums, the Black Country Museum, the Weald and Downland Museum, the North of England Open Air Museum, Beamish and the Chiltern Open Air Museum, for example.

Some institutions – notably the university museums and galleries – have specialist collections which transcend regional boundaries, but even these have a growing commitment to positioning themselves in a regional context.

The re-emergence of aspirations for regional government has made all of the major regional museums and galleries think carefully about how they can contribute to new agendas in the regions. Perhaps

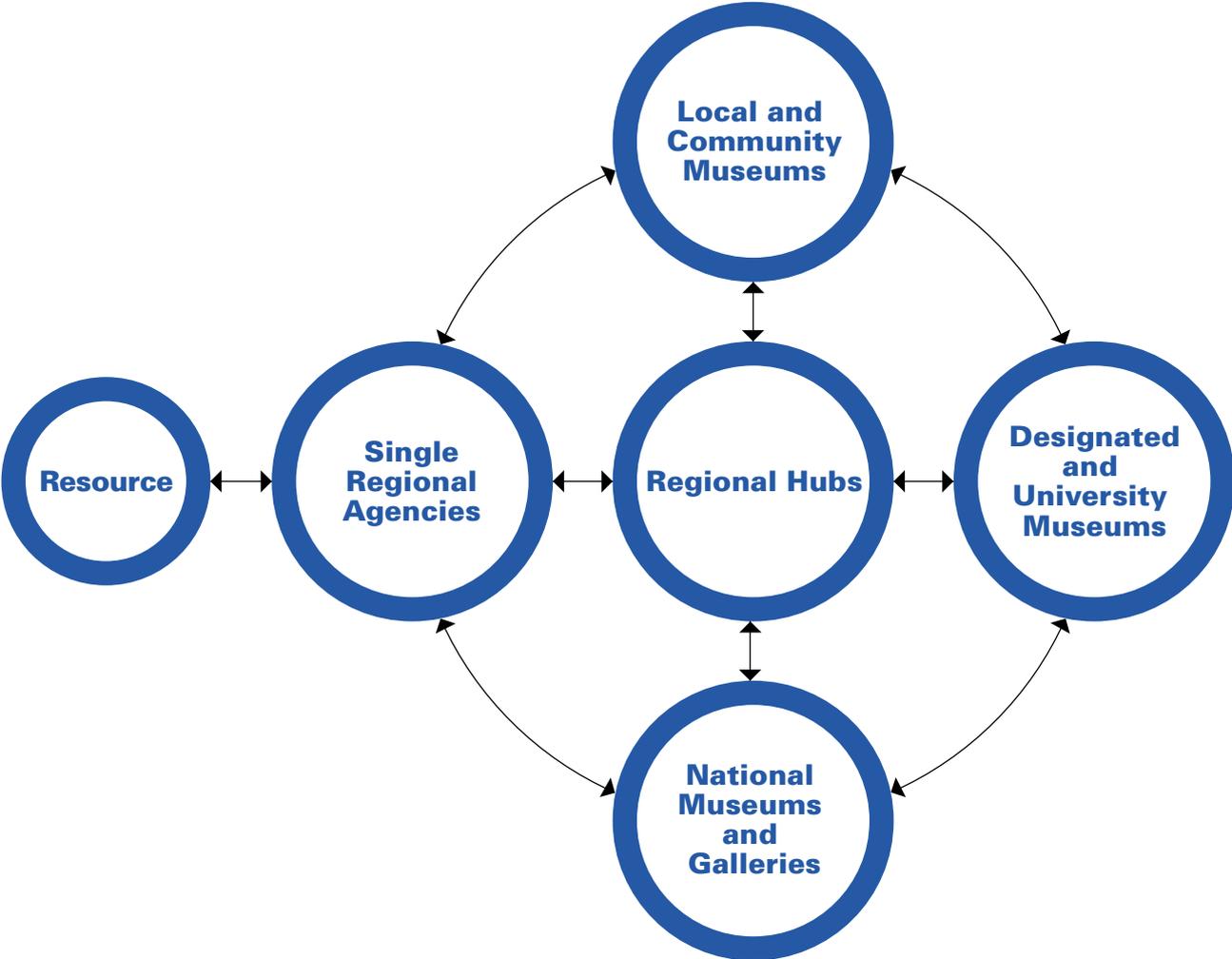
no more than thirty in number, they have the potential to be significant agents for change, bringing about a radical realignment of services to focus on user needs – not only among their current audiences but also among the new ones which will be attracted to revitalised and transformed museums and galleries. This role will create some dilemmas for these institutions. Traditionally, their services have been delivered not regionally but by district or county. Only the area museum councils have operated regionally, and they service museums and galleries rather than users. The major museums and galleries in the regions therefore need to be clear how they should position themselves to the best advantage of users. In doing so, they will want to build on their local democratic and community strengths, but also form new alliances. They will want to develop their core strengths to increase responsiveness to user expectations, create exhibitions and activities that attract larger audiences, and make their collections accessible to all. Once they have achieved excellence in these areas they will then be able to help others in their region to improve the quality of users' experience.

The Task Force has considered all the options carefully and is convinced that the way forward is to invest in the major regional museums and galleries. They will become the museum and gallery community leaders in each region.

Forging new partnerships

With regional leadership should come 'joined-up' thinking and working. At present, relationships between key institutions depend too much on personalities. This does not mean that good things are not happening, but the best practice is not embedded and replicated. One person consulted referred to a tendency for things to 'move at the pace of the slowest camel'. Bringing museums and galleries together through shared expertise and experience will lead to the longer-term benefits of greater efficiency and effectiveness.

Figure 1 (overleaf) illustrates the proposed relationship between the six key elements of the regional museums and galleries domain. The juxtapositions should not be taken too literally. The intention is to show how ideas, expertise and money should flow between the elements, and to emphasise the importance of co-operation between all the elements. Each element has particular resources or strengths – in scholarship; in the scope, depth or relevance of their collections; in contacts with local communities; in contacts with expertise in other domains and professions – that can contribute to the furtherance of the five main aims identified in Chapter 1 for museums and galleries in the twenty-first century. Collaboration between the elements towards achieving clearly defined objectives reinforces the capacity of each element to achieve those objectives, minimises the waste of overlap and duplication, and unlocks the potential of resources already existing but under-exploited. Having established, in consultation with the regional agencies, the strategic priorities for their particular region, the regional hubs will take the lead in initiating the necessary partnerships.



Roles and responsibilities within the framework

The regional hubs

The Task Force believes that the precise contribution of the regional hub should be a matter for regional discussion and inclusion in the Funding Agreement between DCMS and the regional hub. However, some of the areas in which the regional hub might have a leadership role include:

- nurturing the research and scholarship essential for interpreting collections and making them accessible;
- setting high standards of collections management;
- pioneering new initiatives in education, learning and outreach services;
- leading on collection surveys;
- leading on regional marketing initiatives;
- organising touring exhibitions;
- working with regional agencies to broker partnerships and collaborations;
- liaising with regional agencies on the determination of strategic priorities for the region, and on all cross-domain issues such as training and ICT development

The Task Force believes that there is a need to develop centres of research and scholarship covering all the main curatorial disciplines. Scholarship – without which the knowledge represented by their collections cannot be liberated – has all but disappeared from our major regional museums and gallery collections. Leadership for turning this situation around must rest with the regional hubs, who will initiate partnerships that make creative use of the academic expertise not only within university museums but also within university faculties and departments. Local universities which have relevant skills and expertise may provide academic advice to special exhibitions, facilitating the fuller documentation of exhibits and their historical significance, and also identifying places where new acquisitions could be appropriate.

With the national museums and galleries, the regional hubs will develop partnerships to achieve a range of benefits – preparing exhibitions together, sharing skills, developing education and learning

programmes together, and exchanging objects, collections and staff. From this basis, the logical extension could be to work with other museums and galleries in the region to develop supporting or complementary programmes and touring shows. Together they can release the power of collections held in the region and supplement them with loans and touring exhibitions from outside.

The hubs will take the lead on professional initiatives at a regional level – such as mapping collections, producing integrated accessible documentation, and establishing collections resource centres. They will develop expertise in marketing, retailing and income-generation which can then be converted into specialist advice and services to benefit the region as a whole. They will identify and promote good practice such as the development of loan-to-home and loan-to-business schemes (as offered by Reading Museum Service and the National Maritime Museum, for example) and of more imaginative loan schemes to schools, working with the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) to ensure that teacher training and classroom practice include the use of primary source material from museum and gallery collections.

A major contribution in many regions might be to transform the accessibility of collections through the efficient storage of reserve collections. Encouraging the development of local/sub-regional/regional joint stores (between museums and with archives/libraries), including the establishment of collections resource centres by the regional hubs, will also lead to major improvements in access for users and to significant efficiency gains.

In becoming examples of best practice, the regional hubs will also become places where innovative ideas can be piloted and developed with a view to wider application. They will work with regional agencies, Resource, and university and other research centres to host research into the needs of particular audiences, in order to inform their exhibition planning, education programmes and support for lifelong learning. They will then cascade the information down to other

museums in the region, so that by 2006/7 all museums and galleries in the region will have a better understanding of audience needs without the constant duplication of research effort.

As well as the wider regional role, it would seem sensible to encourage the development of partnerships within each of the great regional cities. Each enjoys the benefit of a variety of museum and gallery provision – local-authority, independent, private and university. At present, coordination and cooperation rely on the initiative of those in charge of the separate museums, but the opportunity exists to develop a more strategic and practical approach. In this context the Task Force particularly welcomes recent developments in Manchester, where collaborative working among some of the leading museums and galleries results in joint research, bids and projects. There are clear opportunities for economies of scale, and for the smaller services to benefit from having access to services that only the larger museums and galleries currently provide.

To ensure not only excellence but also consistency across the country, the regional hubs should develop a common vision dedicated to:

- improving public access to collections and services;
- developing audiences;
- supporting education and lifelong learning for all;
- preserving and interpreting the regional heritage;
- supporting community involvement and community development.

This common vision can be developed in partnership with other elements of the framework and more widely with other stakeholders, including government, higher education and the private sector.

The regional agencies

The area museum councils (AMCs) have been important supporters of local and community museums for more than thirty years. The services they provide have changed over time, from coordinating self-help approaches, to supplying services such as conservation and travelling exhibitions, and more

recently acting as significant sources of advice to museums and external funders and engaging in the setting of regional policies and strategies with other cultural agencies. But throughout these changes their main role as a development agency for museums and galleries has remained.

Increased funding for the nine English AMCs has been recommended in a number of reports since they were established. (They currently receive £4.15 million from DCMS via Resource.) The most recent of these reports, the 'Review of Area Museums Councils of England', was undertaken by Tony Pender for the (then) Department of National Heritage and was delivered in May 1997, just as the new Labour government took office. Its key findings were:

- AMCs and their functions are valued by the communities they serve.
- The functions of AMCs relate well to government policy aims and objectives for the museums and galleries sector.
- These two factors provide the rationale for central government funding.
- There are no readily available alternatives that might deliver the core functions of AMCs as comprehensively and effectively as the current arrangements.

Among the report's key recommendations were that

- AMCs should be retained and strengthened to assist museums to raise standards of collections care and service to the public.
- The funding agreement between MGC (the Museums & Galleries Commission) and AMCs should be developed into a more explicit statement of what each AMC is expected to deliver in return for its grant in aid.
- Government should consider how increased resources can be made available to AMCs so that they are adequately and equitably resourced to help museums meet the significant challenges and opportunities that they are facing, notably in relation to museum education, training and the achievement of higher overall standards.

The case for increased funding was endorsed by an unpublished report prepared by the AMCs themselves (Frost and Shepherd, 2000). That report confirmed that all the AMC functions highlighted by Pender's review as important in relation to government policy towards museums were still valued and relevant:

- provision of advice, training, grants and other support to improve museum education provision;
- provision of training for museum personnel in general;
- development or maintenance of regional museums' development strategies;
- provision of specific and strategic advice to major funders such as the Heritage Lottery Fund;
- advice to Lottery and other Fund applicants on capital and revenue projects;
- facilitating and managing consortia projects.

In addition, the AMCs identified new roles developed since 1997, apparently in response to new government initiatives:

- supporting the work of regional cultural consortia, and engaging with wider cultural constituencies in the regions;
- engaging with government's wider regional agenda, including regional development agencies and regional chambers;
- developing cross-domain initiatives with libraries and archives;
- helping museums to widen access – both physical and intellectual – to their collections and services;
- helping museums to tackle social exclusion and contribute to lifelong learning;
- encouraging and facilitating the development of ICT in museums.

The report made no attempt to quantify how much of AMCs' resources was devoted to the 'museums development' role and how much to the 'strategic' role; nor did it indicate whether the effectiveness of either role had been evaluated. But the Task Force's own commissioned research (ABL Consulting, 2001a) confirms a shift in expenditure from 'hands-on' services such as conservation and

design to a focus on advice and information.

About 30 per cent of AMC expenditure is on project grants. This percentage has remained fairly constant during the last six years and between different AMCs, although for the East Midlands Museums Service it fell from 37 per cent to 19 per cent over that period, while for the North East Museums Service it remained constantly high at 48 per cent. The grant per project averages at between £1,000 and £2,000, and museums receive grants amounting to between about £2,500 and £4,000 per annum. In 1998/9, 404 museums received project grants from the AMCs – 36 per cent of the total number of registered museums. Some regions clearly benefited more than others – two-thirds of museums in Yorkshire received a grant, but only 15 per cent of those in the South East Museums Service region. And museums are likely to get most if they are in the North East and least if they are in the East Midlands.

Clearly a significant proportion of the remaining expenditure goes on staff who provide the advice and information valued by most of the AMCs' members. Overheads account for 10–13 per cent of AMC expenditure, and the rest (about 55–60 per cent) is allocated to services. This will include salary costs for staff dealing with museum development and advice issues. Most AMCs – the Southern Museum Service is an exception, spending almost nothing – allocate about 5–8 per cent of their expenditure to training, and the trend of such expenditure has been generally upward during the past six years.

The AMCs acknowledge that their 'greatly-expanded agenda [i.e., adding the strategic role] is bearing down on essentially small organisations that were already identified as under-resourced for the tasks they were expected to undertake in 1997'. Furthermore, they note that, 'unlike any of the other DCMS cultural agencies, [they] are voluntary-sector bodies governed by their members, that can only carry out government objectives in so far that they are funded to do so' (Frost and Shepherd, 2000). The Task Force notes that this adds strength to the argument that

the expectations put upon AMCs are overstretching these organisations and diluting their effectiveness.

The Task Force does, however, reject any suggestion that one or other of the AMCs' two roles – as museum development agency and as strategic regional body – can simply be abandoned. Both remain important: the one to the museums and galleries and, ultimately, their users, the other to government. One way of dealing with the issue might have been to expand the AMCs. But the Task Force feared that this could lead to their becoming unwieldy and increasingly detached bureaucratic organisations. It has therefore opted to recommend that some museum-development-agency functions are shared with the regional hubs, enabling the AMCs (or their successor regional agencies) to develop the strategic regional role and development functions which have clear potential for cross-domain (and cross-sector) synergies, such as in learning and education and training.

In the proposed framework, the AMCs (or their successor regional agencies) will take the lead on cross-domain working and cross-sector initiatives. One example is the development of a network of expertise to address workforce issues (see page 58); working alongside training providers, the agencies would co-ordinate mentoring and training and find avenues to appropriate funding. Another is the promotion of an infrastructure for the development of ICT in both museums and other cultural institutions (see page 36). Liaison with other regional organisations and ensuring that museums and galleries are all engaged with the wider regional agenda (including taking up funding and partnership opportunities) will form a significant part of the agencies' core activities, as will be wider strategic activity on behalf of all museums and galleries in the region.

In *Future Options for Regional Agencies*, a report prepared for Resource by John Holden of Demos (Holden, 2001), this important latter role is described as providing cohesion in the regions, which brings an opportunity to work strategically across the domains, moving beyond short-term, individually funded cross-

domain projects to deliver longer-term and structurally embedded ways of achieving all that museums, archives and libraries can offer their public. In this context, 'strategic' is largely about positioning, planning and priorities:

- A strategic regional agency will establish what is the purpose of museums, archives and libraries in the region, identifying their particular role in the context of the region's priorities (articulated through regional strategies) and setting achievable strategic objectives (stated in the appropriate statutory documents).
- A strategic regional agency will conduct research to ensure that appropriate data and information are available to support its advocacy role as well as to inform its own decisions in relation to the domains in its region. It will maintain an understanding of the needs of its constituents, and relate those – in costed and prioritised plans – to opportunities and available resources. It will seek to build capacity at key points in its region, in order to ensure that wider regional objectives are met.
- Finally, a strategic regional agency will identify priorities. It will pick out what is crucial from what is merely important. It will direct other funders more powerful than itself to points where significant investment would make a substantial contribution. It will harmonise the capacity and aspirations of the domain with stakeholder aspirations and objectives.

Designated and university museums

While ready to recommend radical change where it feels it is needed, the Task Force believes strongly that it should develop and build upon those parts of the domain that appear to be working well. The Designation Scheme for Museums and Galleries can be accounted one of the great successes of the last government in the cultural sphere. The significance of the award of 'designated' status to museums and galleries in the regions has been noted (Chapter 2). The Designation Challenge Fund (DCF), created in 1999

and administered by the Museums & Galleries Commission and then Resource, has offered £15 million over three years to provide some support for each museum or gallery with designated collections. In the course of the Task Force's consultation exercises there was almost universal praise for the benefits that the DCF has brought and for the way in which it has been managed and administered. Parallel exercises by independent consultants produced the same messages. The only reservation expressed was a belief that the selection criteria for designated status had not been applied consistently and that as a result there were a handful of museums and galleries outside the scheme who should perhaps be inside it.

In selecting collections for designation and in drawing up the criteria for the DCF, the Museums & Galleries Commission had put a strong emphasis on collections management. It had usually been the case that collections management (documentation, conservation and storage) was unattractive to external funders and needed special assistance. Designation and the DCF are enabling those museums and galleries with pre-eminent collections to invest in collections management and begin the process of developing centres of collections expertise, the benefits of which can eventually be rolled out to others.

One consequence of the Designation Scheme (and the DCF) has been the formation of a clear 'premier league' of collections (and museums and galleries) in the regions. Although there is naturally some resentment from those whose collections do not enjoy designated status (a resentment usually rationalised by assertions that the scheme has been divisive – which is ironic given the fragmented nature of the domain, and an interesting insight into the concept of 'equality in poverty'), generally speaking the museums world has welcomed and embraced these initiatives. Early indications from the current Resource review of Designation and DCF are strongly favourable to both these initiatives continuing, although not necessarily in precisely their current form.

When Designation – and the DCF – was originally

conceived, it was always the intention that its benefits would in some way cascade down to other museums and galleries. The reasons why this benefit has not accrued to any great extent are as follows. First, it was not insisted upon. Second, there was no financial allowance within DCF to facilitate cascading. Third, some of the more specialist museums and galleries found it difficult to identify to whom they would cascade within their region, but continue to maintain links with other specialist collections; in some cases such links have been strengthened by the scheme. Fourth, some collections were in need of so much attention that all the effort has gone into in-house management, so there has been no cascading to others. The Task Force considers that the original idea of cascading was entirely right, and that lessons can be drawn from its failure.

The Task Force believes that there is still a key role for the concept of designation, supported by a challenge fund. The regional hubs may hold designated collections, but their function goes beyond designation rather than removing the need for designated status. More importantly, there are always going to be smaller museums and galleries (especially in the independent and university sectors) which have pre-eminent collections and include specialist pockets of expertise and knowledge but which will never be serious contenders for regional-hub status. For them, designation has been a transformational source of assistance, and is enabling them to build expertise which can deliver benefits to other institutions. The Task Force would expect the regional hubs to look upon the designated and university museums in their regions as natural partners in raising standards and the quality of service to users.

The Task Force does, however, believe that the Designation Scheme and DCF need to evolve. A challenge-funding mechanism should be retained, because of the flexibility it allows in rewarding and supporting innovation, imagination and creativity, but a revitalised challenge fund could echo the more successful aspects of the Arts Council's Glory of the

Garden programme. This was the foundation for the successful reinvigoration of a number of art galleries in the regions, including those of Walsall and Bradford. The emphasis should be very much on creating teams of dedicated experts who will transform the capacity of museums and galleries with designated collections to deliver services to users in topic areas in which they already have had some success.

But before this can happen, three things need to change. First, the current designation process needs to be revisited to consider admitting a small number of museums and galleries which have either not yet achieved or not yet applied for designated status. The Task Force believes that this is an opportunity to give greater recognition to the social- and industrial-history collections held by independent museums, and to extend acknowledgement of the importance of collections held in universities and of the encyclopaedic collections in many county-town or similar museums. These additional collections would be selected according to a process devised and managed by Resource. This change, the Task Force suggests, should be accompanied by a drive to rebrand the Designation Scheme to raise awareness both within the domain and among the public.

The second change should be a greater emphasis on evaluating the social and economic benefits of pre-eminent collections and on building knowledge and scholarship around them. The Task Force would expect the designated and university museums and galleries to work closely with Resource and to develop explicit partnerships with a wide range of learning institutions.

The third change is necessary to build capacity, and is the way to sustainability. The main problem with all project and challenge funding is that it results in short-term, opportunistic goals. Future funding should be based on the existence of a strategic plan approved by the museum's governing body and showing evidence of public/user consultation. The DCF should be able to help museums develop such plans. Museum and gallery governing bodies and managements have proved unwilling or unable to use the opportunity afforded by project-/challenge-funding schemes to bring public

services such as learning, education and inclusion from the periphery to the core of institutions' activities. The Task Force therefore recommends not only that bidders for DCF support should be asked to demonstrate how this will happen, as a condition of grant aid, but also that bidders may apply for capacity-building funding from the DCF to enable it to happen. This critical change will place the present needs of society at the core of museums' and galleries' activities.

Among the designated museums are a number of university museums. University museums and university collections not formed into a museum are perhaps, in general, the least accessible museum and gallery resource but at the same time they hold some of the most important and yet least known of our artistic and (in particular) scientific collections.

For many university museums and collections funding is very uncertain. Although collections retain historical significance they may no longer be needed for their original purpose – teaching. And as they become redundant justifying their financial support by their university governing bodies can be difficult. Fortunately there are many passionate advocates of the collections within the universities which has helped to preserve and protect the collections. But resources is an issue. The Arts and Humanities Research Board (AHRB) do support the most important museums and collections but otherwise they rely upon challenge funding, the generosity of the university and their own income generation efforts.

Access for learning and education – and for the wider public – can be problematic too. Just as the collections were usually acquired for teaching purposes, so too were the museums and galleries developed. They often retain assumptions on their presentation about the educational attachment levels of their visitors and are not often child-friendly. Location, physical accessibility and opening hours are other frequently encountered issues too. There is however a gentle process in place of making these museums more accessible to the general public while retaining their character as collections and museums with a very

specific university and academic purpose.

These are good reasons to mark out university museums and collections as recipients of additional funding in their own right. However, the Task Force sees an additional role for the university museums in its proposed framework. The museums – and their linkages into their universities – are well placed to be sources and engines of scholarship and research for other museums, both nationally and within their own regions. They should be nurtured for these qualities and all museums and galleries encouraged to work with the university museums (including commissioning them to assist with projects) to help solve research problems.

Equally importantly, in many instances the universities and the university museums retain expertise and specialist knowledge in collections which is now rare elsewhere outside of the national museums and galleries. This is a significant asset for the framework as a whole and should be, again, nurtured and then utilised by other museums and galleries. A knowledge deficit has developed about regional collections but the framework ought to facilitate making best use of what is available before investing in ‘new’ expertise – not least of all because real expertise takes time to develop and mature.

Together the designated and university museums represent both a hugely important collections asset but also sources of knowledge and expertise which can be utilised by all museums and galleries in the framework. But many of them have barely enough money to stay open and if their expertise is to be shared and their collections made accessible then investment intervention is absolutely critical.

The national museums and galleries

All the major national museums and galleries – partly encouraged by their funding agreement with DCMS – wish to seek partnerships with regional museums and galleries, to enable greater access to the national collections and to bridge the gap (which many would say has become a gulf) between the nationals and the regionals. Genuine partnership arrangements can give

the national institution a clear presence in the regional partner institution, with some day-to-day partner presence in the national museum or gallery too. In this way a genuine gain in access may be obtained.

The objectives of the national – and indeed the regional – museums and galleries may be quite different from one institution to another, but the criteria for entering into partnerships are likely to include compatibility and sustainability (i.e., does the potential partner have similar objectives and interests and sufficient profile or presence?), previous track record, regional spread, and a degree of commitment from the partner.

Partnership schemes

The Tate Partnership Scheme is a long-term relationship between the Tate and six museums and galleries in the regions, involving the creation of joint exhibitions, training opportunities, and a more general exchange of expertise. This is, however, dependent upon three-year funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund’s Museums and Galleries Access Fund. A similar relationship is being developed between the National Gallery, Tyne and Wear Museums Service, and Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery. The Victoria & Albert Museum and the Sheffield Museum and Galleries Trust have a ten-year contract that involves the V&A providing Sheffield with three exhibitions during the next five years and working with it to develop staff expertise. A senior member of the V&A staff is a board member of the Sheffield trust.

The nationals could develop roles beyond partnerships with individual regional museums and galleries. They have much to offer – not least in terms of scholarship, collections, research, and subject-specific expertise in interpretation. They could broker a series of subject networks, taking the lead and being the channel for government support. These networks would naturally extend across regional boundaries, making a national overview necessary. Some networks (for maritime museums, regimental museums, and old-

master collections, for example) already exist and could be developed further. Not all networks would have natural leadership in the nationals, however – many aspects of social and industrial history could look to leadership from the regions. There is a strong case, for example, for networks focusing on rural history and vernacular architecture (open-air museums), and one might expect Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust to take a lead on industrial museums. Much can be achieved through such networks, including national assessments of collections (as demonstrated by the British Aviation Preservation Council's impressive register of aircraft and airframes), joint research and exhibition projects and the sharing of skills and knowledge.

Not all initiatives need be new. For example, the existing purchase funds administered by the Victoria & Albert Museum and the Science Museum could be increased to the benefit of many more museums and galleries in the regions.

There are three possible obstacles to the nationals developing a full role in the regions. The first and most obvious is that an integrated approach will require additional resources. The second is the sensitive issue of where and how any new resources are placed: regional museums and galleries do not wish to feel patronised by the nationals, but equally the nationals do not want to feel driven into open-ended relationships in the regions, with unclear outcomes and unclear value for money. The third is the national museums and galleries' own funding priorities, having regard to the grant-in-aid that the government makes available to them. The decline in grant-in-aid, in real terms, has created financial pressures for them. While it is outside the remit of this Task Force to make recommendations on this issue, the nationals will need to have sufficient headroom within their grant-in-aid provision if they are to be able to develop their role in the proposed new framework for regional museums.

Local and community museums

It should be noted that the vast majority of the 1,432 fully registered museums in England are not being

recommended for direct government funding. They can be categorised as 'local' or 'community' museums and galleries, and it is entirely appropriate that both their value and their support be largely local – regardless of whether they are in local-authority or independent governance. 'Local' is of course difficult to define precisely, but, broadly speaking, local and community museums and galleries deliver a year-round service principally to people who live within the catchment area encapsulated in their name; tourists and electronic enquiries are an important supplementary source of visitors and users.

What the curators in these museums and galleries want most is some certainty about their core funding, and that that core funding should be adequate for their needs. Both of these are things that can best be delivered locally, and there is at present no particularly convincing case for why the centre should help.

However, the Task Force does believe that establishing a framework for museums and galleries in the regions will help local and community museums and galleries indirectly. It will offer them:

- consistent and reliable access to expertise within their own region;
- participation in region-wide schemes to help solve professional problems (documentation backlogs, for example);
- funded partnerships with designated and University museums;
- direct assistance (at no or very low cost) with learning and inclusion initiatives and external funding opportunities;
- enormously improved training and development opportunities.

These new or improved opportunities will be delivered either through partnerships with the regional hubs or with museums and galleries with designated collections, or through an enhanced regional grant-aid programme.

The role of Resource

Resource will be responsible for ensuring that the

framework works, and that appropriate and adequate support mechanisms are in place. This will involve it in a number of roles:

Funding

Resource will be responsible for allocating, administering, monitoring and evaluating funding to the regional hubs, designated and university museums and galleries, and regional agencies. It will also be responsible for managing other one-off challenge funds generated either by itself or by a government department.

Standards

Resource will retain its current role of setting domain standards for key activity areas (on a UK basis).

Collections

Resource will be responsible for investigating a number of collections-related issues which need to be considered as part of developing a strong regional museums and galleries infrastructure.

One issue concerns the general desire to increase accessibility to collections, 95 per cent of which are not on display and a significant proportion of which are not easily accessible. It has been proposed that neglected items and some collections that are worth keeping (surely not all) should be transferred or loaned to places where they will be better appreciated and made more accessible. To facilitate this, one suggestion is to create a national collections register/database to enable access to collections and their movement within the domain and beyond it. A number of other proposals may be explored:

- Effective mapping of collections to identify the most important and to facilitate access/effective use. Standards and methodology should be established in partnership with regional hubs and regional agencies. This should be implemented at regional level.
- Review the place/role and importance of mass-produced consumer items.

- Make disposal sale easier and more respectable. Set up a system with national standards. Any financial benefits should go back into the museum or gallery.
- Make surplus stock more easily available to teachers.

A second issue involves investigating the feasibility of creating a national collections centre to provide advice and support on collections-management issues to all museums and galleries. Throughout the consultation process we have been repeatedly told that there is considerable duplication of effort where advice about collections management is concerned. Each area museum council tends to produce helpful guidance on similar topics; the Museums Association and the Association of Independent Museums produce similar advice, as did the Museums and Galleries Commission. The availability of web-based technology suggests that such advice could be made available from a single point. Linking this single point to the standards developed nationally by Resource could create an efficient and effective mechanism for ensuring consistency in the quality of collection care and public services throughout the domain.

Organisational development

Resource will be responsible for originating national initiatives and programmes to address leadership and management weaknesses, skills development and training, and changes desirable in institutional culture and workforce profile (Resource, 2001a).

- *Leadership/management weaknesses.* The lack of a business approach, weak leadership and inefficient management are all linked. It is suggested that Resource, in partnership with regional hubs and regional agencies, contract into selected business schools or other commercial training partners to provide support at regional level. Effectively, Resource would draw up a list of criteria/standards and contract those which the business school would deliver. Quality control would be essential, and the context would need to

have some ‘museums flavour’ and be linked to a qualification. Working with the Museums Association would help ensure that.

- *Skills development and training.* There is widespread concern about significant failings in this area across all museums and galleries. This needs to be addressed urgently.
- *Culture change and workforce profile.* Recommendations should be developed to address the serious cultural/attitudinal problems in museum and gallery organisations and the poor match between the profile of museum staff and that of the audiences that they claim to serve. Such work will support and link in to that of the change facilitators in each of the regional hubs, who should also be involved with it.

Rationalisation

Resource will recommend a mechanism for the rationalisation of public-funding support to museums and galleries. This may include creating new public-funding criteria to guide local authorities, Lottery distributors, government and others. The mechanism should be designed so that decisions are made at local level, and so that closure of institutions or ‘natural wastage’ may be seen as both possible and desirable.

Facilitating collaboration and partnerships

Resource will facilitate funded collaborations and partnerships between key elements within the framework and with all appropriate government departments.

Data and information

Resource will be responsible for the efficient and effective identification and (through regional agencies) collection of key domain and sectoral data and information. Liaison with DCMS will be essential.

Resource will conduct detailed baseline studies in the regional hubs to enable accurate measurement of deliverables from 2004/5 onwards.

Resource will investigate the creation of an

‘observatory’ (with the assistance of EU funding) which will form the basis of a new authoritative data and information source for the whole of the sector. It will work with regional hubs and regional agencies to agree what data and information need to be collected. Collection will take place at regional level, using standards and methodologies agreed nationally.

A national strategy for museums and galleries

Resource will lead on and coordinate the writing of a national strategy for museums and galleries.

Summary

Roles and responsibilities of the key contributing elements in the new framework are summarised in the following table.

Table 16 Roles and Responsibilities

Element	Roles and Responsibilities	Key Partners	Outcome
Regional hubs	Provide leadership for the regional museums and galleries community in domain professional issues, especially collections management, exhibitions, and audience development	All within the framework	A more effective, co-ordinated and focused approach to domain professional issues
	Develop collections-based expertise and scholarship	National museums and galleries; Designated and university museums and galleries	A more skilled workforce contributing to a wider appreciation and use of regional museums
	Develop and facilitate touring exhibitions within the region and into the region from outside	National museums and galleries, local museums	Increased number of touring exhibitions encouraging regional/national collaboration and reciprocity. Exhibitions stimulate greater involvement of community with museums and galleries.
	Develop the effective coordination of audience development within the museums and galleries domain, including market research to articulate the distinctive needs of museum and gallery users.	All within the Framework	Increase in visits to and use of museums and galleries coupled with an increase in satisfied visitors. Role of museum and gallery in community developed.
	Develop or investigate the development of collections research centres, either solely for museums collections or cross-domain.	Regional agency	Research centres established providing intervention and advice for museum collections.
	Develop world-class facilities to elevate regional hubs to significant cultural institutions.	National museums and galleries	Recognition of value of regional museums and galleries on a regional, national and international level.
	Produce exhibitions of national and international standard, including a touring exhibitions capacity	National museums and galleries	Greater use of museums and galleries by community. Positive impact of tourism to regions
	Develop conservation and interpretation facilities and services – for own use and for sharing within the region	National museums and galleries	Improved access to collections (including future access). More effective use of collection leading to improved visitor satisfaction.
	Develop the full range of expertise and targeted services in education, learning and outreach/social inclusion, sharing these with others in the regions.	Regional agency, Resource, Department for Education and Skills, learning and skills councils	Museums and galleries placed at the heart of [lifelong] learning and education for all. The potential of museums and galleries to enrich lives is unlocked.
	Develop contribution to increasing social capital and economic prosperity in the region	Regional agency, regional development agency	Social and economic prosperity of region improved through museums' and galleries' impact on local lines of business. E.g. tourism, new jobs and personal development.

Table 16 continued

Element	Roles and Responsibilities	Key Partners	Outcome
Regional hubs continued	Develop regional identity through understanding and exploring the past, present and future	All framework elements, plus universities, regional assembly, regional development agency, regional cultural consortia	Increased sense of community and place. Celebration of the history, richness and potential of regions.
Regional agencies	Provide strategic advocacy for the domain within the region	All	The domain is placed within a regional context.
	Provide advice and support on cross-domain issues	Resource	Better use of resources, synergies and enhanced user services through greater cooperation at regional level
	Identify strategic needs and priorities for the domain	Regional hubs, local museums, Resource, Heritage Lottery Fund	Better strategic planning and development of the domain. Increased understanding of where we want to be and how to get there.
	Lead on cost-effective regional action for museum development through advice and a small grants programme.	Regional Hubs, Resource	Targeted support and development to underpin strategic planning.
	Undertake regional collection of data and information, and appropriate associated research	Resource; regional hubs	To create better data and information to evaluate the domain's performance and indicate areas for future work.
	Identify and communicate the domain's particular role in the context of the region's priorities, and set achievable strategic priorities	Regional development agencies, regional cultural consortia, regional hubs	To ensure that the domain is understood at regional level and its potential contributions to regional objectives utilised.
	Identify funding and other opportunities as they emerge at regional level, and communicate them to the domain	Regional development agency, government office	A better funded domain from new sources.
	Coordinate centralised sector/domain support (at regional level) – for example, learning support units and funding support units	Resource	More museums and galleries contributing to the education and learning agendas.
	Lead and coordinate the domain's contribution to regional cultural strategic planning	Regional hubs, local museums	The domain's role acknowledged and integrated into regional cultural planning.
Designated and university museums	Provide leadership for the regional museums and galleries in collections – expertise and scholarship.	National museums and galleries; Regional hubs	A more focused and co-ordinated approach to expertise and scholarship leading to a highly skilled workforce offering a wider appreciation of the collection.

Table 16 continued

Element	Roles and Responsibilities	Key Partners	Outcome
National museums and galleries	Develop long term, sustainable partnerships with regional hubs and designated and university museums	Regional hubs, designated and university museums	A stronger regional museums and galleries community with strong links to government sponsored nationals
	Assist regional hubs and designated museums to develop collections expertise, providing leadership and incentives as appropriate	Regional hubs, designated museums	Better cared for and managed collections for use in learning, education and inclusion programmes
	Develop national subject/discipline based networks	Regional hubs, designated and university museums, local museums	More effectively and efficiently coordinated data, information and services for users
Local and community museums	Develop services specifically targeted at their local communities	Community development services or agencies	Increased involvement of community leading to a better use of collections.
	Develop a specific input to neighbourhood-renewal projects	Regional hubs, Resource	Recognition of role museums can play in neighbourhood renewal.
Resource	Allocate, administer, monitor and evaluate funding to the [regional hubs] designated museums and galleries, and regional agencies	Regional hubs, designated museums, regional agency	A properly supported regional framework with clear and strong links into government at all levels.
	Manage challenge funds – including facilitating funded collaborations and partnerships within the framework	As appropriate	
	Investigate ancillary proposals for developing a strong regional museums and galleries infrastructure, for example <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •A national collections register/database; •Facilitating the transfer or disposal of surplus stock; (the rationalisation of collections) including research projects (e.g. 20thC consumer items) •A national collections centre; •A data and information observatory 	All	A strong infrastructure more efficiently and effectively managed, leading to improved services to users.
	Take the national lead on leadership, management and culture-change issues	National museums and galleries, regional hubs	A better led and motivated domain.
	Take the national lead on ensuring that appropriate skills development and training is available.	Regional agencies, CHNTO regional hubs	A more skilled and flexible workforce.
	Identify key data and information required and ensure it is collected to nationally agreed standards and protocols.	Regional agencies	A better-informed domain able to demonstrate its achievements and identify points of investment.

6

Building the new framework

- 6.1 Where will regional hubs come from?
- 6.2 How will regional hubs be selected?
 - Criteria for regional hubs and partner organisations
 - The selection process
- 6.3 Governance arrangements
- 6.4 Consolidation and transformation
- 6.5 Implementation

Where will regional hubs come from?

116 Introducing the new national pattern of regional provision which will bring high-quality museum and gallery services for all will entail:

- consolidation and transformation of major regional museum and gallery services that have been selected to become regional hubs;
- ensuring that regional hubs have the capacity to provide leadership for the region and to take on enhanced regional functions;
- creation of new systems and relationships keyed into regional and local cultural strategies;
- new governance structures for regional hubs;
- new government and other funding to support new systems and relationships;
- clear identification of the roles and responsibilities of regional hubs and cultural agencies.

33 In the case of a local authority, the entire service will be part of the regional hub. However, it is envisaged that the funding agreements with the hub will specify which museums and galleries should be supported, and in most cases this will be the major ones and not small branch museums.

The Task Force envisages that there will be a regional hub in each of the nine English regions. (London, as a recognised English region with its own regional development agency, will be included in the framework, but may require separate arrangements appropriate to its unique circumstances.) Each hub will consist of one lead museum and gallery service³³ and one, perhaps two, but no more than three satellite partners. There are two reasons for recommending this arrangement. The first is that it is unlikely to be possible or sensible to attempt to concentrate all the essential capabilities of a regional hub in one place. Second, having satellite partners means that a geographical spread of leadership can be achieved; and this arrangement will mean that partner museum and galleries already having a national reputation for aspects of service delivery will be able to obtain additional funding to develop this expertise further.

Possible ways in which this approach might be applied can be tentatively put forward. In the South West, for example, Bristol City Museums and Galleries would be the obvious choice for the lead in the hub, but the inclusion as satellite partners, of museums in, say, Exeter, Plymouth, Truro or Swindon would both ensure geographical spread and acknowledge, for example, Exeter's important position with regard to its ethnographic and world-culture collections and interpretations. In the East Midlands, Leicester City Museums and Galleries might command the lead position, but a partnership with Leicestershire County Museums Service would recognise that service's expertise in science and technology and support for community museums, and a partnership with Nottingham City Museums could enable the further development of that service's cutting-edge community-outreach work.

The regional hubs will therefore themselves be partnerships designed to benefit from additional resources both to ensure the excellence of what they do as individual services and to raise their joint capacity to give leadership to the region as a whole.

How will regional hubs be selected?

The Task Force recommends that the selection of regional hubs should be jointly managed by DCMS and Resource. Local authorities, universities, independent museum trusts, and other governing bodies should be invited to propose their existing services as regional hubs. Partnerships are specifically encouraged (see above), and it is expected that these will have been established in principle before applications are submitted. Criteria will be developed to ensure that those applying have the necessary foundations upon which to build and achieve what will be expected of them.

Criteria for regional hubs and partner organisations

Listed below are the types of criteria that will need to be applied in order to compile a shortlist of museums and galleries which can then be narrowed down to create a lead museum or gallery and up to three partner organisations within each region. No one organisation will score highly in all areas; a weighted ranking system will be developed and applied to all organisations that put themselves forward for consideration.

The criteria fall under five main headings:

- *Status* – to include registered status and having designated collections.
- *Location* – to consider geographic proximity to other registered museums in the area, recognition as an administrative centre, population catchment, and social-deprivation indices.
- *Infrastructure* – to consider the knowledgeability and professional qualifications of staff, the size and width of collections, and physical capacity.
- *Capacity and commitment* – to consider governing bodies' previous and continuing commitment to core funding, numbers of visitors, evidence of investment in staff development and training, and ability to manage external partnerships.
- *Endorsement and recognition of services* – to include recognition of standards of good practice – for example, by Spectrum, BS 5454, Investors in People, and previous collaboration within museum networks.

Together, the partners in the regional hub should be prepared to guarantee an increase in the numbers of users and a significant improvement in the range and quality of services delivered to users. They will also provide other museums with expertise/advisory services in the following areas:

- collections care and management;
- curatorial research and scholarship;
- exhibitions, displays and interpretation;
- marketing and retailing;
- audience development.

The selection process

1. A detailed prospectus covering the criteria necessary to qualify as a regional hub and the expected characteristics of a regional hub will be made available to all potential interested parties.
2. Potential candidates for regional-hub status will be selected from submissions received.
3. A financial offer will be made to the selected regional hubs for funding from April 2004 for an initial period of three years. In response, they will be invited to submit a detailed strategic and resources plan which will not necessarily be confined to the immediate funding horizon.
4. Each plan is likely to acknowledge that, in its earlier stages, the work of the regional hub will emphasise a major consolidation and transformation programme (see page 121) for the regional hub itself, after which an identified transitional period will lead towards the development of its wider regional role.
5. Funding will be direct via Resource (in a similar way to grants from the Designation Challenge Fund), but the status of the funding is expected to be greater than that of challenge funding and more on a par with the sponsored-body status of the national museums and galleries. Linking into funding from the local authority or other governing body will probably require the following:
 - a threshold spending level being reached by the local authority/governing body before the

Governance arrangements

museum/gallery becomes eligible for government support – this is necessary to encourage the governing bodies to maintain an adequate level of core funding to support the museums and galleries in their care;

- a funding agreement which ties together expenditure contributions from the local governing body and from central government, as well as specifying deliverables/targets for outputs and outcomes;
 - a new governance arrangement (see below).
6. A proposed five-year transitional period (April 2002 to March 2007) will require close working between the area museum councils (or their successor single regional agencies) and the regional hubs as roles and responsibilities are transferred from the former to the latter.
 7. The process is to be jointly managed by DCMS and Resource.

Commitment and skills, together with transparency, through new governance arrangements, will help to change our major regional museums and galleries, and through that process help transform the entire museum and galleries domain. The Task Force's extensive consultations found that, although museums and galleries in the regions are critically underfunded, their present governance arrangements are also a major barrier to releasing the potential benefits contained within their collections. This is especially true of the major regional museums and galleries which are part of local authorities.

Investment to support the work of the regional hubs is essential. But careful consideration needs to be given to how it will happen. There does not have to be the same solution everywhere. The arrangements will need to be meticulously and sensitively negotiated between the existing governing bodies and Resource/DCMS. The Task Force suggests that the following models may be appropriate for consideration:

- (a) A direct grant is the simplest approach, but is unlikely to engender a real sense of partnership.
- (b) Where relevant, conversion of the local-authority museum and gallery into an independent trust.
- (c) Creation of a joint board of management for the funding recipients, who are then funded through a funding agreement: the 'Tyne and Wear model'.
- (d) The DTLGR Local Public Service Agreements model.
- (e) The New Zealand trust model – a variation on the independent trust, but engaging local government much more closely.

The trust model concept has been around for some time, and has, for example, been applied in Sheffield, where, although the council retains ownership of the collections and buildings, the management of the service is in the hands of the Sheffield Museums and Galleries Trust. The principal objection to this approach is that it may divorce the public interest from the management of the service and might work for only the lead partner in a regional hub. However, it can give executives a greater 'freedom to manage' and may

encourage investment from the private sector.

Other issues which arise from this model include the need to be clear about the residual responsibilities of previous governing bodies and the sustainability of the arrangements. Will the local authority retain ownership of the collections and responsibility for the maintenance of the buildings? To what extent will the new trust (board and management) have freedom to raise income and rationalise assets? What degree of public funding might be retained from the local authority? Because of the public's interest (legal and democratic) in the collections the degree of 'independence' may be critical to the future of the trust. There is likely to be both political and public resistance in many instances.

The 'Tyne and Wear' model is a partnership of five local authorities coming together to achieve sub-regional strategic management of museums and galleries. Tyne & Wear Museums (TWM) is a federation of 10 museums and galleries which is jointly funded by the five metropolitan district councils in the County of Tyne and Wear: Newcastle upon Tyne (Lead Authority), Gateshead, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Sunderland. The museum service is governed by a Joint Museums Committee, comprising elected members of each of these local authorities.

A sixth funding partner of the museum service is the Department for Culture, Media and Sport from which we receive grant-in-aid on an annual basis. This grant was made in recognition of the national importance of the collections held by the museum service, and to help maintain a countywide service, threatened when Tyne and Wear County Council, which had run the museum service since 1974, was abolished in 1986.

A seventh funding partner is the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, with which TWM has an agreement to manage the Hancock Museum. The Hancock is governed by its own Management Committee, comprising representatives of the University and of the Natural History Society of Northumbria which owns the Museum's collections.

The Discovery Museum contains, through a partnership with the 15th/19th The King's Royal Hussars and the Northumberland Hussars, the museum collections of both regiments; and also contains the John George Joicey Museum, by arrangement with the Trustees of the John George Joicey Bequest.

TWM operates a number of archaeological and historic building functions on behalf of Newcastle City Council, through an agreement with the Council's Directorate of Enterprise, Environment and Culture.

This federated arrangement has proven to be both flexible and cost effective, enabling each of the museum partners to benefit from the economies of scale, and access to a large pool of professional expertise, that association with a large organisation can allow. A mutual pressure to succeed among the stakeholders and recognition of the region-wide contribution and significance of the services provided by TWM has resulted in protected and increased revenue funding. A significant capital development programme has, to date, delivered the multi-award-winning Segedunum Roman Fort, Baths & Museum (2000) and Sunderland Museum and Winter Gardens (2001) with further large-scale developments to come later in the year at Discovery Museum, Newcastle.

As part of the government's programme for modernising local government there are a number of new ideas being developed which are very relevant to the issues faced by regional museums and galleries. Local Strategic Partnerships, bringing together different types of organisations (for-profit, not-for-profit, public and voluntary), and cross-cutting themes are relevant but Local Public Services Agreements (PSAs) offer a model for bringing local and central government resources together. Currently being piloted in twenty local authorities, the concept involves local authorities coming to funding agreements across all activities. The DCMS is investigating how a cultural dimension might be built into the PSAs. The principle behind PSAs is 'something for something' and it is important that performance indicators are capable of

identifying very clear ‘hard edge’ outcomes in return for government investment. This is acknowledged as a difficult area for culture – including regional museums and galleries – but there are obviously some very interesting possibilities in the context of this report’s recommendations in favour of government intervention without loss of local independence, initiative and ownership.

Finally, we also have noted a model which combines something of a number of the above approaches – which we call the New Zealand model because of its articulation by Dunedin City Council and the Auckland War Memorial Museum. The latter operates under a 1996 Act of Parliament which establishes the Museum’s Board as a charitable trust with ten members, five of whom are appointed by the local authorities (who provide the bulk of the funding), four of whom are appointed by the Auckland Museum Institute (which is like a friends of the museums), and one Maori representative. The statute actually spells out that they are members of the Board because the management skills, experience and professional judgement they possess ensures the museum achieves its objectives (also specified in the Act). This is more about local governance, but the use of legislation to specify the ground rules of a partnership is interesting.

Whichever route is chosen, a detailed funding agreement will be needed, and it is essential that the governing body’s support for its museums and galleries is not allowed to be reduced before, during or after a negotiated agreement. Indeed, there is an expectation that the availability of additional government support might be used to lever in additional local support. More generally, the advantage of models (b) to (e) is that they offer an opportunity to bring in new blood to the governing bodies and allow a more exclusive focus on the museum and gallery service. This new blood should include ‘people who have a very strong sense of the importance and value of cultural organisations in their area’ (Evans, 2001: 13), not just local business people whom everybody vaguely hopes will either improve management or raise more money. However, all new

governance arrangements should be designed to maximise opportunities for attracting new funding from the private sector.

Private-public sector partnerships are widely seen as the way forward in many places where there has previously been an over-reliance on the public purse, making cultural institutions among those vulnerable to economic and political volatility. The Task Force has heard the argument of those who point to North America as a model of how to bring private and public interests together, with private benefactors seeing art galleries and museums as suitable vehicles for using their money to create public benefits. It is claimed that this brings a deep commitment at local and regional level from individuals, foundations and corporations. At its best, it can get to the heart of each community, providing a sense of identity and belonging and enhancing opportunities to recruit the highest calibre of management, who in their turn respond to the feeling that they are part of an individual situation and not just an anonymous (and relatively unappreciated) totality.

Whether the quite divergent cultural histories on either side of the Atlantic could be changed easily and quickly is another matter, as is the question of whether there is now sufficient wealth in the UK for the displacement of public sponsorship by private benefaction. The American model also challenges the very principles of the UK public museum – free admission, the sanctity of the collections, public palaces rather than private places, and so on. Nevertheless, the point remains that relatively little private or business wealth is utilised to support our major regional museums and galleries, and this is a weakness which might threaten their sustainability if it is not addressed in tandem with securing greater government support.

Consolidation and transformation

The purpose of the proposed consolidation and transformation programme is to assist regional hubs in undergoing change, and to address personnel weaknesses that this report has uncovered, in order that:

- regional hubs become fit for their principal business, maximise access to and display of their collections, broaden their visitor profiles, enable the development of meaningful cross-domain and cross-sectoral partnerships, and invest in their human talent;
- having achieved an agreed state of consolidation, regional hubs become ready to operate within the framework that the Task Force recommends, to the extent that Resource can feel confident that each regional hub will accept its newly defined roles with enthusiasm, energy and commitment.

It is important to emphasise that what is being proposed differs markedly from the stabilisation and advancement programmes operated, respectively, by the Arts Council of England and the Scottish Arts Council. The consolidation and transformation programme will not repair balance sheets; nor will it be managed with the expectation of quick fixes in technical areas. It will be a comprehensive process of enabling regional hubs to achieve their potential through accepting the need for change, with provision of additional resources as an interventionist measure to address past erosions. The programme will concentrate on the following elements:

- a strategic stock-take of each regional hub, building on the current review and profiling exercise (McCann Matthews Millman, 2001), to identify and quantify areas of deficit and needs for capacity-building;
- for each regional hub, the development of a ten-year strategic plan with clear targets for:
 - *product development*, including optimising access through ICT and the negotiation of partnerships between international, national and regional peers;
 - *business development*, including optimising earned

income and the exploration and implementation of opportunities to attract plural funding;

- *market development*, including genuine commitments to social inclusion and the placing of marketing and education at the heart of each museum's business plan;
- *human-resource development*, including the adoption and implementation of new training policies and the commitment of appropriate budgets for professional development;
- *domain development*, including the provision of technical, marketing, educational and training services to other museums with needs within the region, as requested and in partnership with the single regional agencies.

Each regional hub will develop and manage its own consolidation and transformation programme. Depending on individual circumstances, and in order to optimise work already in train for Best Value reviews where relevant, it is expected that each hub will form a strategic project team, drawing in external expertise and being able to access funds from the programme for external consultancy support in specialist areas. A key requirement for each team will be the inclusion or engagement of personnel with a high degree of experience of managing change. Specifically, it is recommended that each team appoints a change facilitator for up to three years to guide it through what will be a challenging period of transformation.

It is expected that, in common with Best Value practice, the strategic project team will address fundamental questions, including governance, and test a number of possible models for future operations. Resource will need to be absolutely confident that the chosen governance model will be robust and sufficiently flexible to enable the museum to assume a regional role within the framework recommended by the Task Force – capable of adopting twenty-first-century management practice and overtly enthusiastic to be seen to be so doing, and fully accountable to its stakeholders.

The consolidation and transformation programme

Implementation

122 will specifically exclude capital funding for building improvements (in which area it is hoped that the Heritage Lottery Fund will continue to be supportive), although Resource fully acknowledges the scale of need and is concerned that the domain faces very significant difficulties in complying with disability-discrimination legislation. The programme does, however, include exhibit renewal and associated costs, as investments in the social capital of the museums and galleries.

While the consolidation and transformation programme will not demand minimum levels of partnership funding, there is an expectation that museums entering the process will accept that long-term sustainability is the key objective. Each strategic plan will therefore need to demonstrate a clear and credible strategy to maintain the service at the consolidated level once programme funds have been exhausted, indicating the sources of continuing funding and the degree of commitment from stakeholders. A lack of credibility in the commitment of stakeholders to ensuring post-programme sustainability would render an application to enter the programme unacceptable.

To establish the framework for regional museums and galleries described in this report, it is the Task Force's recommendation that an offer of support be made to each of the nine English regions. That offer should become available from 2004/5 for an initial period of three years.

The offer will specify the sum available for each region. It is proposed that 75 per cent of the total available be allocated to regions according to the formula developed by Frost and Shepherd in their recent review of area-museum-council funding allocations (Frost and Shepherd, 2000). The remaining 25 per cent should be allocated on the basis of identified special needs.

The objective will be to establish a regional hub, as described in Chapter 5, in each region. As stated earlier, that need not be only one museum or museum service. Indeed, the Task Force feels quite strongly that hubs consisting of a single museum or museum service are not advisable. Potential applicants/bidders to become regional hubs are therefore encouraged to form partnerships.

Each partnership should, however, have a nominated lead institution which will be the senior partner in all respects. To reduce administrative costs, one of its roles will be to act as the sole recipient for funding.

Each member of the partnership will need to satisfy the following criteria:

- size and potential capacity of the museum/gallery;
- regional status of its location;
- importance of its collections;
- size of population in its hinterland;
- meeting a threshold spending level.

In addition, the lead partner must be prepared to enter into a new governance arrangement. Government should be clearly seen as a partner in new arrangements, rather than simply an arm's-length funding body. The new arrangements should secure continued local-authority support at the same or a higher level than in financial year 2000/2001, plus an allowance for inflation.

A funding agreement will be essential to tie together financial support from government and from the current governing body. It should also specify output and outcome deliverables/targets.

7

Costings

- 7.1 Capacity-building in the regional hubs**
 - 'New blood' appointments**
 - Learning, education, access and inclusion**
 - Exhibitions and capital displays**
 - Marketing**
 - Creating national/regional partnerships**
 - Changing museum culture**
- 7.2 The Designation Challenge Fund**
- 7.3 Strengthening regional agencies**
 - Developing regional capacity**
- 7.4 The next two years**
- 7.5 Sources of funding**

This chapter indicates the likely cost of implementing the new framework.

Three possible areas of expenditure are excluded at this stage because they ought to be the subject of more detailed discussions. Two of them relate principally to the Heritage Lottery Fund for support, and might perhaps be more appropriately considered as part of the current consultation around the preparation of the HLF's strategic plan for 2002–2005. The third is suggested as an area for contribution by the Department for Work and Pensions.

The first area is that of the capital renewal of buildings and building services, which the Task Force has identified as a continuing high priority for the major regional museums and galleries. Without sound buildings, fit to deliver world-class modern services, much of what is recommended in this report will come to nothing. The Heritage Lottery Fund has been generous in its support of the major regional museums and galleries, and the Task Force strongly endorses continued investment in them. The Task Force also feels that the HLF should be encouraged to look more favourably on new buildings, which are sometimes by far the best solution to a problem of accessibility to collections and knowledge. The Task Force has identified exhibit renewal as a separate issue, for funding as part of the consolidation and transformation programme (see page 121), because it considers that budgetary problems can sometimes mean that the content of major Lottery-funded projects may be seen as being of secondary importance to getting the building sorted out.

The second area involves the issue of endowments. The Task Force believes that the provision by HLF of a £25 million endowment reserve from which sums could be allocated to independent museums (as a priority) – either as a grant or as a short- or a long-term loan – would make a major difference to the ability of these museums to be stable organisations capable of delivering public benefits, especially in learning and education.

The third area involves the need to address the

implications of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Unless this is done, many museums and galleries will be forced to close. However, the costs involved are likely to be well beyond the means of the domain. The Task Force therefore suggests that the Department for Work and Pensions ought to be involved in discussions with the DCMS and other stakeholders (such as the Local Government Association) as to how this problem might be collectively resolved.

The remainder of this chapter looks in detail at those areas where additional financial assistance from government or elsewhere would make a critical difference to the future of regional museums and galleries, and the services that they can provide for users.

The Task Force's recommendations are summarised in Tables 17 and 18. Table 18 shows these costs expressed as inputs – i.e., the cost of staff and operational budgets. Table 17 relates costings to the outcomes targets described earlier in the report (in chapter 3). The cost of achieving specific outcomes will of course be of greatest interest to government. The detailed costings have however been constructed on the basis of inputs because investment in one sphere (for example 'new blood' staff, exhibitions and changing the museum culture) will contribute to the achievement of many outcomes. Some degree of 'read across' between the two tables is therefore needed.

The source of the costings shown in Table 17 is a mixture of additional current expenditure for 'new blood' appointments, primarily for posts relating to access to collections (some collections management but mostly scholarship and interpretation); additional current expenditure for operation work relating to education, learning and inclusion – for example to ensure that high-quality support materials can be produced; and additional capital expenditure for the creation of more accessible 'permanent' displays and high-quality temporary and touring exhibitions. Most of this additional funding is focused on the regional hubs, but some is allocated to strengthening other elements in the new framework as an essential complement to the reinvigoration of the regional hubs.

Table 17

Summary costings: by outcomes

Outcome	£ million	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7
Education and Learning						
Access to collections		2.5	2.5	2.9	4.9	8.8
A comprehensive learning and education service			4.0	4.6	7.9	10.6
Teacher training initiatives				1.0	1.0	1.0
Museums as learning centres				3.0	4.0	5.0
Providing objects to schools				1.0	1.0	1.0
Learning support units		2.0	2.0	2.6	2.6	2.7
Access and Social Inclusion						
Increased usage		2.5	2.5	2.7	2.3	2.0
Change visitor profile				1.0	1.0	1.0
Outreach services			4.0	5.5	5.5	6.5
Cultural champions				1.5	1.5	1.5
Inclusive places				5.0	7.0	8.0
National/regional partnerships			2.0	8.7	8.8	9.0
Economic Regeneration						
Local tourism initiatives				5.0	5.0	
Skills for young people				4.5	4.5	4.5
Inspiration and Creativity						
Creativity fund for objects				4.5	4.5	4.5
Excellence and High Quality (Standards)						
Mapping		1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Visitor services grading scheme						
Education and learning standard						
Audience development standard						
User-based performance indicators						
Modernisation of whole community						
		2.0	2.0	2.9	2.8	1.8
Cultural Change						
Change champions				0.2	0.2	0.2
Traineeships				0.2	0.2	0.2
Different voices				0.5	0.5	0.5
Management Development				0.6	0.6	0.6
Organisational leadership				0.5	0.5	0.5
ITC Investment to modernise and change						
				9.0	9.0	9.0
Rationalisation						
				0.5	0.3	0.2
Cross-Cutting (across all outcomes (eg Evaluation))						
				2.4	1.8	2.4
Total		10.0	20.0	71.3	78.4	87.5

The Task Force is conscious of the need to be sensitive to the wishes of potential regional hubs, especially in ensuring that they are stabilised and providing high-quality services for their immediate audiences before they start to develop a regional role. However, it is also mindful of the need to deliver results within the next five years, and notes that additional funding is unlikely to be available until April 2004 – the start of the next spending round – over halfway into that five-year period.

Table 18

Summary costings: inputs

£ million	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7
Capacity-building in the regional hubs					
'New blood' appointments	—	—	1.4	6.8	14.7
Learning, education, access and inclusion (operations)	—	8.0	9.0	9.0	9.0
Exhibitions	—	—	6.7	6.7	6.8
Capital displays investment	—	—	5.0	7.0	8.0
Marketing	—	—	2.7	2.3	2.0
Creating national/regional partnerships	—	2.0	8.7	8.8	9.0
Changing museum culture	—	—	2.0	2.0	2.0
ICT	—	—	9.0	9.0	9.0
Designation Challenge Fund	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Strengthening regional agencies	2.0	2.0	1.8	1.8	1.9
Learning and funding support	2.0	2.0	2.6	2.6	2.7
Local tourism initiatives	—	—	5.0	5.0	5.0
Museum development officers	—	—	2.4	2.4	2.4
Skills and creativity initiatives	—	—	9.0	9.0	9.0
Task-force-related work for Resource	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Total	10.0	20.0	71.3	78.4	87.5

Capacity-building in the regional hubs

This is a key part of the Task Force's funding proposals. It seeks to address the concerns and issues which led to the establishment of this Task Force and are described and discussed earlier in this report.

The Task Force feels very strongly that these issues cannot be addressed by a challenge-funding regime. Under-capacity has damaged the ability of the major regional museums and galleries to make their full contribution to society both now and in the future. A short-term challenge-funding approach to rectifying this will not be a sustainable solution. Rather, the Task Force believes that the additional funding needed to raise the regional hubs to a state of excellence and then equip them to give strong leadership to their regions should be added to their core funding.

The following areas need to be addressed:

- 'new blood' appointments to strengthen or create the essential expertise for delivery of excellence in the twenty-first century;
- operational budgets for learning, education, access and inclusion which will enable museum and galleries to be effective partners with lead agencies in neighbourhood renewal and regeneration;
- creative and inspirational exhibitions, to bring together the best scholarship with the best communication and interpretation techniques;
- a marketing infrastructure that ensures that investment delivers public benefits;
- creating partnerships between national and regional museums;
- changing the culture of museums and galleries, and investment in ICT.

'New blood' appointments

This report has demonstrated that there is a disproportionate gap in curatorial, learning and education, and outreach capacity between the national and the regional museums and galleries. The Task Force recognises that there might reasonably be significant differences between a national museum and gallery and a major regional museum and gallery. So, rather than rely only on the analysis of the gap between

the National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside and the regional museums and galleries, it has also developed a methodology based on recent authoritative analysis of Glasgow City Museums and Galleries (Glasgow, 2000; see Table 13). Glasgow is a major international city and regional capital and, as a major local-authority service, Glasgow's museum service closely mirrors the major regional museum and galleries in England in its recent history – including the loss of £2,652,700 from its budget and over 100 staff in two years of severe cuts (Glasgow, 2000: 51).

In 2000, Glasgow's City Museums and Galleries department had 87.5 staff (FTE) given over to curatorship, education, outreach and access, conservation and collections management, and exhibition-building and maintenance. A Best Value report (Glasgow, 2000) recommended an increase to 108.5 – a 24 per cent increase. It was estimated that the addition of twenty-one core staff (plus some additional administrative support) would cost £600,000 per annum.

Glasgow has a population of 611,660 – larger than most of the cities in which major regional museums and galleries are located, but considerably smaller than Birmingham (1,019,000). Reference to Table 19 shows that all the eight museum services for which reliable data is available have significantly fewer staff than Glasgow. Even taking differences in size into account, it is clear that there is a gap between Glasgow and the major English regional museums and galleries.

Table 19 Core staff in selected regional museums and galleries (1999/2000)

	Birmingham	Bristol	Coventry	Leeds	Leicester	Nottingham	Sheffield	Tyne & Wear	Glasgow*
Senior Management	6.0	4.0	6.0	3.0	7.0	3.0	4.3	7.0	5.0
Collections access	30.5	16.5	12.0	22.5	20.5	19.0	11.5	38.0	50.5
Outreach/Education	6.5	4.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	6.0	3.0	13.0	4.0
Exhibition and design	19.9	5.0	4.0	1.0	4.0	14.0	0.0	11.0	25.0
Total	63.0	29.5	24.0	29.5	33.5	42.0	18.8	69.0	84.5

Source: GLLAM Benchmarking Survey 1999/2000 or *1998/9

Table 20 Modelling the core staff deficit

	Tyne and Wear Museums Service + 25%	Current regional-hub average	Deficit per region	Total deficit
Collections access	47.5	22.5	25.0	225.0
Outreach/education	16.25	3.9	12.35	111.50
Exhibition and design	13.75	7.5	6.25	56.25
Total	77.50	33.9	43.60	392.75

Choosing an appropriate benchmark for the key services into which the Task Force wishes to introduce 'new blood' is not easy, and a much more substantial audit of current provision would need to be done before the recommendations made here could be implemented. But if one assumes that Tyne and Wear Museums Service is the existing service that most closely approximates to the concept of a regional hub, and that this requires a 25 per cent increase in core staff (approximating to Glasgow City Museums' increase) to enable it to be excellent, then this provides a useful benchmark with which other large city services can be compared in order to suggest how many additional core posts may be needed in total (Table 20).

Table 20 suggests that there is a core staff deficit in our major regional museums and galleries of almost 400 posts. The annual cost of funding these would probably be about £7.6 million, assuming 15 per cent are senior, 25 per cent middle and 60 per cent are junior appointments (see table 14).

This analysis is based on the current status quo in the balance of staff emphasis on conservation and collections management on the one hand and public programming and exhibition production and maintenance on the other. Introducing funding on this scale would be conditional upon that balance of staff emphasis changing in favour of more public programming (education, learning, inclusion, outreach)

Table 21 Core staff – additional funding

£ million	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	Total (2004/5-2006/7)
Core government contribution	—	—	1.40	6.80	14.80	—
Plus 2.5% inflation	—	—	—	6.96	15.16	—
Less 3% efficiency savings	—	—	—	6.76	14.70	—
Total	—	—	1.40	6.76	14.70	22.86

and exhibitions. It is impossible to prescribe, at this stage, precisely how many staff and with which skills or expertise will be needed in each regional hub. But in thinking about these ‘new blood’ appointments the Task Force feels that a proportion of 2:1 between public programming and research/documentation/collections care staff might be a useful guide.

It would clearly be difficult to recruit nearly 400 additional staff in one year, so the Task Force proposes a staggered introduction of additional funds: of £1.4 million in year 1, £6.8 million in year 2, and, finally, £14.7 million in year 3. Funding these posts would represent a substantial investment in the future of the major regional museums and galleries, enabling them to become substantial contributors to the government’s learning, education and inclusion policy agendas.

In making these calculations (Table 21), the Task Force has allowed for a 2.5 per cent inflationary increase in staff costs. However, it has also included a 3 per cent efficiency saving per annum. This will be achieved through synergistic savings opened up by achieving a critical mass of staff, and through more efficient use of resources by more experienced or better-qualified staff.

Learning, education, access and inclusion

Museums and galleries need operational budgets of sufficient strength to allow them to enter into effective

partnerships with lead agencies in neighbourhood renewal and regeneration. The excellence studies contained in the report on *The Efficiency and Effectiveness of Government-sponsored Museums and Galleries* (DCMS, 1999a) suggest that 4.5 per cent of a museum’s budget should be spent on education (excluding staffing).

Using the same sample of museums and galleries as in Tables 11 and 12 above, 4.5 per cent of their combined annual revenue expenditure (net of VAT) would be £1.36 million, or an average of £170,000 each. Allowing for there being more than one service in each regional hub, this suggests that £500,000 per annum would be an appropriate average operational expenditure for ‘education’. To broaden this to include learning, access and inclusion would require – based on industry norms – a total of £1 million per annum for each regional hub.

Exhibitions and capital displays

The decline in the production of exhibitions of national and international standard by major regional museums and galleries is a consequence of reduced capacity, especially of staff and budgets. If these institutions are to be creative and inspirational places, as well as vehicles for learning, access and inclusion, then investment in exhibition programmes is essential.

There has been a shortfall in exhibition design, production and maintenance staff, as well as in

curatorial expertise. Here the focus is on the material and non-establishment costs involved in delivering an exciting exhibition programme.

There are two elements to be considered. The first is the renewal or refurbishment of the core displays – sometimes called the permanent displays. This process will involve significant capital investment. Analysis of Lottery awards suggests that gallery refurbishment accounts for 10 per cent of total capital needs. Using the GLLAM capital-needs analysis (see Table 13, page 83) as a guide, this suggests an existing need of about £1.27 million for this purpose per major English regional museum or gallery, or about £20m for all the English regional hubs.

The second is the provision of a temporary-exhibitions programme. Mounting a successful programme requires a degree of funding certainty. Major temporary exhibitions take time to develop. Long-term planning is essential if important items are to be borrowed, if systematic audience development (whether focused on social inclusion or tourism) is to be undertaken, and if private-sector sponsorship (an essential component in financing major exhibitions) is to be secured. Government assistance will provide the essential stability for this.

From its analysis of exhibition programmes in Glasgow and Birmingham, the Task Force would expect that most regional hubs need an exhibitions budget of £750,000 per annum to deliver high-quality exhibition programmes.

Marketing

Inadequate marketing capacity has been identified as a significant weakness in all the major regional museums and galleries. Market research (Davies, 1994; Selwood, 2001a; Samuels and Sabin, 2001) reveals that 'lack of awareness' is a major factor in people not visiting or using museums and galleries. Lack of marketing capacity is therefore a major barrier to access.

In the calculations below, the Task Force has modelled the structure and staffing of a marketing team for a regional hub. It has then similarly modelled

the operational costs, based on indicative costs from real examples where there is evidence that the marketing provision is adequate for the need.

Annual costs per marketing team

Marketing manager	1	£40,000 + 20% oncosts = £48,000
Marketing and press officer	2	£25,000c = £60,000
Commercial officer	1	£30,000 + 20% oncosts = £36,000
Commercial assistant	1	£15,000 + 20% oncosts = £18,000
Development manager	1	£15,000 + 20% oncosts = £18,000
Others (photographer/technician)	1	£15,000 + 20% oncosts = £18,000
Total		£198,000

For nine regions, this gives a total cost of 9 £198,000 = £1,782,000p.a.

Operational costs

Using a model regional hub with four members profiled below and the mean of two methods of calculating operational costs (10 per cent of total expenditure or £1.25 per visit) gives the following operational costs:

1.	£2.3 million expenditure, 275,000 visits = £286,875
2.	£2.0 million expenditure, 200,000 visits = £225,000
3.	£1.2 million expenditure, 110,000 visits = £128,750
4.	£0.9 million expenditure, 75,000 visits = £91,875
	Total £732,500
	Mean £183,125

For nine regions, this gives a total operational cost of 9 £183,125 = £1,648,125 per annum.

In calculating the costs over three years, four further factors have to be taken into account:

- inflation/salary increases (2.5 per cent per annum allowed);

Table 22

Marketing support in major regional museums and galleries

£ million	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7
Expenditure					
Marketing-team costs	—	—	1.78	1.82	1.87
Operational costs	—	—	1.64	1.64	1.64
Total			3.42	3.46	3.51
Sources of funding	—	—			
Less efficiency savings	—	—	—	0.10	0.12
Less increased income	—	—	0.34	0.52	0.70
Less local contribution	—	—	0.34	0.52	0.70
Recommended government contribution	—	—	2.74	2.32	1.99

- efficiency savings (3 per cent per annum expected);
- increased income (10 per cent in year 1; 15 per cent in year 2; 20 per cent in year 3);
- local-governing-body contribution (10 per cent in year 1; 15 per cent in year 2; 20 per cent in year 3).

It is suggested that the government's contribution should be net of increased income and local contributions (though both are difficult to predict at this stage).

The full costings for marketing may therefore be shown in Table 22 above.

It must of course be emphasised that these calculations are based on modelling of a 'typical' regional hub. The actual distribution of marketing capacity between the nine regions will not be equal, and support for marketing will need to be either a reflection of identified regional needs or on the basis of an agreed formula.

Creating national/regional partnerships

Building partnerships between the national

museums and galleries and museums and galleries in the regions will have many benefits:

- increased access to those parts of the distributed national collection held in national museums and galleries – this will be of particular benefit to users in the regions, who should be entitled to share in the learning, inspiration and enjoyment of the collections held by the national museums and galleries without having to travel to London;
- creation of opportunities for a properly planned exchange of staff, experience and ideas between the national and regional museums and galleries;
- greater creativity and innovation in user-focused public programming as expertise from more than one organisation (and partnerships need not be between only two museums or galleries) is fused to bring about fresh ideas and thinking.

On the basis of the experience of the Tate and the National Gallery, there is scope for developing partnerships in a number of national museums and galleries and in all the major regional museums and

Table 23

Changing the culture of museums and galleries

Recommendation	Whose initiative	Cost (£ million)
Change Champions	Resource/DCMS	0.6
Ethnic-minority traineeships	Museums Association/ regional hubs/ postgraduate courses	0.6
Different Voices programme	Resource/ regional hubs	1.5
Management-development networks	Regional agencies	1.5
Leadership-development programme	Resource	1.5
Mentoring programme	Museums Association	0.3
Total		6.0

galleries. Equally important is supporting the role of national museums and galleries as initiators and leaders in subject-based networking.

In total the Task Force estimates an additional cost of £6.7 million in year 1, rising to £7.0 million in year 3. This is calculated on the basis of each entering into a partnership package (an exhibition or some other user-based project) up to three times a year with a national museum or gallery at a cost of up to £250,000 each time, less efficiency savings and other contributions. In addition, the development of networks, research and acquisition funds and longer-term relationships will also require significant funding.

Changing Museum Culture

The need for change

There is little or no point in building the capacity of regional hubs if no attempt is made to change or modify the attitudes of the staff who will have to deliver new agendas. 'New blood' will help but change management programmes will also be essential. Museum-brand professionalism is a barrier to change

and needs to be broken down. The details of the Task Force's proposals were described in Chapter 3. Table 23 above costs the key recommendations.

ICT investment

It should be noted – as explained in chapter 3 – that investment in ICT is felt to be a key part not only of improving service delivery uses but also in changing the culture. A sum of £9 million p.a. is proposed but must be subject to much more needs analysis and consideration as to where such investment might best come from.

Skills and creativity

Two of the proposed programmes for the regional hubs – 'Skills for young people' and 'Creativity fund for objects' - are regarded by the Task Force as ways of breaking important new ground. Each will require further exploration, but it seems unlikely that an investment of less than £0.5 million per region for each will make any significant impact.

The Designation Challenge Fund

Via the Designation Challenge Fund and administered by Resource, a total of £15 million was made available to museums and galleries holding designated collections in a three-year grant programme beginning in April 1999, with a strong emphasis on support for collections and collections management.

Resource has appointed consultants to devise a methodology to assess the impact of the DCF, in order to assess how effective year 1 and 2 of designation have been. Resource has completed a review of the Designation Scheme. The positive outcomes of both the Designation/ Designation Challenge Fund (DCF) Review and the initial evaluation of the impact of the DCF strongly support Resource's proposal (as a result of its Review) that the Designation Challenge Fund should be continued during the period 2002/3–2003/4.

The review has examined, inter alia:

- the fundamental rationale of designation;
- the appropriateness of the criteria for designation;
- the perceived benefits of designation;
- the 'fit' of designation with DCMS objectives for the domain;
- the scope for amending the scheme and the DCF to embrace the library and archive domains.

The DCF plays an important part in sustaining and developing collections of particular national or international significance. However, there is likely to be considerable scope for amending it in order to:

- focus more upon the delivery of services for public benefit;
- encourage designated and university museums to interact more effectively with other museums within their region;
- promote and coordinate joint working with complementary archive and library collections;
- maximise the leverage exerted by DCF funding in terms of delivering government objectives for the domain.

As a result of the review, Resource will propose to DCMS that it continues with the DCF for 2002/3 and 2003/4 and maintain the current funding of £5 million per annum. The implications and results of the review

are, however, to be discussed with DCMS before any final decisions are taken about the future direction of the scheme. DCF focuses on collections management and support for this core activity is obviously welcomed. However, while DCF remains a challenge fund it leads to short termism. Especially frustrating for the Directors of the major regional museums and galleries is that the DCF projects have attracted the very kind of 'new blood' people that they would like to have in established posts and when a challenge-funded project ends these people are lost and often are also disillusioned and seek long-term careers elsewhere.

The Task Force has considered the cases for and against recommending that the sum allocated should become part of core funding for the museums and galleries with designated collections. It feels that it is more appropriate that it remains a challenge fund in the short term, subject to Resource implementing the improvements recommended by the review. The principle of government grant-in-aid being used to lever additional resources – particularly from the private sector – remains a good one, and may remain appropriate for museums with designated collections who are not part of the regional hubs. The review recommends that options for funding for 2004/5 and beyond are examined in detail when outputs from the current programme have been fully evaluated.

The Task Force does however recommend that if the DCF is continued – and it believes there is considerable merit in it being so – then it must contribute to the priority outcomes of the museums and galleries domain. The figures presented in Tables 17 and 18 assume this will be the case.

Strengthening regional agencies

136 Recent reports and papers (Frost and Shepherd, 2000; Babbidge, 2001) have argued the case for increasing the budgets of area museum councils. On pages 102–3 we have demonstrated how AMCs have had a key role in supporting museums and galleries in developing better collection care regimes. They can clearly also be an effective springboard for cross-domain support services for learning and inclusion programmes in a number of museums and galleries in their regions. The Task Force endorses these arguments on the basis that supporting small strategic units, regionally based, is a cost-effective way of creating both short- and long-term beneficial outcomes, for the entire museums and galleries community and through them to users. It wishes to support the Frost and Shepherd recommendation that an injection of £1.8 million per annum would address many outstanding issues and provide stability for the area museum councils – or their successor single regional agencies by 2004 – for some years to come.

Developing regional capacity

An efficient way of providing an advisory and support service to most local and community museums is to position a small unit of experienced people in each region. The Task Force proposes the development of two such units in each region – for learning and for funding support – and the introduction of museum development officers.

Learning support units

Only some area museum councils and no regional library or archive services have professional educators on their staff.

Almost all museum, library and archive services offer some sort of education service and support for learners. All have the potential to do more. Most of them lack access to professional support in planning, developing, piloting and evaluating such services. The result is inconsistent provision which is reactive rather than proactive and tends to focus on the formal-education sector.

The following proposal builds on the work of the

highly successful South-Eastern Museums Education Unit (SEMEU), which operated in the SEMS region from 1991 to 1999. The unit worked in over 400 museums, and external evaluation demonstrated both its impact and its success in helping museums to develop sustainable user-focused services.

The proposal is for regionally-based learning support units which will work with museums, archives and libraries to develop and realise the learning potential of these institutions and to raise standards of learning and education services throughout the country. The result will be improved services and more people using collections and resources to support their learning.

Regional library services, area museum councils, and regional archive councils will be asked to work together to put forward proposals for establishing learning support units in their regions which will:

- provide advice and support to museums, archives and libraries in developing, piloting and delivering user-focused learning programmes;
- develop and run training courses for staff and volunteers in working with new audiences and developing user-focused education services;
- forge cross-domain partnerships to develop programmes and resources for learners of all ages;
- identify potential partners and forge links between them and museums, archives and libraries;
- assist museums, archives and libraries in carrying out visitor research into audience needs – particularly learning needs;
- evaluate the methodologies and approaches developed;
- act as advocates for the learning power of museums, archives and libraries;
- disseminate best practice;
- ensure that museums, archives and libraries are equipped to meet cross-domain education and access standards;
- ensure that organisations and agencies working in the areas of social inclusion, community-based learning and neighbourhood renewal understand

the contribution that museums, archives and libraries can make to delivering government agendas in these areas and involve these institutions in their projects.

Establishing nine regional learning support units with three staff each, administrative support, and a budget to deliver high-quality projects will cost £2 million per year.

Funding support units

Museums, libraries and archives face enormous costs associated with capital renewal and the development of new user-focused services. For example, it is estimated that capital-renewal needs alone account for more than £1,000 million across the domain as a whole. It is clearly outside the gift of central government to provide funds of this magnitude for this purpose. It is therefore all the more important for museums, archives and libraries to organise themselves to exploit alternative avenues of funding – from the National Lottery, from Europe, from the private sector, and from charitable trusts and other funding institutions.

To date, the domain has had only spasmodic success in obtaining funds from these sources, and the experience gained by successful applicants has not always been shared within the domain as a whole. One of the challenges for Resource is to equip the domain with the means to help itself by being more successful in the way in which it manages bids for third-party funding.

To achieve this, the Task Force proposes that funding support units be established in each region. These would be cross-domain units, probably linked to the existing regional structures for museums, archives and libraries. Their role, which would be similar to the roles already carried out by many regional arts boards, would include:

- identifying funding opportunities;
- promoting expertise in bidding for funds through training programmes, seminars etc.;
- coordinating and advising upon bids by key regional players;

- advising and assisting small organisations in developing bids;
- ensuring that bids accord with regional strategic needs and priorities ;
- enhancing and promoting the quality of bids.

The Task Force proposes that small units of two people be established in each region, with a total annual cost of approximately £0.5 million.

The Task Force does not want these learning support units and funding support units to be purely ‘advisory’: it is concerned that such a limited role may become bureaucratic and not proactive. Giving advice will be important, but these units need not be the sole source of advice in a region, and local and community museums should be encouraged to look more widely for this – to the regional hubs, for example. The funding support units will be more advisory in character than the learning support units, as their core work will be to advise on how to access funding opportunities. The Task Force hopes, however, that the learning support units will be very proactive in directly supporting projects, initiating projects and longer-term programmes, and acting as a catalyst for collaborations and partnerships in the regions. The two types of unit will of course be expected to work together to unlock the potential of museums and galleries in their area.

The right balance will have to be struck between funding the regional posts, operational budgets, and building capacity in museums and galleries themselves. The right people will be needed to stimulate action which will lead to a transformation in the use of museums’ and galleries’ collections, but there is a limit to what a remotely located regional person (or persons) can achieve. An adequate budget to stimulate the innovative use of collections or to lever in new money for the same purpose is equally important. The budget proposals (modelled on a single region) are therefore as in Table 24 (overleaf).

Table 24

Budget proposals per region [funding and learning support]

£ thousand	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7
Funding-support-unit (FSU) manager	42.0	43.0	44.1
FSU operational budget	20.0	20.0	20.0
Head of learning support unit (LSU)	42.0	43.0	44.1
2<x> learning support officers	67.0	68.9	70.6
LSU operational budget	100.0	100.0	100.0
Administrative support (shared)	16.8	17.2	17.7
Total	288.0	292.1	296.5

These figures may be aggregated for the nine regions to give a total sum, although it is of course unlikely that the available funds will be equally divided between the nine regions:

2004/5	2005/6	2006/7
£2,592,000	£2,628,900	£2,668,500

Local tourism initiatives

There is need to support the growth and renewal of independent museums in market towns and in the countryside which form an important part of the regional tourism infrastructure. Over a number of years they have found it very difficult to source investment money to enable them to modernise their infrastructure and so attract both more sponsorship and revenue-earning visits. The foot and mouth crisis in 2001 has further weakened their position and if they are to play a role in the new framework then they will need support. A fund of £5 million p.a. would be appropriate, particularly if some of it would be used as a venture capital fund.

Museum development officers

These will be an innovation in that for the first time there will be an acknowledged national network of regionally based cultural entrepreneurs in museums

and galleries. Their task will be to support small local and community museums – especially independent museums – largely through managing innovation funds to be used for investment in small projects which have been successfully piloted, in order to sustain success, generalise their approach and encourage collaborations and partnerships. The posts will be county-based, but will form part of the responsibilities of the regional hubs. The number required may be negotiable, but the Task Force envisages about thirty such posts being created (at a cost of about £30,000 per annum each), and recommends that each post needs an operational budget/grant-aid fund of about £100,000. The total cost per annum for all regions will therefore be some £3.9 million. It is not envisaged that the full cost would be met centrally: partnership funding of at least £1.5 million per annum would be required from within the regions.

The next two years

In November 2000, as part of the current spending round, DCMS made available to Resource an additional £10 million per annum for 2002/3 and 2003/4 ‘for investment in, and on behalf of, museums, galleries, libraries and archives in the English regions’ (DCMS, 2001d: 95). This investment was intended to cover the following elements:

- the continuation and development of the Designation Challenge Fund;
- an Innovation Fund to encourage new approaches to service delivery by regional museums, archives and libraries;
- new sources of advice and support to museums, archives and libraries in relation to bidding for funds from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Europe, and private and charitable sources;
- incentive funding to strengthen existing regional structures and to encourage sector-wide working between area museum councils, regional archive councils, and regional library systems.

When the Task Force was established in January 2001, the Secretary of State invited it to advise DCMS on how this £20 million over two years might best be allocated, in the light of its review of the position and needs of regional museums across the country and the relationship between regional and national institutions. The original thinking about how the £20 million might be distributed therefore needs to be re-visited.

The Task Force feels that it would be unfair significantly to dilute the cross-domain spirit of the additional allocation. Nevertheless, it is clear that expenditure in 2002/3 and 2003/4 must, wherever possible, contribute to preparing the ground for the much greater investment that the Task Force hopes will be forthcoming in 2004/5. In particular, the tasks allocated to Resource in respect of baseline research, impact research, and the investigation of innovative ideas should be addressed in the two years 2002/3 and 2003/4. Furthermore – and most importantly – the opportunity given by these monies being available from April 2002 must be grasped as an opportunity to begin implementing the recommendations of this report.

The Task Force therefore recommends that the allocations should be made in this way :

	2002/3 (£ million)	2003/4 (£ million)
Designation		
Challenge Fund	5.0	5.0
Learning and funding support (regions)	2.0	2.0
Incentive funding for regional structures	2.0	2.0
Task-force-related work for Resource	1.0	1.0
Total	10.0	10.0

However, the Task Force also believes that an additional £10 million should be made available in 2003/4 to ‘kick-start’ the process of modernisation in advance of the major investment it recommends from April 2004. This extra allocation should be specifically targeted to start developing learning services and learning centres, outreach services and national/regional partnerships.

Sources of Funding

140 This report is addressed primarily to government. This is a national issue not just a local or regional one. We are calling upon government to recognise their responsibilities and take action to secure the future of the major regional museums and galleries and the potency of their contribution to learning, education and inclusion. Government intervention and investment will unlock the potential of these museums and galleries.

Although government should be seen as an important source of investment it does not have to be – indeed should not be – the sole investor. As well as being important in itself, government investment will be an endorsement of the value and importance of our major regional museums and galleries which hopefully will encourage others to invest too.

Local government has of course an important role to play. It has shouldered the responsibility for over a hundred years. It justifiably should expect some help before we lose these great cultural assets for ever. Local authorities are the guardians of local ownership of our museums and galleries. That link should not be severed. It should be strengthened by local authorities entering into local and national partnerships to both protect and liberate local cultural assets it holds in trust for the public. And that should mean increasing its financial commitment rather than reducing it.

Others have a responsibility too. The Heritage Lottery Fund – chief lottery distributor for the museums and galleries domain – has to be included. It has played an important part in the revival of many museums but recognises that there is more to be done. ‘Since HLF was established we have been seeking to address this backlog of physical neglect and decline, but it is clear that meeting these needs requires a long-term and systematic approach to funding, with resources from the Lottery providing only part of this solution’, (HLF: 2001: 7). This report offers an opportunity for HLF to work in partnership with others to achieve the outcomes we all want.

Many charitable foundations, for example the Clore Foundation, the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and

the Wolfson Foundation, have contributed at a national level, with interventions often providing funding for small scale projects which have demonstrated what museums and galleries can achieve when resources are available. Other charitable funds have made important and often regular contributions to the work of local and community museums.

The private sector is also important. Private investment in UK museums and galleries is very much lower than in, for example, the United States. This report recommends investment in marketing and development capacity which will help the major regional museums and galleries to secure sponsorship and other forms of investment from private individuals and the business sector. But it is also expected that government intervention and investment will in itself encourage further investment from non-public sources.

8

Recommendations to government

1. A new framework for regional museums should be established, funded jointly by government, local authorities and other current governing bodies, Lottery distribution boards and the for-profit sector. This should be designed to transform the quality of services available to museum and gallery users in the regions and to ensure that the museums and galleries domain plays a leading role in contributing to the government's wider regional agenda.
2. With the funds allocated to it for 2002/3 and 2003/4 Resource should begin to give annual funding support to major regional museums and galleries that should form the hubs of the new framework. This support, which should be additional to existing core funding, would be to enable them, first, to rebuild capacity to become first-class services and, second, to act as focal points for developing and delivering regional museum services to the public.
3. Government should increase its grant to Resource from 2004/5 to enable it to extend annual funding support to this named group of major regional museums and galleries across England.
4. The new funding partnerships between government and the existing funders should lead to the creation of new governance arrangements for the major regional museums and galleries.
5. Additional resources should also be injected into major regional institutions – notably the regional agencies, the museums and galleries with designated collections and the national museums and galleries – in order to facilitate their new partnerships with the major regional museums and galleries named in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3 above.
6. The additional financial input should be accompanied by the setting of clear output and outcome targets, specified by funding agreements.
7. Longer-term core funding arrangements for regional museums and galleries should be preceded by consolidation and transformation measures to build the increased capacity necessary to enable museums and galleries to play their full part in meeting the government's regional agenda.
8. Recognising common interests in the cultural, educational and social benefits that the new framework would deliver, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport should work with the Department for Education and Skills, the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions, the Local Government Association, Resource, individual governing bodies and other key stakeholders to fully support this report's findings and recommendations.
9. The museums and galleries community should urgently address the issues of rationalisation highlighted in this report and – assisted by Resource – bring forward a national strategy which will lead to it being better equipped to meet the needs and demands of twenty-first century society.
10. Government should direct Resource to consider the scope for and cost of developing a national advisory service for technical and professional issues associated with the management of collections.
11. Government should direct Resource to hold detailed discussions within its sector and to bring forward a timetable and business plan for implementation of these recommendations.

Methodology

At an early stage of its work, the Task Force identified various key themes which should underpin its deliberations. Accordingly, individual authors were commissioned to produce short essays on the following themes:

- The current situation (David Fleming)
- Markets and users (Sara Selwood)
- Rationalisation and collaboration (Sandy Nairne)
- Collections and research (Keith Thomson)
- Government and governance and funding models (Crispin Paine)
- Capacity to change (Sue Millar)
- The twenty-first century museum (Catherine Croft)
- Technologies (Louise Smith)

Each author was supported by a working party of experts, drawn from both within and outside the museums and galleries world. All the working parties met at least once, and the authors then produced essays which informed the Task Force's thinking. These essays are published on the Resource website (Internet <http://www.resource.gov.uk>).

The Task Force was concerned to consult as widely as possible, although time was limited. In addition to inviting individual submissions, through publicity in publications such as the Museums Journal, consultative meetings were held in each of the AMC regions (two in the case of the South East). Each regional meeting lasted a day, and consisted of three elements:

- A meeting with the AMC Director and his/her staff;
- A meeting with 'key players', from some of the larger museums and galleries in the region, as identified by the AMC Director;
- An open discussion, to which all AMC members were invited (in some cases, representatives of user groups, such as Friends organisations, also contributed to these discussions).

A number of members of the Task Force, as well as the project leader, were involved in facilitating these meetings.

As well as the regional meetings, the Task Force undertook consultation at a national level. This consisted of close and ongoing liaison with key stakeholders and, also, specially convened meetings with particular

interest groups (e.g. the UK conservation community; the Group for Small Local Authority Museums).

A list of those who contributed at the various consultative stages is attached to the Acknowledgements section below.

The Task Force carried out a major literature survey to ensure that its conclusions were founded upon authoritative research and validated experience.

The Task Force also commissioned research to address some of the evidence gaps in that are so characteristic of the sector. Research was undertaken in the following areas:

- Area Museums Councils: Functions and Patterns of Expenditures (ABL Consulting)
- Critical Success Factors in University and Independent Museums (ABL Consulting)
- A study of the Process, Impact and Implications of Museum Closures (ABL Consulting)
- A Structure for Regional Funding of Local and Community Museums (AEA)
- Financial Modelling for Regional Museums and Galleries (Branstock)
- Business Profiles of Fourteen Regional Museums and Galleries (McCann Matthews Millman)
- Change Museum Culture (March et al)
- Listening to the People (Samuels and Sabin)
- English Regional Museums (SH Consulting)

Some of these studies were modest or exploratory, while others (e.g. 'Listening to the People' and 'English Regional Museums') represented significant contributions to our knowledge and understanding of regional museums and galleries.

The report was drafted by the project leader. It was shared, at various stages, with experienced individuals from the domain who helped enormously to shape its conclusions and with colleagues at DCMS.

This is however, the Task Force's report and is its vision for how museums and galleries might develop – with the help of government intervention – into much stronger institutions for the delivery of social and economic benefits to a larger and more diverse audience of users.

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Part of the process included setting up nine working parties to examine particular issues relating to museums and galleries in the regions. The Task Force thanks all those who were members of the working parties and contributed towards the essays that resulted from them.

The chairman and members of the Task Force thank the project leader, Stuart Davies, for his work. The report has dominated his life for many months, and

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Glossary

ACE	Arts Council of England	MGLI	Museums and Galleries Lifelong Learning Initiative
ACNI	Arts Council of Northern Ireland	MOD	Ministry of Defence
ACW	Arts Council of Wales	NEMLAC	North East Museums Libraries and Archives Council
AHRB	Arts and Humanities Research Board	NHMF	National Heritage Memorial Fund
AIM	Association of Independent Museums	NOF	New Opportunities Fund
AMCs	Area Museum Councils	NWDA	North West Development Agency
CHNTO	Cultural Heritage National Training Organisation	NMGM	National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside
CO	Cabinet Office	NTO	National Training Organisation
DCF	Designation Challenge Funding	NWMS	North West Museums Service
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport	QUEST	Quality, Efficiency and Standards Team (DCMS)
DETR	Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions	RCC	Regional Cultural Consortium
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment	RDA	Regional Development Agency
DfES	Department for Education and Skills	SAC	Scottish Arts Council
DNH	Department of National Heritage	SEMEU	South-Eastern Museums Education Unit
DTLGR	Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions	SEMS	South-East Museums Service
EMMS	East Midlands Museums Service	SMA	Southern Museums Agency
Engage	The National Association for Gallery Education	SRB	Single Regeneration Budget
ETC	English Tourism Council	SWMC	South-West Museums Council
FSU	Funding Support Unit	UA	Unitary Authority
FTE	Full-time-equivalent-post	UMG	University Museums Group
GDP	Gross domestic product	WMRMC	West Midlands Regional Museums Council
GEM	The Group for Education in Museums	YMC	Yorkshire Museums Council
GLLAM	The Group for Large Local Authority Museums		
CLMG	Campaign for Learning through Museums and Galleries		
GoSLAM	Group for Small Local Authority Museums		
HLF	Heritage Lottery Fund		
ICT	Information and Communications Technology		
IIP	Investors in People		
LSU	Learning Support Unit		
MBC	Metropolitan Borough Council		
MGC	Museums & Galleries Commission		

