

REPORT BY THE MUSEUMS THINK TANK

SCOTLAND'S MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

DECEMBER 2010

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INTRODUCTION

Context

Scotland is richly endowed with a network of museums and galleries of many sizes and subjects. The artefacts which they contain are many and varied, drawn from Scotland's own history and culture as well as those of other lands. They are an endless source of fascination, education and inspiration to Scotland's own people, to the very many visitors which they attract and to those in other countries who experience Scotland's collections when these are loaned and exhibited abroad. They are internationally respected and greatly enhance Scotland's reputation and standing in the world.

For all that, Scotland's museums and galleries – in common with the other Scottish and UK cultural bodies – have to anticipate a bleaker financial environment in future. The recent global banking and financial crisis is expected to result in stringent budgetary reductions at all levels and across most (if not all) of the UK public sector.

There is no doubt that our museums and galleries need to be in a strong position to survive the economic challenges that lie ahead. It is vital that key decision makers such as the Scottish Government and local authorities recognise the importance of our museums and galleries and the contribution they make to both the Scottish economy and to Scottish society. There is no doubt that our museums and galleries face constraints within their funding environment, and we hope that our recommendations to create relevant structures to underpin future developments, will offer direction and facilitate more effective working practices.

Background to the report

This report has been prepared by a Think Tank of experienced and knowledgeable professionals in the museums and galleries sector in Scotland, established by the former Culture Minister in Scotland, Mike Russell, MSP. The Museums Summit¹, in June 2009, was the first time representatives from all parts of the sector were brought together to discuss the issues that had been facing many museums and galleries for a number of years. The previous Minister encouraged an open and honest discussion to recognise not just the challenges facing museums and galleries but the opportunities for change. One of the key messages from the day was for museums and galleries to recognise what they do well and how they could do things better with the resources available to them. Delegates agreed that there should be a national, coherent strategy to allow museums and galleries to flourish. The previous Minister asked that a small group of professionals from the museums sector come together to assist the Scottish Government with its policy development. The Think Tank began its discussions in September 2009.

The Think Tank hopes that this report will underpin effective action and improve the resilience and strategic focus of the museums and galleries sector in Scotland for a challenging future.

¹ www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/ArtsCultureSport/arts/CulturalPolicy/museums-policy/museums-summit/brief-summary

Composition of the Think Tank

The Think Tank was composed of leading professionals from a range of bodies which are active providers of museums and galleries services. Scale and sectoral focus – including the „nationals’, the „industrials’, independent and the local authority museums and galleries – were considered in the appointments but the participants were appointed in their own right for their individual expertise. To make the group workable the size was limited to ten members though it is accepted that a body of this size cannot reflect all the various circumstances and interests across such a diverse sector.

The Scottish Government has chaired and minuted the meetings². The members of the Think Tank were:

Dr Jim Arnold	Director and Village Manager (Retired) New Lanark World Heritage Site
Professor Stewart Brymer	Honorary President Dundee Heritage Trust,
Bailie Liz Cameron,	Executive Member, Development and Regeneration Glasgow City Council
John Leighton	Director-General National Galleries of Scotland
Frank Little	Museums Manager Culture and Sport, City of Edinburgh Council
Dr Gordon Rintoul	Director National Museums of Scotland
Rachel Skene,	Head of Tourism Caithness and Sutherland, H.I.E
Ewen Smith	Director (Retired) Hunterian Museum & Art Gallery, Uni. of Glasgow
Jim Tildesley,	Director Scottish Maritime Museum
Dr Sharon Webb	Director and Curator Kilmartin House Trust

Remit

The Think Tank was tasked with articulating to policy makers at all levels the contribution of the sector to Scottish society; ensuring the correct balance between national, local and independent provision; making the best use of scarce resources through collaboration and priority setting, to enable the sector to take forward appropriate solutions; and considering how to find a sustainable future for Scotland’s industrial collections. Taking each of these elements in turn:

² See www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/ArtsCultureSport/arts/CulturalPolicy/museums-policy/think-tank/firstmeeting / www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/ArtsCultureSport/arts/CulturalPolicy/museums-policy/think-tank/secondmeeting / www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/ArtsCultureSport/arts/CulturalPolicy/museums-policy/think-tank/thirdmeeting / www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/ArtsCultureSport/arts/CulturalPolicy/museums-policy/think-tank/fourthmeeting

Articulation of the contribution museums and galleries make

The chapter “ Making the Case” sets out the contribution that museums and galleries make to the Scottish economy, by encouraging tourism and regeneration; to education, by supporting and promoting lifelong learning and creativity; and to health and well-being, by providing a focal point in many communities and promoting cultural and social engagement as well as preserving the nation’s material heritage.

Ensuring the correct balance between national, local and independent provision

The Think Tank anticipates as outlined in the chapter on “Working Methods” that the proposed delivery body should necessarily address this when considering and developing a National Strategy. The Think Tank recognises that there are a diverse range of museums and galleries and recommends that a revised Recognition Scheme is used as a tool to address the balance between local and national provision and to prioritise funding.

Making the best use of scarce resources

Recommendations within the chapters “Working Methods” and “Funding and Strategy” address this. The Think Tank agrees that there are significant benefits to greater collaborative working across museums and galleries. The Think Tank drew on the lessons learnt from models introduced in England and Wales and believes that the wealth of expertise and resources across our museums and galleries should be used more effectively. The Think Tank has considered how funding can be distributed more efficiently to support the overall aims of the National Strategy.

A sustainable future for Scotland’s industrial collections

The future of Scotland’s industrial collections has proved a difficult area for the Think Tank to reach consensus on. All members agree that our industrial collections are an asset to Scotland and that maintaining the status quo is not an option.

Overview of the sector

Museums and Galleries Scotland (MGS), the membership body for the sector, represents over 350 museums and galleries in Scotland. It could be considered as ‘the voice of the sector in Scotland’ as well as the representative of the interests of Scottish museums and galleries to the rest of the United Kingdom and internationally.³ In addition to advocacy, MGS provides research, publication, advisory (including ‘best practice’ advice) and training services to its members.

MGS administers in Scotland a UK-wide Accreditation Programme which *‘is open to all museums that meet the 1998 Museum Association definition of a museum’*⁴. The aim of accreditation is to raise standards of practice across the sector. An Accreditation Development Programme was initiated in 2004 and revised Accreditation Standards will be announced at the October 2010 Museums Association Conference. Accredited museums and galleries are encouraged to use the MGS ‘Quality Improvement System’, a self-assessment tool which aims to rank six key operational parameters on a six-point scale.

³ MGS Sector Report 8 April 2010 ‘Challenges and Opportunities’

⁴ MGS website at musemsgalleriesscotland.org.uk/the-programmes/accreditation/

The sector itself appears markedly diverse to any external observer. The majority of the MGS membership of over 350 museums and galleries are small – some very small in staff and resources - and are funded in a variety of ways. We make further reference to this in the chapter “Funding and Strategy”. Many are funded in whole or in part by local authorities in ways which again can be diverse, including direct grant in aid, project funding and payments for services under service level agreements. For example, Argyll and Bute Council provides £28,000 per annum to two local museums which have professional staff, in return for those independent museums curating the council’s own museum and providing advisory and curatorial advice to the regions smaller independent museums. Some are independent trusts, again with diversity of focus and scale, with „the industrials’ – including the Scottish Maritime Museum, Scottish Mining Museum and the Scottish Fisheries Museum – among the larger. Some, such as Discovery Point and Verdant Works which are operated by Dundee Heritage Trust, draw funding from a variety of sources, including significant self-generated revenues. Our university museums contain significant amounts of Scotland’s fine art, science and medical collections and account for around a quarter of all Recognised Collections. Others, such as the Burrell Collection and the Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery operated by Glasgow Life⁵, are large and internationally significant. To compound the complexity, the National Galleries and National Library of Scotland are members of MGS but the National Museums of Scotland has chosen not to join MGS, nor has New Lanark Trust, a World Heritage site, which draws funding from its local authority, Historic Scotland, the Heritage Lottery Fund and other sources but chooses not to be an accredited museum. MGS therefore represents the great majority of Scotland’s museums and galleries, but not all

Funding is a perennial problem for most museums and galleries, with *ad hoc* project funding from a variety of sources, help in kind and perceived underfunding relative to aspirations the norm. There is intense competition for funding and a widespread desire for the stability which some form of guaranteed core funding regime might provide. Tensions on funding and perceived roles exist between the larger national and local authority museums and galleries on the one hand and the many smaller bodies on the other. (The chapter “Funding and Strategy” goes on to consider current financial arrangements in more detail.) These predominant characteristics have shaped the organisational culture of the sector and structured the services which most of its members expect of MGS.

The diversity of the museums and galleries sector appears in large part the consequence of historical and local initiatives by government, local authorities and independent groups of enthusiasts and therefore lacks a strategic overview. There is no compelling structural logic underlying the present geographical or subject focus of museums and galleries across Scotland. The longer-term challenge for the sector and those who guide its development is to balance the invaluable initiative and enthusiasm and volunteer effort that abounds in the sector with a greater emphasis on strategic development and prioritisation. This will help ensure the sector’s survival given the challenging circumstances ahead.

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⁵ Formerly Culture and Sport Glasgow, the arms-length charitable trust created by Glasgow City Council.

MAKING THE CASE

Museums and galleries play a vital role in Scotland's present and in its future. Collectively, our local, regional and national museums are a national asset of incalculable worth providing a vast source of knowledge, delight and inspiration for this and for future generations. More than ever before our collections are essential for education, health and well-being, for inspiring creativity and talent as well as boosting tourism, economic regeneration and inward investment. There are more than 360 museums and galleries in Scotland caring for more than 12 million objects⁶ and attracting around 25.3 million visitors per year.

Our museums and galleries are at the very heart of the development and transformation of society. They help us not just to discover our identity as individuals but also to define what binds us as communities and what distinguishes our culture in a local, national and international context. A vibrant museums and galleries sector can be part of the solution to many of the pressing social and economic challenges that we face in Scotland today. Museums and galleries contribute greatly and in many ways to the Scottish Government's stated National Outcomes and the overarching stated purpose of *"creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth"*.

A Vital Element in the Scottish Economy

Developing the economy and creating employment opportunities are key stated priorities for Scotland and the Scottish Government, and have become even more important in the more fragile, post „credit crunch' economic environment. The Government's National Outcomes state that *"we live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe"* and *"we realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people"*.

Scotland's museums and galleries play a crucial role in our economy, encouraging tourism, improving our skills base, driving the creative industries in design and innovation, supporting regeneration and helping to attract inward investment. History and culture are regularly reported as reasons for non-residents to visit Scotland and the quality and diversity of our museums is central to this. Museums and galleries showcase the best of Scottish culture and heritage at home and abroad while loans and exhibitions across the world help to raise the profile of Scotland on the international stage.

Many revitalized museums have been key drivers for economic regeneration in both urban and rural areas. Museums and galleries can also be a key factor in encouraging inward investment on a local and national level. Museums and galleries are an essential link between the creative industries and the wider education sector in Scotland. Art students, designers, artists and photographers are among the wide range of practitioners who utilise Scotland's collections for inspiration and encouragement. Scotland's ability to train and retain talent depends on skills within the sector.

Even by the narrowest utilitarian calculus, Scotland's museums and galleries generate huge revenues both directly, by their own activities, and indirectly in attracting visitors who then use a wide range of transport, residential, catering and other services provided by other agencies and businesses.

⁶ SMC, *The Heart of the Community*, 2006

At national level the total worth of museums and galleries to the Scottish economy has been calculated by MGS at over £800m.⁷ Museums and galleries generate £78.9m in direct and £44.18m in indirect revenues per annum and are estimated to sustain some 3,688 tourism-related jobs in Scotland⁸. More widely, the creative industries as a whole employ 60,700 people in Scotland and have a turnover of £5.2 billion. Museums and galleries support and nurture all the diverse elements of this sector from arts, crafts, design and fashion through to film, interactive leisure software, computer services, TV and radio.⁹

At a regional level significant museums and galleries in Scotland, such as The Burrell Collection and Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum in Glasgow or Discovery Point and Verdant Works in Dundee, can provide for economic growth and diversification in their cities, as well as focal points for education, inspiration and civic pride. Major national infrastructure projects such as the Riverside Project in Glasgow (due to open in 2011) and regional projects such as the Heritage Centre, Ionad Naomh Moluag, Island of Lismore (opened in 2007) are important drivers for regeneration. At local level, and particularly in rural areas, even relatively small museums and galleries can be disproportionately important in maintaining viable local economies as manufacturing and extractive industry, farming and fishing tend to decline in employment terms. Regions and towns across Scotland have identified museum projects as key factors in their potential to attract interest and investment from business and non-residents.

The evidence is that museums and galleries, far from constituting the optional sector of a modern economy as they are sometimes erroneously portrayed, are central to its success and support many other areas of economic activity, both directly and indirectly. Even taken in isolation, public investment in the cultural sector as a whole both levers in significant additional investment from private sources and produces a net return in financial terms alone, at rates which commercial and other forms of public investment can only envy. A recent independent economic impact study of Kilmartin House Museum showed that for every £1 of public funding going into the museum, £14 was generated in the local economy.

A limitless resource for educating, inspiring and nurturing talent.

Education is at the heart of what we do at museums. From schools programmes, through advanced academic research, to third generation and therefore life-long learning, museums are active centres for promoting learning across many disciplines, across all ages, and across diverse communities, thereby contributing significantly to social inclusion.

Promoting opportunities for education and encouraging talent are stated as top priorities for Government in Scotland. Indeed our museums and galleries clearly support the Scottish Government's National Outcomes which seek to ensure that our society encourages children, young people and learners of all ages to fulfil their potential.

Museums and galleries form one of our greatest resources for learning across all ages. A recent survey showed that 80% of parents think that museums and galleries are among the most important resources for educating their children.¹⁰ In Britain more than two thirds of children aged 5-11 visited a museum last year as part of a programme organised by their

⁷ MGS, *Realising the True Impact of Museums and Galleries in Scottish Tourism Phase 2*. This figure is based on a variety of information obtained from across the sector such as footfall and, average tourist expenditure.

⁸ MGS, *Realising the True Impact of Museums and Galleries in Scottish Tourism Phase 2*

⁹ FTI FTWiss Evidence Review 2008, Scottish Government website

¹⁰ *Attitudes of Parents to Museums NMDC 2004:2*

school¹¹ and Scotland enjoys one of the highest rates of visits from schoolchildren in the UK. The sector works closely with partners in education, providing innovative programmes for teachers, supporting the curriculum for excellence and partnering national initiatives such as the *Scotland's History* website. University museums, in particular, provide outstanding opportunities for school children to visit universities, and thereby contribute to the erosion of barriers to higher education, especially as perceived by socially excluded groups. Equally, of course, at the other end of the age spectrum, museums also contribute significantly to life-long learning agendas.

Museums deliver genuine life-long learning, working closely with universities, promoting research and providing opportunities for adults and older people to achieve their potential and maximize their creativity.

The levels of interest in our museums and galleries are higher than ever before. Our museums have revolutionized the ways in which they communicate with their audiences and, through innovative programming, activities, through improvements in services, facilities and marketing, museums in this country have been successful in extending their existing audiences. Museums and galleries are accelerating their use of digital technology through both stand-alone and partnership initiatives and, through the internet, increasingly accessing a potentially unlimited global audience.

Inheriting Scotland's great tradition of research, discovery and invention our museums can help to drive a new spirit of enlightenment in this country.

Improving lives, building communities

The Scottish Government has stated its commitment to promoting individual health and well-being and to developing strong and supportive communities across Scotland. This is reflected in the Scottish Government's National Outcomes to which our museums and galleries contribute.

There is clear quantitative and qualitative evidence of the positive transformational impact of cultural and creative activity on individuals and communities. A recent report highlighted the potential for museums to help tackle numerous social issues from crime prevention through to migration, offering "central spaces of mutual understanding ...where cultural identity can be developed."¹² Museums and galleries in Scotland generate community-focused projects contributing to local pride, a sense of empowerment and greater commitment to the local area. Outreach projects often engage with prisons, hospitals and ethnic minorities, helping to promote social engagement and confidence.

Museums and their collections belong to the public. They are focal points for communities on a local, regional or national level, providing truly public spaces; forums where people can gather, mix and debate. Museums encourage a better understanding of our shared artistic, cultural and industrial heritage and provoke debate about our identity. From the smallest most focussed collection to our world-class national museums they inspire pride, passion and involvement.

¹¹ *Taking Part Child Survey DCMS Nov 09*

¹² *Can Museums be a Potent Force in Social and Urban Regeneration? Simon Tait Sept 08, Joseph Rowntree Foundation*

Museums have the potential to work across traditional barriers and boundaries in society, for example in areas of special needs, such as hospitals and prisons, bringing significant benefits for relatively modest levels of investment.

Many museums provide a focal point for dispersed communities or shared interests such as military and industrial museums. Most museums depend to a greater or lesser extent on the participation of individuals, volunteers and benefactors who are passionate about what they – and the sector as a whole – provide. That passion is fully justified by the achievements of the sector.

The purpose in asserting the practical and wide benefits of a vibrant museums and galleries sector to Scottish society in future is to inform the coming debate on the distribution of the expected budgetary reductions across the public sector. The museums and galleries sector understands that it will not be exempt from increased constraints but expects these to be applied in a balanced way, with due regard to the importance of the activities which are funded for the life of the nation and the cost effectiveness of the investment in each sector.

SUPPORTING THE SECTOR

The Think Tank's recommendations build on existing best practice across the sector rather than undertake a wholesale re-engineering of structures, which could be unnecessarily disruptive in what are already difficult circumstances. Its aim is to progressively improve the efficiency and cost effectiveness of the many bodies in the sector and, overall, the focus of Scotland's museums and galleries on agreed national priorities.

The sector is fragmented and needs unity, clarity, direction and support for its development. The diversity of the sector is by no means a negative characteristic and should not be perceived as a threat or a risk. Whilst this diversity gives the sector resilience and a great potential for innovative work, it nevertheless poses challenges in co-ordination, funding, efficient working and prioritisation.

The Think Tank's recommendations are made in the belief that strategy for supporting the sector needs to be clearly developed, communicated and implemented by a single body, in a clear dialogue with and support from Government, and drawing in advice and support from a wide range of key players within the sector and beyond. To this end, the Think Tank's recommendations on structures are twofold:

- Principally, the establishment of a National Development Body (NDB) as the key single organisation to develop and deliver, within a policy dialogue with Government, strategy and support for the sector.
- The establishment of a Museums and Galleries Forum as part of the strategic process, bringing in a broader range of key players to advise on and support strategy. Although playing this influential role, the Forum is envisaged as light touch and occasional, with resources mainly concentrated in successful delivery of the NDB and its new role.

The report takes each of these elements in turn. Potential elements of future strategy are contained both in the Think Tank's description of the NDB and in the next sections on partnerships and funding.

National Development Body

The Think Tank recommends the establishment of a National Development Body (NDB) with the core aim of building cohesion across the sector.

Functions

It should be the key point of contact and support for museums and galleries mainly through distributing its grants, operating the accreditation system and recognition scheme and encouraging new partnerships and joint working. The NDB could broker support at regional and national level to maximise investment and funding from a range of external sources. The NDB would promote best practice, mainly through the accreditation and recognition schemes, and have an overview of available skills and support, offering training and guidance where needed. This would realise cost efficiencies through avoiding duplication of resources and effort. The body should encourage and support the sector to take responsibility for planning its future within the context of national cultural priorities but would not seek to impose solutions from above.

The NDB should offer advice on how the sector is performing to both the Scottish Government and local authorities. Much of this will be gathered from research activity which should be undertaken as a means to identify trends and issues in the sector.

It is vital that the NDB should speak for the whole sector and should engage with and encompass museums and galleries of all types, from those at local level to the National Collections. This would allow relations to be established between the National Collections and the NDB and could help to bridge the separation of local and National Museums and Galleries under current MGS arrangements.

Options for setting up the NDB

The Think Tank recommends that the NDB should not be a membership organisation

There is concern amongst some members of the Think Tank about the potential conflicts of interests which can arise when a membership organisation has strategic direction and funding responsibilities as well as representative and advocacy roles. Some members of the Think Tank believe that supporting a membership structure within a NDB would not be cost efficient and would have potential to undermine the clarity of strategic co-ordination.

In the interest of transparency and role clarity, most other sector funding arrangements make a much clearer organisational distinction between lobbying and advocacy roles and those of strategic direction and funding. A particular model which could be considered in this context is that for higher and further education in Scotland, where advocacy and representation is the responsibility of Scotland's Colleges on behalf of its 43 incorporated colleges and of Universities Scotland on behalf of the 21 universities and higher education institutions in Scotland, whilst the Scottish Funding Council provides „best practice' advice and oversees standards and funding. The operation of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) by the UK funding councils is a recognised model of good practice in peer review across the sector, awarding grants in accordance with priorities and clear criteria to ensure that funding streams support concentration on excellence.

It will be for the Scottish Government to determine its relationship with and its remit for MGS given these recommendations and the functions the Scottish Government considers a delivery body should carry out. One option is that MGS might cease to be a membership organisation and be re-constituted as the National Development Body for the sector, with a remit which focuses on the congruent functions of ensuring the provision of support and advice, and of reviewing, improving and administering grant schemes for the sector.

Potential options for the organisational form of the NDB would be as a standalone agency answerable to Ministers, or a merged or co-located unit within another agency. There are a number of options within those forms. The Think Tank has concentrated on setting out high level proposals and have not been in a position to carry out a detailed assessment of the structural and governance arrangements that may emerge. The main elements to consider when determining the organisational form of the NDB will be its functions, principles of operation (for instance, grant allocation) and the effectiveness of current delivery arrangements.

The Think Tank believes that a standalone body would be the ideal option although appreciate the merits of co-location provided, of course, the opportunities are mutually beneficial.

FORUM

The Think Tank recommends the establishment of a Forum to advise on and support strategy for museums and galleries.

The National Development Body would play a key part in this wider strategic process which would incorporate the Scottish Government with other key players.

A Forum would review strategy and prioritisation on a regular basis. This would complement the creation of the NDB and the two would maintain a dialogue to ensure effective delivery, communication and review of priorities.

The Forum would review priorities for, and across the sector; agree high level support for those priorities, particularly in respect of collaborative partnerships; review progress and health of the sector, and ultimately set an example of collaborative working at the highest level as a counterbalance to the fragmented nature of the sector.

The Forum should be chaired by the Scottish Government. Aside from the NDB, members should include the National Collections and representatives of the main sectors, such as local government, independent, military and university museums and galleries. It is important that other key agencies should be represented such as Historic Scotland and VisitScotland although the core business must remain focused on museums and galleries. It must be comprised of those in a position to take decisions and be well-informed by the sector. The Think Tank's discussions have favoured a membership not exceeding 12.

The Think Tank envisages that the Forum would meet twice a year. A meeting in September/October would be used to review the priorities for the coming financial year which would inform the business plans of those organisations represented on the Forum and other key organisations. A meeting in May would review progress and provide an opportunity to take a first look at possible topics for the September/October meeting.

WORKING METHODS

National Strategy

One of the key tasks for the NDB will be the drafting of a National Strategy for Scotland's museums and galleries. The Strategy would in effect provide museums and galleries with a framework for their future development. The Strategy should reflect the needs and priorities of the sector and seek to define the roles and functions of the sector in doing so. Once drafted the National Strategy would be made available for public consultation.

The Think Tank does not propose to set out the detail of what the National Strategy contains, although it would be reasonable for the NDB to consider the core functions of museums and galleries such as acquisitions, disposals, collecting policies, conservation, access to collections, skills development and partnership working. The NDB will facilitate the better use of existing resources and practices and offer support for museums and galleries both through distributing grants and supporting those who adopt new, innovative approaches to working. As pressure continues to mount on cultural and community resources the NDB will be invaluable in augmenting local level activity and working to advocate and broker agreements which help to sustain the museums sector across Scotland. The NDB will need to be astute in leveraging in funds from other sources and in ensuring the valuable contribution of volunteers is used to the optimum benefit via in-kind and match funding schemes. The NDB will be able to extract the lessons learnt from how museums and galleries operate and offer best practice guidance which can be used to further develop the Strategy.

The full endorsement and backing of the entire sector is fundamental to the success of the NDB and strategy development. The Think Tank encourages the sector to support these recommendations in principle whilst acknowledging that much will remain to be done in detailed policy remit and organisational design.

Local and national provision

The balance between local and national provision should be addressed as the NDB develops the National Strategy. There are different roles and structures of local and national museums. The National Museums of Scotland and National Galleries of Scotland manage cultural assets belonging to the nation and receive Scottish Government funding to do this. Scotland has a large number of local authority, university and independent museums and galleries caring for cultural assets belonging to an equally diverse group of communities and a diverse range of national and local funding, some of which contain collections of national importance. Spending varies across many local authority areas and this often does not correlate to the number or needs of museums and galleries within Council boundaries, nor is there necessarily any rationale to the geographical location of museums across the country. The National Strategy should consider how these current arrangements are working and whether they can be improved.

The Think Tank recommends that the Recognition Scheme is used as a tool to prioritise funding.

A revised Recognition Scheme could be used as a means to address the balance between local and national provision and be a mechanism through which to prioritise funding against clear and sustainable criteria. The NDB may wish to consider the merits of a tiered system of investment with local, regional and national recognition categories. The tiered system might

present 3 different categories - local, regional and national - reflecting the significance of collections at community, regional and country level.

The different tiers could have different requirements over and above achieving the necessary standards. Regional and national museums might be contractually obliged to provide specific support. Under local recognition museums and galleries at local level could be required to meet set criteria in terms of collection care, business development and service provision and would therefore be eligible for Recognition funding, which might be ring-fenced from local authority budgets in exchange for agreed services. Museums and galleries with regional significance (those who are not National Collections but deemed to be of regional significance) might be eligible for regional recognition, and could provide a hub facility for local recognised collections. The hub, possibly the local authority museum service, could be an exemplar, operating to a high standard and have the capacity, expertise and knowledge to take the lead in partnership development in their area. As with local recognition there could be a ring-fenced funding package from local authority budgets in exchange for agreed services. National recognition might apply to all collections deemed to be of national significance. This status could require these organisations to have a duty of care for the wider sector and could be a source of expertise and specialist advice. There might be a rolling funding agreement with the Scottish Government against set criteria. Local, regional and national Recognised collections could have access to grants and projects applicable to their level of designation.

The NDB is envisaged as being the „glue’ within these systems ensuring an integrated network of Recognised museums working to achieve the aims and objectives of the National Strategy. The NDB is the vital interface between strategy and implementation; between the Government and the Forum but also as the critical connection to those at the coal face.

Using resources effectively

The diversity of the sector reflects and underlines the need to have a National Development Body, which would be in a strategically useful and strong position to encourage and facilitate new partnerships, joint working and advice sharing. Expertise and innovation is essential to the future vibrancy of the sector and this can be best provided through a wide network of partners and the encouragement of new approaches.

Partnership working

The theme of partnership working has been a constant in the UK public sector for the past two decades, and relates closely to the themes of shared services, service-integration, „Best Value’ and community empowerment. The underlying rationale is normally that of achieving economies of scale but service improvement, through the ability to tap scarce expertise that might otherwise be unavailable within the organisation and the overall creation of policy consensus, are also significant drivers for partnerships.

There are currently many examples of good museum partnership working over many years. These are largely informal and project based partnerships. The types of partnership arrangements found amongst Scotland’s museums and galleries include:

Informal collaboration and discussion between staff of different museums or galleries is very common, especially where there are limited numbers of professional staff in smaller bodies. The sector as a whole has a culture of collegiality that is beneficial to any delivery body.

Ad hoc advice and support from one body which has the resources, skills and/or experience to another which is undertaking unfamiliar tasks or lacks the resources itself, is also common in the sector. At present there is a wide range of support services offered to museums and galleries and it can be unclear who does what, why and who to approach for assistance. Support is not only available from MGS to its members but also from a range of national bodies. For instance the National Museums of Scotland¹³ provide partnership working, free training, skills sharing opportunities, advice on collections care and conservation, advice on Recognition and Accreditation schemes and management of the National Fund for Acquisitions. The National Galleries of Scotland provide advice and loans with aims to expand its partnership working and Historic Scotland offer advice relating to building development, preservation and conservation. Advisory and support activity also takes place across Scotland on a regional, local or subject specific level. For example, the East of Scotland Museums Partnership provides action-learning sets, behind the scenes visits and conservation sessions. Curatorial advisors also play an important voluntary role in providing museum support as part of required standards of Accreditation. The NDB, as a central point for advice and support, can direct museums and galleries towards a number of advice providers thus making best use of the knowledge and expertise that is currently offered.

Service level agreements are sometimes used as a means of supporting smaller museums, especially those with no permanent curatorial staff of their own. For example, Kilmartin House Museum and Auchindrain, the two largest of the local museums in Argyll and Bute Council's area each have service level agreements to curate the Council's own museum in Campbeltown, and provide curatorial services and advice to the largely volunteer run small, independent museums in the area. For the providing bodies, the attraction is that of a relatively secure source of funding generated by the contract and for the service recipient it is access to professional expertise. The funding body may see such arrangements as cost-effective ways of making best practice advice available across the area for which it is responsible.

Shared services are potentially the most developed form of partnership in that they are contractual and long-term. Ministers at a UK and Scottish level have long urged the greater development of shared services across the public sector and may be correct in occasionally suspecting that resistance to sharing of services can be driven in part by a simple desire for self-sufficiency and the clarity which comes from exclusive responsibility. Some shared services developments are being implemented between the National Collections but it has to be accepted that the scope of functions and of staff numbers affected by such arrangements so far is very limited. Realistically, few of the organisations in the Scottish museums and galleries sector are of a scale in either transaction numbers or staff to justify a thorough shared services solution for all of their functions. This is intended to be realistic and not defensive. We do accept that an overriding requirement for the future is the improvement of efficiency in the sector and, where that can actually be achieved, by a shared services solution that should be considered.

Museums will have to be increasingly „business-like’ in evaluating opportunities for mutual support and trading of services within the sector, and of assessing the balance of advantages in choosing whether or not to gear up to provide particular functions for themselves and their peers.

¹³ The National Museums of Scotland and National Galleries of Scotland have no formal role or responsibility to provide support to local museums and galleries and do not receive funding for this purpose.

Lessons have been learnt from various projects and initiatives and the Think Tank has used these to consider how the National Strategy might develop. Of particular note has been Renaissance in the Regions¹⁴ and the Regional Development Challenge Fund Project¹⁵ from which the hub and spokes model derive.

The importance of people and development

Those who either work directly in museums and galleries or provide support are a key asset and resource and it will be fundamental that this is taken into account when the NDB is developing a National Strategy.

Scotland's National Audit of 2001 showed that museums in Scotland employed 10,885 staff and volunteers. This figure consisted of 2,899 paid staff and 53% of those working in museums were volunteers.¹⁶ The museum labour market is traditionally highly skilled (attracting those from academic backgrounds with specific curatorial skills and knowledge) but low paid. Museums are supported by people of all ages, from those on student placements to retired people.

Volunteers are a vital resource to museums and galleries. Volunteers young and old provide significant economic value to museums and galleries, estimated to be almost £300,000 per average month in the high season and around £250,000 in the low season.¹⁷

Volunteers significantly increase an organisation's capacity (undertaking a variety of roles such as guiding and conservation-related work); bring a wealth of knowledge and skills (often specialist skills and knowledge of the local area); and above all else often have an enthusiasm and commitment to supporting their local museum and the wider community. Without volunteers the museums and galleries landscape would be poorly staffed. Indeed nearly 25% of museums who responded to research undertaken by Museums Galleries Scotland were run entirely by volunteers.¹⁸

Most volunteers are older people and it is therefore of paramount importance that museums and galleries take account of succession planning to ensure that there is a constant supply of volunteers and an adequate transfer of skills and knowledge to subsequent generations.

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¹⁷ The report "Renaissance in the Regions" was published in October 2001 and proposed a new structure for England's regional museums. A „hub' for each of the nine English regions was made up by a group of the 44 largest museums who worked together to improve museums across the whole region. This was funded by the UK Government.

¹⁵ The scheme was managed by MGS on behalf of the Scottish Government and aimed to create partnerships across regional boundaries, involving museums of different types and sizes. Museums were encouraged to involve partners out with the sector. 10 partnerships received three-year grant funding from 2003. The scheme has now ceased.

¹⁶ From "Realising the True Impact of Museums and Galleries in Scottish Tourism, Phase 2", Museums Galleries Scotland 2005

¹⁷ From "Volunteering in Museums-A Research Study into Volunteering within Museums", Museums Galleries Scotland, 2009

¹⁸ From "Realising the True Impact of Museums and Galleries in Scottish Tourism, Phase 2", Museums Galleries Scotland 2005

FUNDING AND STRATEGY

Current arrangements

There is a maze of funding and funding sources for our museums and galleries and provision varies across bodies and even geographic areas. The wide range of funding bodies include local authorities, the Scottish Funding Council in support of university museums, the Heritage Lottery Fund, the National Museums of Scotland's National Fund for Acquisitions, the Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations, the European Union, the Ministry of Defence (in relation to military museums) and of course the Scottish Government and the various project grants schemes operated by MGS, as well as self generated income,. This is by no means an exhaustive list. This number of funders reflects the fact that the sector is made up of many different bodies of differing sizes and scale, doing different things in different ways. The Think Tank recognises that the Scottish Government has an interest in creating a framework to ensure that our museums and galleries can deliver the appropriate services in an efficient way, but would not wish to see the Scottish Government acting as the direct funder for the entire sector.

The financial data that the Think Tank considered reflect the current multifarious funding arrangements. There is easier access to some information - for example, published figures for central government grants to the National Collections and local authority expenditure returns on museums and galleries – than for others, particularly the funding of independent museums. For example the Scottish Government publishes the running costs, capital grant and purchase budget for the National Museums of Scotland and the National Galleries of Scotland who will receive in 2010-11 £26,985,000 and £16,855,000 respectively¹⁹. We know that the Scottish Government will provide £3,848,000 to MGS in 2010-11 (which includes additional money for the Scottish Mining and Scottish Maritime Museums)²⁰. There are difficulties around the figures produced by CIPFA on local authority expenditure on museums and galleries as there has been no consistent reporting framework for local authorities. In 2007-08 local authorities allocated £37, 080,000 in net revenue expenditure for museums and galleries and £24,814,000 in capital expenditure.²¹ Such figures merely present a snapshot of some of the available funding rather than offering any real insight into the picture across the entire sector.

We know that philanthropic donations are an important source of funding for many museums although it would be impossible to establish the amount of donations across the entire sector given the amount of museums and galleries and the often anonymous nature of such giving.

Given the mixed quality of the information available it is difficult for the Think Tank to make specific funding recommendations. It is possible however to identify some trends:

- Independent museums (as recognised for example in the Scottish Museums Council national audit in 2002, and further evidenced by data on the smaller industrial museums) continue to have a pattern of funding which does not rely on a single dominant source of income, instead are heavily reliant on admission charges and other self generated income

¹⁹ The NMS allocation includes almost £5,000,000 for capital projects (the Royal Museums Project and the extension to storage facilities at Granton) and the NGS figures include around £2,000,000 in capital funding for the Scottish National Portrait Gallery.

²⁰ Grant figures at time of publication of grant in aid letters to NMS, NGS and MGS.

²¹ CIPFA

- Many museums, including the National Collections and the industrials, have significant needs for longer term capital investment which should be addressed through careful resource planning (equally true of the National Collections and, for example, industrial museums both large and small)
- There is some evidence of a reduction in local authority funding in recent years, both in total and in specific instances of funding independent museums including the industrial collections, although the record varies significantly between different local authority areas. Overall the net revenue expenditure on museums and galleries of all Scottish local authorities fell sharply between 2005-06, when councils spent £46,782,000, and 2007-08 when expenditure dropped to £37,080,000.²² However, gross capital expenditure has increased from £18,327,000 in 2006-07 to £24,814,000 in 2007-08.²³

The Think Tank recommends that the NDB should carry out a financial audit of funding to museums and galleries on a regular basis and gives priority to monitoring trends in funding to museums and galleries.

The Think Tank recommends that the NDB should undertake an early review of the Recognition Scheme.

The NDB should consider the current shape of the scheme and the qualifying criteria. The review should bring forward proposals to make the grant award process more efficient and transparent. The criteria for the grant award should encourage partnership working with other agencies and service level agreements or shared service arrangements wherever appropriate. As part of the review we suggest that ring-fencing or partial guarantees to some parts of the sector should be minimised in advance of a comprehensive review of the Recognition Scheme and overall funding, so that the ability of the NDB to implement strategic direction is not impeded from the start.

²² CIPFA

²³ Ibid

Industrial collections

Our industrial collections have a vital role in telling the story of our industrial past and it is therefore very important to consider how these collections are preserved and maintained for future generations. Industrial museums are located at the point where industrial activity took place and include industrial objects that often require specialist maintenance and curatorial knowledge. There are between sixty and eighty visitor attractions that could be classed as “industrial museums” or have an element of industrial heritage²⁴.

Much of Scotland’s industrial heritage has been destroyed or neglected largely because of the cost of upkeep and repair and until 2000-2001 industrial sites were primarily a matter of local interest. Various reports around this time on their condition led the Scottish Government to provide emergency funding for three major industrials, the Scottish Mining Museum, the Scottish Maritime Museum and the Scottish Fisheries Museum, through the Scottish Museums Council (now MGS). The three museums are all run by independent trusts.

Considering how to achieve a sustainable future for industrial museums has proved to be the most difficult area for the Think Tank to agree on. There is agreement, however, that our industrial heritage is important and that maintaining the status quo is not an option.

Funding

The Think Tank recommends that the Scottish Government explicitly agrees direct-funding for the Scottish Mining Museum, Scottish Maritime Museum and the Scottish Fisheries Museum, recognising the *de-facto* funding priority already given to them and that this should be set out for the period of each Scottish Government spending review, rather than on an ad-hoc basis.

The Think Tank favours clarification of the terms and conditions under which the three major industrial museums are provided funding from the Scottish Government. Such a measure, together with a commitment from the Scottish Government on funding, will allow for greater transparency and ensure these museums are aware of their responsibilities in meeting the conditions set, for example, in respect of reporting to Scottish Ministers by way of periodic performance review and accountability for funding. By setting out the funding commitment to the major industrials for the period of each Scottish Government spending review, with plans for capital investment, this will enable long term planning and greater stability for these sites.

The three industrial museums have collections of National Significance under the Recognition Scheme and are eligible for financial support through the Recognition Fund in addition to the ring-fenced funding they receive from MGS. They also receive funds from their local authorities and various other bodies. This duplication of funding streams is something the NDB should address when developing the National Strategy.

There are, of course, many other industrial museums as previously noted. Bodies such as Summerlee, the Museum of Lead Mining, Aberdeen Maritime Museum, the Glasgow Museum of Transport (which will become the Riverside Museum in 2011), the Museum of Scottish Lighthouses and the Grampian Transport Museum do not receive core revenue support and may require specific project funding or grants from MGS. Funding for the

²⁴ From “A Strategy for Industrial Heritage in Scotland”-Scottish Museums Council, 2006

remaining industrial museums should be distributed through a delivery body and take account of whether they are accredited museums or have recognised collections. The Think Tank has noted that the sustainability of these industrial collections is something that they have not covered and should be incorporated into the National Strategy. Members have urged that long- term funding to the major industrials should not prove detrimental to the other industrial collections.

Collaborative working

The Think Tank recommends that the Scottish Government supports and encourages the establishment of a Federation for industrial museums whose members are also encouraged to work closely together to achieve optimum efficiencies.

A greater collaborative approach between our industrial museums would benefit all parties. A Federation of Scottish Industrial Museums should be set up to undertake partnership and collaboration activities. The Federation should develop joint working practices, co-ordinate business planning and consider how to disseminate best practice and the availability of skills. This Federation model could be useful to other groups of museums with similar collective interests.

In return for the direct funding arrangement with the Scottish Government, the major industrial museums should exercise a leadership role in the Federation.

Options considered

The Think Tank considered several options in relation to the three major industrial museums. The most direct option would be to provide the museums with more money from the Scottish Government. Whilst some of the Group favoured this approach there is recognition that there is limited funding which needs to be prioritised across the whole sector. Whilst this may offer a quick fix it is important to consider the structure that supports the industrial museums.

Another option might be the absorption of the three “industrials” by the National Museums of Scotland. This option was ruled out as it would be very costly to harmonise staff salaries and such absorption would dominate the work undertaken by NMS for a significant period.

The group were also attracted by the option of an increased role for Historic Scotland. Many of the buildings that house Scotland’s industrial collections are listed and Historic Scotland could perhaps operate these as visitor attractions. Historic Scotland may wish to express a view on that option at an appropriate time.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Considerations and conclusions

Any group of informed and motivated individuals will have disagreements on minor and, in some cases, major issues. We are united, however, in seeking a structure, a culture and ways of operating in future which will give the sector greater confidence that it can withstand the coming financial challenges.

Since we began our discussions in September 2009 the UK recession and the inevitability of public service cuts has meant an increasing number of our museums and galleries are fearful for their on-going sustainability. The announcement in July 2010 that the UK Government will abolish the Museums, Libraries and Archive Council was a marker that cultural services, whether at national or local level, are not immune from cutbacks. This report is therefore produced at a time when our museums and galleries have more need than ever before for a sense of direction. Our recommendations offer the structures and mechanisms whereby museums and galleries can benefit from greater joined up working and the efficient use of resources and agreed priorities over the coming years.

In our view it is vital that the skills and expertise in conservation and interpretation which the sector has developed over decades – centuries in some cases – are preserved. Many artefacts could, in extremis, be stored. Skill and experience cannot as readily be stored, transmitted and preserved if development and innovation is no longer encouraged. We understand that some might perceive museums and galleries, and the cultural sector as a whole, as a lower priority than some others in a competitive struggle for diminishing funding, but such perceptions have to be judged against the clear evidence of the enduring worth and widespread benefits of a vibrant museums and galleries sector.

We also accept that performance improvement is always, in principle, possible, even in organisations which believe that they have optimised efficiency. We are, as a sector, open to new ways of working, innovative partnerships and shared services, where appropriate and helpful. We recognise the diversity of the sector and accept that the future shape of the sector has to be more patterned and shaped around priorities at national level, led by Government. We would, though, ask Government to allow adequate time for the consideration of precise organisational or funding options, if the recommendations in principle here are broadly accepted.

There is one particular area where we broadly agree, with reservations in some cases, that a clear departure from current organisational patterns is required. Whatever the precise organisational vehicles and arrangements, we are clear that it is increasingly inappropriate that a membership body should continue to provide the functions of grant administration, best practice advice and accreditation in parallel with advocacy and lobbying. Much good work has been done and is being done by MGS but the structure is not transparent and there are evident tensions between these roles.

There is clearly much our museums and galleries have to offer and our recommendations are designed to equip the sector with the necessary means, not just to survive, but also to flourish and recognise its full potential.

Recommendations

In some cases without significant dissent and in others by a majority, we make the following recommendations to the Minister. We recommend that:

- 1. The Scottish Government considers separation of the functions currently delivered by MGS to create a National Development Body for museums and galleries (NDB) which has no representation or membership functions but would be charged with supporting and advising the sector, encouraging new partnerships and joint working. The NDB will be charged with developing a National Strategy to inform all strategic activity for museums and galleries, which, among other things, will consider the balance between local and national provision.**
- 2. The Scottish Government considers moving the grant administration functions and administration of the Accreditation Scheme currently with MGS to the NDB and, in relation to grants, ensure clarity, simplicity and direction for museums and galleries.**
- 3. The Scottish Government undertakes an options appraisal of potential organisational locations for the NDB. A standalone body is favoured by the Think Tank although the option of locating it within a complementary body in order to achieve synergies with the wider cultural strategy and efficiencies in grant administration systems should be considered.**
- 4. In implementing these changes, careful consideration should be given to transitional arrangements in order to allow museums and galleries adequate time to adjust and adapt.**
- 5. The Scottish Government establishes and leads a Forum to advise on and support the development and implementation of the strategy for museums and galleries in dialogue with the NDB.**
- 6. The NDB should carry out a financial audit of funding to museums and galleries on a regular basis and gives priority to monitoring trends in funding to museums and galleries.**
- 7. The Recognition Scheme is used as a tool to prioritise funding.**
- 8. In the event that an NDB or equivalent is established as a result of this report, it should undertake an early review of the Recognition Scheme, which would include:**
 - criteria for admission and the operation of the Recognition Scheme, incorporating an element of independent input in that review;

- bringing forward proposals to make the grant award process more efficient and transparent;
 - any proposal to revise the criteria for grant award should clearly encourage partnership working with other agencies and SLA or shared service arrangements wherever appropriate;
 - minimising ring-fencing or partial guarantees to some parts of the sector in advance of a comprehensive review of the Recognition Scheme and overall funding, so that the ability of the NDB to implement strategic direction is not impeded from the start. We recognise that this recommendation will not be welcomed by the all in the sector.
9. **The Scottish Government explicitly agrees direct funding for the Scottish Mining Museum, Scottish Maritime Museum, and Scottish Fisheries Museum recognising the *de-facto* funding priority already given to them and that this should be set out for the period of each Scottish Government spending review, rather than on an ad-hoc basis.**
10. **The Scottish Government supports and encourages the establishment of a Federation of industrial museums whose members are also encouraged to work closely together to achieve optimum efficiencies.**

APPENDIX A

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GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

CIPFA	Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy
DCMS	Department of Culture Media & Sport
FTI	Fresh Talent Initiative
FTWiss	Fresh Talent Working in Scotland Scheme
MGS	Museums Galleries Scotland
NDB	National Development Body
NGS	National Galleries of Scotland
NMDC	National Museums Directors Conference
NMS	National Museums Scotland
RAE	Research Assessment Exercise
SAC	Scottish Arts Council
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SMC	Scottish Museums Council



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