



An Action Framework for Museums -
Consultation and Response

August 2003



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE



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Executive Summary

This report presents the Scottish Executive response to the consultation on an Action Framework for Museums, which took place between September and December 2002. Ninety-two detailed submissions were received, analysed, and considered by the Executive, as were the outcomes of task groups at the major museum sector conference held in Edinburgh in November 2002.

The main action points of the response are made in the context of the **Partnership for a Better Scotland** (PABS) agreement of 15 May 2003 which lays out commitments for the next four years of government in Scotland. That agreement promises consideration of the future governance of the arts, culture, and creative industries in Scotland and decisions about the arrangements for consultation are expected in the autumn of this year. That consultation may have a significant impact on long-term structures and funding arrangements for the museums and galleries sector. The action points summarised here do not impinge on the issues now to be addressed by that wider review. They focus on important potential improvements raised by the consultation which are achievable in the short term and within existing resources, but which will have significant long-term impact for the sector as a whole.

These key aspects will be addressed by immediate and focused work in the following broad areas:

- The creation of a regional development framework to develop the capacity and sustainability of the cultural heritage sector through active partnerships.
- The Nationals to adopt a greater role in support of the non-national sector, providing advice, expertise, and other assistance.
- With the help of key partners, the Executive will identify existing and planned research to articulate the enriching role heritage plays in the lives of Scottish people, the value they place on it, and to find reliable measures for the most significant cultural, economic and social impacts of museums.
- The Executive will set out a view of the future of the three industrial museums currently funded directly from the Strategic Change Fund.
- The Executive will reposition the resource currently provided to the Strategic Change Fund to support the developments put forward here, to give it a more precise strategic purpose, and confirm it as a continuing resource to the sector as a whole.

Introduction

The Scottish Executive's National Cultural Strategy strives to promote opportunities for all of Scotland's people to participate in the celebration and understanding of our rich and diverse cultural heritage. The strategy also recognises the contribution culture makes to wider Scottish Executive priorities such as health, education, social justice, economic development, regeneration, tourism and equality.

Scotland has approximately 400 museums and galleries of different sizes covering a range of subjects. These include:

- The National Museums of Scotland (NMS) and National Galleries of Scotland (NGS).
- Local authorities' museums and galleries.
- Independent museums and galleries (run and funded by trusts but often heavily reliant on a mix of local government grants and income from admissions and trading).
- Regimental museums (funded by the Ministry of Defence but sometimes with indirect support from Historic Scotland and income from admission charges).
- University collections (with special factor funding from the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC)).

Many of the independent museums were established through local enthusiast or collector initiatives over the years, but without reference at the time to their place in any wider contexts or to their long-term sustainability within what is now a highly competitive market.

The Scottish Executive recognises that the existing framework lacks consistency and strategic direction. There is a need to ensure that collections important to Scotland are protected and made available to present and future generations. As a first step the Executive commissioned a National Audit of Museums and Galleries from the Scottish Museums Council. This identified size, location, significance and composition of collections in the public domain. Funding of £250,000 was provided to carry out the work.

The National Audit made no formal recommendations but gave pointers on key issues for consideration. It identified that any action plan developed for the sector would have to recognise the role and contribution of many partners, and be shared by those partners. In September 2002, the then Minister for Tourism Culture and Sport launched a consultation exercise to assist the development of a framework for further action.

Purpose and Scope of Consultation

In his announcement of the consultation exercise, and at the supporting conference in Edinburgh in November 2002, the then Minister for Tourism Culture and Sport asked the museums and galleries sector for their views on how a number of key issues might be addressed within the constraints of existing resources.

The key issues for comment were identified as:

Roles and structures

- The respective roles of the Executive, National Museums of Scotland, National Galleries of Scotland, and local authorities
- The role and structure of the Scottish Museums Council (SMC)
- The scope for partnership between national and non-national institutions

Funding

- How to promote sustainability
- How to work with other funders
- The future of the strategic change fund

The contribution to wider agendas

- Social priorities – education, social justice, and equality
- Economic priorities – regeneration, tourism
- How to develop and maintain wider audiences
- The important contribution of volunteers in the sector

Professional Issues

- Issues around care of collections, for instance the distribution and availability of curatorial expertise
- Building greater capacity within the sector, for instance on education or assisting museums in securing funding
- The potential of Information Technology
- The development of a framework of standards
- Performance Indicators for the sector

Responses to the consultation – a summary

There were 92 detailed responses to the consultation. A list of respondents is attached at Annex A. They responded under the four headings of the consultation request. Many of the responses also called for significant Scottish Executive support for the non-national museums sector and for local authorities to make a greater commitment to core funding for the capacity and sustainability of museums in their area.

Under the Roles and Structures heading there was significant call for:

- Clarification of the respective roles of NMS, NGS and SMC
- Review of funding for local authorities regarding museums and galleries, and a formalisation of the concepts of 'cultural entitlement' and to 'ensure adequate cultural facilities'
- The Executive to establish the role of Resource in Scotland

A new agency with strategic oversight was championed variously:

- a) for all museums, b) for the non-national sector
- to be responsible for standards (establish and monitor), training, advice, grant-aid
- with a regional development approach
- to work with Nationals to disseminate expertise
- to work with Resource and CyMAL (the Welsh agency) on standards and performance indicators

In relation to the Scottish Museums Council it was widely considered that:

- the Council's role should be clarified
- SMC could be expanded to fulfil the role of a new agency (but that being a membership organisation would compromise this role); and that SMC
- should establish close relationships with nationals
- should extend representation of independent museums

On the subject of partnership the respondents considered that the Executive should promote:

- formalisation of the outreach role of the Nationals
- the development of regional partnerships/networks
- the establishment of regional centres of excellence
- the establishment of partnerships between all heritage and enterprise agencies
- links to Community Planning

In respect of funding:

It was suggested:

- that insufficient core funding compromises sustainability of individual museums
- that core funding provided by the Executive should be based on importance of collections and agreed national performance standards
- that local authorities' funding and commitment/responsibility should be reviewed along with 'cultural entitlement'
- that any new arrangements for funding should be long term and strategic
- that traditional departmental funding strategies in local authorities, should be reviewed
- that a significant percentage of nationally important collections are outwith direct funding and should be taken account of

The Strategic Change Fund's future:

- should be decided after review of current funding
- should not be a substitute for insufficient core funding

Wider agendas:

In relation to the social agenda it was noted that:

- there is a shortage of education officers
- local museums contribute to community identity
- local museums have an important role in agendas for education, social justice and equality; and
- that their contribution needs strategic focus
- that they should be involved in Community Planning

In relation to the economic agenda:

- research is needed into real economic value of museums
- there should be close strategic links to the Tourism Framework for Action
- that museums should work with ATBs
- that an overall strategy is required to enable these developments

In terms of widening audiences:

- research is required into visitor needs and best practice
- that restraints on improving access to listed buildings need addressing
- new interpretation techniques are required
- improvements depend on sustained core funding

It was considered that volunteers:

- are necessary for survival
- require management, training and professional development
- develop active citizenship

On Professional Issues respondents commented:

- on lack of access to curatorial and conservation expertise
- that a national strategy for training would enhance the sector
- that formalisation of the outreach role of Nationals would contribute to professional expertise
- that establishing centres of expertise, including university museums, would benefit the sector as a whole
- that national availability of expertise needed to be established
- that strategies to deal with significant documentation backlogs are required at all levels
- that it is difficult to develop capacity when lacking resources to undertake core activities
- that the role of SCRAN could be developed
- that an ICT policy is required for the sector as a whole
- that there should be a national standards framework using Resource's registration scheme as the basis

The Education Culture and Sport (ECS) Committee

The Parliamentary ECS Committee said consideration would need to be given to the future function of SMC and the remit of NMS. This should include consideration of which body is the most appropriate for the future funding and support of museums; whether there should be a national framework for sharing curatorial expertise and how this would be achieved; and if new designations are required to distinguish between local and national bodies. It would also be desirable to attempt to estimate the necessary cost for running an effective, efficient and sustainable range of Scottish museums.

The wider context

The submissions summarised above were considered in detail and in the context of what could constitute the most effective progress for the sector within the constraints of existing resources. Consideration was also given to how any new action taken would enable the sector through increased capacity, to provide access to quality experience based on well-researched and well-cared-for collections, to develop sustainability and to generate greater resources in the future from a range of sources.

The Partnership Agreement for a Better Scotland contains a commitment to consult on the future governance of the arts, culture and the creative industries in Scotland. It also undertakes to look at the creation of a single cultural organisation for Scotland. This will include consultation on the structure and purpose of the Scottish Arts Council as well as the other national and regional cultural bodies and companies. It will look at the future role and funding of the arts and culture in Scotland.

These impending wider-ranging consultations could have significant impact on the arrangements for support of the cultural heritage sector. A significant range of issues in relation to museums and galleries, in particular those relating to organisations, structures, roles and responsibilities, should ideally be focused and considered within this wider context. Indeed, many of the museums and galleries submissions called for just such a comprehensive look at the bigger picture.

A Museums Action Framework – The Scottish Executive Response

The proposals made here therefore, do not compromise wider consideration of key issues in the broader context. Rather they will contribute to long-term improvement in the sector by focusing on some significant aspects that can be taken forward immediately and within identified resources.

Progress will be made towards this improvement through focused work in the following broad areas.

1. The creation of a regional development framework

The purpose of the framework is to develop the capacity and sustainability of the cultural heritage sector through active partnerships: across local authority boundaries; between local authority and independent museums; enabling a new level of productive interaction with the Nationals and providing opportunities for museums to link into, and be part of, other initiatives within developing regional partnerships. In particular:

- A network of regional museum development officers with some strategic project funding will be created. These officers will work across local authority boundaries, at an appropriately senior level to ensure effectiveness and influence, developing capacity and skills through regional public/voluntary/private sector partnerships.
- They will take on a general role of developing the local presence of museums – as educational and cultural facilities and as visitor attractions.
- They will help local museums to plug into the processes of community planning. They will be points for the development of funding proposals and education.
- Through their connections to each other and to central support from SMC and the Nationals they will promote benchmarks for quality and ensure access to relevant expertise.
- In developing the capacity of regional 'clusters' they will enable the improved interface between the Nationals and non-nationals, e.g. by developing the infrastructure to host national loans.

This follows an SMC proposal, but it is also reflected in the NMS response that regional partnerships should be created, and in discussion with VOCAL (The Voice of Chief Officers of Cultural, Community, and Leisure Services in Scotland). Many of the other submissions from the sector advocated strategic regional partnerships and networks as a way forward to address a number of the issues of capacity and development under all four of the headings consulted on.

Scottish Executive funding for the framework will take the form of a Challenge Fund with the minimum level of bureaucracy and prescription, though bids will be expected to demonstrate expected outcomes, and clear targets for monitoring progress. The Executive seeks to enable maximum ownership from the partnerships themselves so the exact nature of the bid will depend on the priorities of each partnership, which will be expected to encompass independent and local authority museums in the region. The partnerships will manage posts and some strategic project funding and the lead body can be either an independent or local authority partner.

Partnerships will be invited to bid within a range of broad strategic 'themes' drawn from the consultation. These will be explained fully in guidance to be issued with the call to bid from the Executive but will include such examples as:

- the development of regional cultural tourism
- regional workforce development
- regional partnerships between museums and non-museum organisations
- joint regional initiatives
- maximising the educational potential.

The Scottish Executive Regional Development Challenge Fund will offer a maximum of £100,000 per annum over three years to each partnership to support posts, administrative support, and strategic project work. Executive funds bid for will be matched by a 25% contribution from each partnership to ensure regional and local commitment over three years.

The exact groupings will be decided by the partnerships themselves, but the guidance will indicate that between 6-10 partnerships across Scotland are envisaged. It is recognised that some partnerships will be more immediately able and ready to bid than others. First off the blocks will be those who already have sufficient relationships and capacity to pull effective strategic bids together but these will help to demonstrate the benefits and provide examples of process and good practice. Others may take longer to group and bid and SMC will have a role to be proactive with potential partnerships that need help to gel.

The Executive will issue invitations to bid and guidance in the autumn 2003 for an April 2004 start, and in subsequent years to allow for local funding timetables. SMC will provide administration for the process.

2. The nationals to adopt a greater role in support of the non-national sector

NMS and NGS have, for many years, provided advice, expertise, and other assistance to the non-national sector. These activities are much valued and NMS has identified in its recently published new vision that there is significant scope to manage such activity more coherently and effectively. NGS are taking similar steps. This will largely be in provision of advice on collection management, collection care, and subject specific expertise.

Capacity to co-ordinate and ration the demand on this national pool of expertise – not all of which is located in the nationals themselves – will require some hierarchy of collections – or items in collections. The Audit does not provide enough on this without further work in developing a strategy. The development of a set of criteria for prioritising will be required to make this proposed resource workable. Such criteria will be a useful development with wider application.

In its response to the consultation NMS has proposed a more clearly defined national role for itself as a source of advice and expertise and also as a key player in the creation of strategic partnerships which build capacity. In its strategic objectives for its Corporate Plan period 2003-07 it undertakes to communicate this shift of focus through marketing activities, strategic and operational working, partnerships, and staff training and development.

With the help of key partners, the Executive will identify existing and planned research, and if necessary commission further research, to articulate the enriching role heritage plays in the lives of Scottish people, the value they place on it, and to find reliable measures for the most significant cultural, economic and social impacts of museums. This responds to a suggestion in the SMC submission and the ECS Committee paper. There has been relatively poor external advocacy of the sector and a difficulty in promotion based on evidence. A sound evidence base for assessing the importance of a rich cultural heritage to Scottish people in all their diversity, and consequently to social and economic agendas in both central and local government is overdue. It could underpin the sector's development, support its case for investment in quality and access to excellence, and provide baselines for future assessment of growth and sustainability.

This will be particularly timely in the light of proposals for wider consultation over the coming period on cultural policy, structures and funding at both Executive and local authority levels put forward by the 'Partnership for a Better Scotland' document, and local authority organisations.

3. The Executive will set out a view of the future of the three industrial museums currently funded directly from the Strategic Change Fund

The Executive's support to the three industrial museums that benefit from the present emergency package is time limited to finish in 2003-04. Transitional planning for moves out of Strategic Change Fund support is being worked on in consultation between the Executive and the museums. A longer-term approach to sustainability is being developed by each of these museums to move toward alternative future arrangements. These arrangements will be different in each case.

The Executive has commissioned a consultancy to review future options for the conservation and exhibition of certain internationally and nationally significant items of Scotland's maritime heritage. These items are at present in the care of the Trustees of the Scottish Maritime Museum. The review has taken into account the resources likely to be available locally and nationally, imminent or concurrent developments nationally and locally, and relevant time-scales. It has advised on practical proposals to safeguard and make accessible the maritime heritage within those constraints and opportunities and discussion between the Executive and the Trustees is continuing.

The Executive will consult further with key partners to establish a view on the future care and accessibility of industrial heritage that is of recognised national importance to Scotland.

4. The Strategic Change Fund

The existing funding of industrial museums is taken from the Strategic Change Fund. The Executive will redirect part of the resource presently engaged in the Strategic Change Fund to the Regional Development Challenge Fund and to support for other work arising from this action framework from 2004-05 onwards. The Executive considers that the repositioning of this resource to fund the developments put forward here will give it more precise and overall strategic purpose, lasting impact, and confirm it as a continuing resource to the sector as a whole.

In conclusion

The Scottish Executive recognises the dedication and commitment of the people – paid staff and volunteers – who work at every level to safeguard and provide access to the cultural heritage of Scotland. We are grateful to all those who responded so eloquently to the consultation exercise.

Those aspects of the submissions which have contributed to our understanding of the sector's views on the bigger structural and funding issues, not dealt with here, will not be lost. They will be considered, and further views sought, in the context of

the wider look at cultural policy, structures, and funding arrangements that is committed to in PABS. Such a 'bigger picture' consultation was itself one of the requests that recurred in the submissions from the museums sector to this exercise.

The framework described in this response from the Scottish Executive provides for focused and immediate action, achievable within existing resources, to address specific and significant issues raised in the consultation. It does not pre-empt the outcomes of a wider review, but it does enable developments to begin which will contribute to the long-term capacity building and sustainability of the sector as a whole and have lasting effect.

The Scottish Executive
August 2003

Annex A

Submissions to the consultation were received from:

The Rt Hon	Lord Steel of Aikwood		
Mr	David Anderson		Victoria and Albert Museum
Mr	Peter Anderson		The National Archives of Scotland
Mr	J E Arnold		New Lanark Conservation Trust
Ms	Fionna Ashmore		Society of Antiquaries of Scotland
Mr	Mike Baughan		Learning + Teaching Scotland
Ms	Susan Bennett		Elgin Museum
Mr	John S Beveridge		Coalfield Communities Campaign
Ms	Lesley Botten		
Mr	Eddie Brogan		Scottish Enterprise
Mr	Ian Brown		Scottish Borders Council
Mr	Steve Callaghan		Orkney Islands Council
Mr	Alistair Campbell		The Moray Council
Professor	Ian Carradice		University Museums in Scotland
Ms	Annette Carruthers		University of St Andrews
Mr	Rennie Chambers		Wanlockhead Museum Trust
Mr	Trevor Clark	CBE LVO AMA	
Sir	Timothy Clifford		National Galleries of Scotland
Sir	Timothy Clifford		National Galleries of Scotland
Mr	Herbert Coutts		The City of Edinburgh Council
Mr	Ronnie Cramond	CBE	intact
Ms	Barbara E Crawford		University of St Andrews
Ms	Sheila Cronin		Renfrewshire Council
Mr	Sandy Cumming		Highlands & Islands Enterprise
Mr	Neil Curtis		Scottish Society of Museum Archaeologists



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Mr	Neil	Curtis		University of Aberdeen
Mr	David	Devereux		
Mr	Ian	Downs		Scottish Maritime Museum Trust
Mr	Nat	Edwards		Burns National Heritage Park
Mr	Neil	Firth		Pier Arts Centre
Ms	Liz	Forgan	OBE	Heritage Lottery Fund
Mrs	Karen	Gillon	MSP	Education Culture and Sport Committee
Sir	Peter	Graham		The Gordon Highlanders Museum
Ms	Emma	Granville		Scottish Liberal Democrats
Mr	Steve	Grimmond		VOCAL
Mr	Mark	Hall		
Mr	David	Harris		Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh
Ms	Norma	Hart		Dumfries & Galloway Tourist Board
Ms	Elizabeth	Henderson		West Lothian Council
Mr	Ian	Jardine		Scottish Natural Heritage
Mr	Matthew	Jarron		University of Dundee
Ms	Ann	Jones		Heriot-Watt University
Mr	Paul	Jukes		North Lanarkshire Council
Ms	Dawn	Kemp		The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh
Ms	Elsbeth	King		The Smith Gallery Stirling
Ms	Heleen	Kist		SCRAN Limited
Ms	Elizabeth I	Kwasnik		South Ayrshire Council
Ms	Janet	Law		Scottish Out of School Care Network
Mr	David	Lockwood		Dumfries & Galloway Council
Ms	Sandra	Macdougall		Inverclyde Council
Ms	Dallas	Machan		Fife Council

Mr	Willie	Macleod	Visitscotland
Mr	Robert N	MacSporran	Dalmellington and District Conservation Trust
Mr	Thomas G	Malloy	The Maclaurin Trust
Bailie Dr	Christopher	Mason	The Clyde Maritime Trust
Mr	John	Mayhew	The National Trust for Scotland
Mr	Ian J S	McAlpine	CISWO
Ms	Sheila	McClure	National Museums of Scotland
Ms	Bridget	McConnell	Glasgow City Council
Mr	Joseph	McGeer	Argyll & Bute Council
Mr	David Adams	McGilp	Highland Museums Forum
Mr	Neil	McKechnie	West Dunbarton Council
Mr	Ciaran	Monaghan	Aberdeen City Council
Mr	John	Murray	Moffat Museum Trust
Ms	Sylvia	Murray	COSLA
Dr	Brendan	O'Connor	
Ms	Gail	Pain	South Lanarkshire Council
Mr	John	Pickin	
Mr	Robert	Pickles	Volunteer Development Scotland
Ms	Ylva	Player-Dahnsjö	University of Dundee
Ms	Gill	Poulter	Dundee Heritage Trust
Mr	David B	Price	
Ms	Helen C	Rawson	University of St Andrews
Ms	Seona	Reid	The Glasgow School of Art
Miss	Alison	Reid	Scottish Museum Federation
Mr	Bruce	Robertson	The Highland Council
Mr	Robin H	Rodger	
Ms	Jane	Ryder	Scottish Museums Council
Mr	Tom	Shearer	East Lothian Council



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Dr	Evelyn	Silber	University of Glasgow
Mr	Mark	Simmons	
Ms	Anna	Southall	Resource
Mr	William	Stafford	East Ayrshire Council
Mr	John	Stewart-Young	Dundee City Council
Mr	John	Stewart-Young	Group of Scottish Local Authority Museums
Mr	Michael	Taylor	Perth & Kinross Council
Mr	Mike	Ward	Grampian Transport Museum
Mr	Fergus	Waters	Scottish Mining Museum
Mr	A B	Watson	Angus Council
Mr	David	Wears	Cultural Heritage National Training Organisation
Ms	Helen	Wilkinson	Museums Association
Mr	Alan	Young	West Lothian Museums Forum





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