



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Expert Review of Local Museum Provision in Wales 2015



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Dr Haydn E Edwards

Chair of the Expert Review of Local Museum Provision in Wales

Front cover photograph: Swansea Museum

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Foreword

Local authority museums have provided an important and valued service to their communities. Established mainly during a “golden age” in the 1970s and 80s, they have some important collections and are supported by committed staff. A network of museums throughout Wales is part of a wider cultural sector, which includes Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales, Cadw, National Trust and independent museums. These museums and historic buildings are important components of our cultural, educational life and contribute to the economy through their role in tourism and support the well-being of our communities. Their collections are part of our local and national history.

In an age where new museums are being opened all over the world, we in Wales are witnessing reductions in budgets. This will eventually lead to reduced opening times, collections not being developed, charges being introduced for some services, staff reductions, exhibitions being curtailed and many other signs of services under stress leading inevitably to museum closures.

During times of financial pressure there are standard responses throughout the public sector in order to maintain and secure services. These include the need to outsource the service, and to commercialise and raise funds from alternative sources. Other responses include a re-assessment of a service, including possible transfer from the public sector, and identifying new audiences. Some of these options, and many more, are explored in this report but it is clear that there is no universal panacea as a response to public sector funding changes.

The report recognises the value and importance of the local museum sector and the Expert Panel would want the museum

sector to flourish and develop. However, many changes are urgently required if we are to avoid the inevitable decline and even disappearance of parts of this sector.

During the review we have gathered evidence from a wide range of stakeholder representatives, and our interviews as well as the two sector meetings have been important parts of the review process. Empirical data, where available, has been used to inform our analysis which then leads to an assessment of the different options available for creating a more resilient sector. We are firmly of the view that at the moment, local government should decide the immediate future of their museums and Welsh Government should provide the context and environment to ensure a major upgrade of the service.

The recommendations in this report address the issues that we have determined to be the priority for local authorities, Welsh Government and other agencies. Their implementation will support some of the conclusions of two other recently commissioned reports by Welsh Government – the Andrews report on culture and poverty and the Smith report on the arts and education.

The challenge of any review of this nature is to strike a balance between what should happen and what is possible. We sincerely hope that the two are in alignment in this report and that through the implementation of the recommendations and our vision for the future, the foundations for a resilient, flourishing and well-supported new museum sector will be established.

Dr Haydn Edwards,
Chair of the Expert Review
of Local Museum Provision in Wales

Recommendations

1. Welsh Government, in partnership with Welsh Local Government Association, to create three Regional Bodies to provide operational direction, management and support to locally delivered museums.
2. The Welsh Government should establish a national Museums Council in order to provide collective leadership and co-ordinated activities at national level for the museum sector.
3. The Welsh Government should develop a Museums Charter to set expectations for public museums in Wales and the requirement to measure their progress and standards achieved.
4. Local authorities, when reviewing their museums services, should consider all options including retention of present operation, transfer to alternative delivery model or closure and do this in consultation with Welsh Government.
5. Welsh Government should put measures in place to establish Collections Wales which will rationalise, develop and safeguard collections of significance to the histories and cultures of Wales.
6. Welsh Government, local authorities, other governing bodies and sector bodies to collaborate to identify and provide the skills development needed to support the workforce during the transition and beyond, in order for it to be able to fully achieve the requirements of the Museums Charter.
7. Welsh Government should establish a transformation fund in order to facilitate the major changes required in the museum sector in Wales.
8. The Welsh Government should review, in partnership with museum governing bodies, the policy and practice of charging for museum entry and from this to provide guidance.
9. The Welsh Government should ensure that museums directly provided by local authorities should be given relief from National Non-Domestic Rates on the same basis as museums that are operated by charities.
10. Welsh Ministers should be formally responsible for supporting and developing all public museums in Wales.



Tenby Museum and Art Gallery
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Introduction

Background to the Review

1. Museums¹ in Wales are defined by their collections of material evidence of human experience and the natural world, and the exploration of both through the eye of the artist. They hold evidence of why Wales is a creative country, as well as its contribution to the world and wider histories.

2. These museums fall into three broad groups:

- national museums, those of Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales (Amgueddfa Cymru), which are funded directly by the Welsh Government;
- local museums, operated and funded by local authorities; and
- independent local² museums, sometimes subsidised by local authorities.

3. There is no statutory obligation on local authorities in Wales to provide museum services – they are discretionary. Nevertheless, twenty of the twenty-two county councils fund some form of museum provision.

4. Currently, the context for provision of services by Welsh local government is changing. Significant reductions in funding are having a substantial impact on museums, sometimes with extreme consequences. Reorganisation and reform of local government is on the horizon. A review of local museums is therefore timely.

Commission of Expert Review

5. In October 2014, the Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism announced that an Expert Review would be commissioned, with two specific purposes:

- to review the proposed changes by local authorities to local museum provision from April 2014; and
- to identify sustainable future models of service delivery, which will maximize opportunities offered through collaboration, partnership and innovation.

6. The full Terms of Reference are provided in Appendix 1.

7. The Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism appointed an Expert Panel, chaired by Dr Haydn E Edwards, Vice President of Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales. The Panel comprised Adrian Babbidge of Egeria Consultancy, Professor Gaynor Kavanagh, Cardiff Metropolitan University, and Peter Gomer, Policy Officer, Welsh Local Government Association. Short biographical details of the Panel members are provided in Appendix 2. The Museums, Archives and Libraries Division of the Welsh Government supported the Panel in its work.

¹ Throughout this report the term museum is used to include art galleries that perform the functions of collecting and learning.

² Local in this context is taken to cover all independent museums, which also include those relating to particular communities of interest, for example Regimental museums.

The Work of the Panel

8. Between November 2014 and May 2015 we met 10 times, during which we interviewed 20 representatives from 10 different bodies. Although our focus was on local authority museums, we also considered a representative sample of independent local museums and looked at the role of Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales. As part of the consultation, we hosted two regional meetings, in Llandudno Junction and Merthyr Tydfil, which were attended by a total of 61 delegates. We received 29 written submissions. In addition, we considered evidence provided in 2014 by 21 local authorities. Contributors are listed at Appendix 3.

9. We drew on an extensive range of reports and independent studies on the sector, including those commissioned by the local authorities themselves on the future of their museums and those undertaken by the Welsh Government's Museums, Archives and Libraries Division. We also deployed a wide range of data on museums for comparative purposes and we used our own extensive knowledge of museums worldwide to inform our judgements and provide perspective on the local authority museums in Wales. Our sources are listed in the bibliography.



Abergavenny Museum
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Chapter 1: Background to Local Museums in Wales

10. A review of this nature requires an understanding of the background to current provision. To do this, we returned to absolute fundamentals, including what defines a museum as a museum, and gathered baseline data on funding and function. The following summarises our findings.

Definitions

11. The definition of a museum developed by the Museums Association in 1998 is widely understood within the sector, but less so externally. It states that:

'Museums enable people to explore collections for inspiration, learning and enjoyment. They are institutions that collect, safeguard and make accessible artefacts and specimens, which they hold in trust for society.'

12. To be considered a museum, an institution has to meet all the key characteristics of this definition. These characteristics are developed further by the Accreditation Scheme for Museums in the UK and underpin the Welsh Government Strategy for Museums in Wales.³ Accreditation is described in more detail in chapter 2 (paragraphs 46-49).

Museums in Wales

13. Local museum provision in the UK is frequently said to be rooted in commitments made in the nineteenth century, when museums were sometimes seen as important provision for training artisans and for raising the status of emergent town and city councils. In Wales the first museum was the Royal Institution of South Wales, now Swansea Museum, founded in 1846, and by the 1860s Cardiff Council was beginning a museum collection. The Corporation of Welshpool took over responsibility for Powysland Museum on 1 January 1888, and in the same year Newport Museum and Art Gallery was established as part of a council-funded Free Library and Museum.

14. Local authorities have driven the growth of museum provision in Wales, with the number of local authority museum services growing from 12 in 1967⁴ to 45 in 2011.⁵ Local authorities thus became the main funder of local museums and now provide direct revenue funding of approximately £9.3 million⁶ for the delivery of local museum services.

15. The Welsh Government's Museums, Archives and Libraries Division estimates that there are now around 160 local or regional concerns in Wales that in the most general sense could be described as museums. Of these, around 120 could potentially meet the Museums Association's definition of a museum, and 98 (including the seven Amgueddfa Cymru museums⁷)

³ *A Museums Strategy for Wales* (Welsh Government 2010)

⁴ Standing Commission on Museums & Galleries *Survey of Provincial Museums & Galleries* (Her Majesty's Stationery Office 1967) Appendix C

⁵ *Spotlight on Museums 2011* (Welsh Government 2013) p9

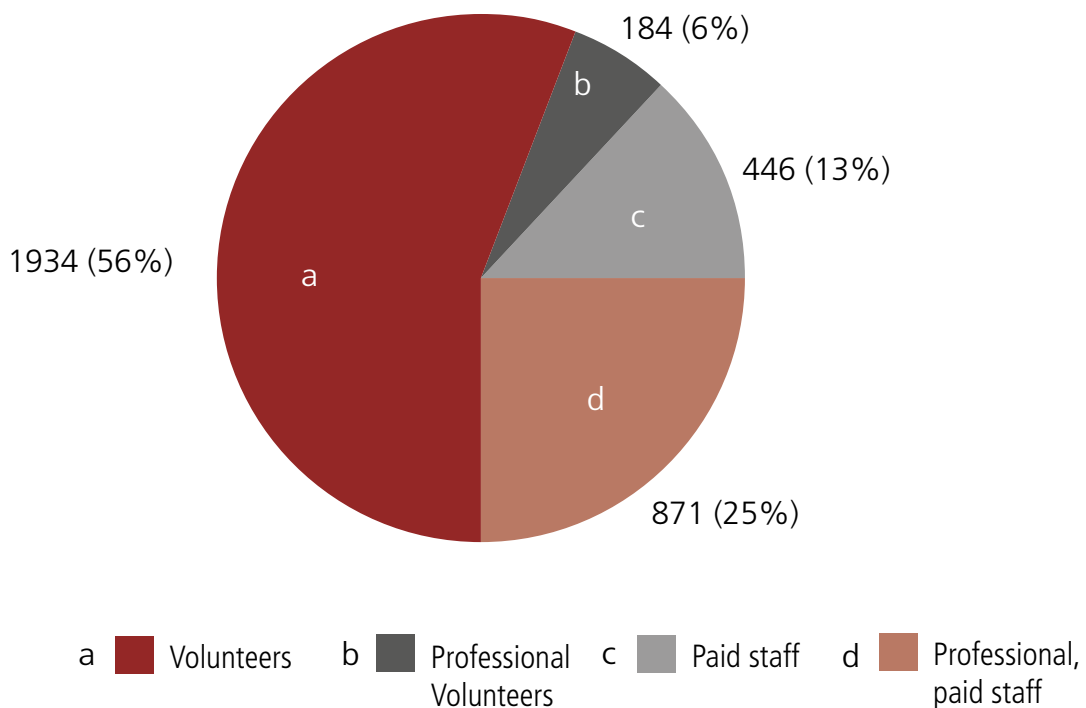
⁶ *Revenue Outturn Forms, Local Government Finance Statistics 2013-14* (Welsh Government 2014. Unpublished)

⁷ The seven sites of Amgueddfa Cymru are Accredited individually.

participate in the Museum Accreditation scheme at May 2015.⁸ Of these, 44⁹ are directly managed by, or receive core funding from, a local authority.

16. In 2011, the total museum workforce in Wales was approximately 3435 people, made up of 1317 paid staff and 2118 volunteers.¹⁰ Figures 1 and 2 show the proportions of the museum workforce for all Wales and for local museums respectively.

Figure 1: The proportion of volunteers and paid staff in the museums of Wales¹¹



Source: *Spotlight on Museums 2011* (Welsh Government 2013)

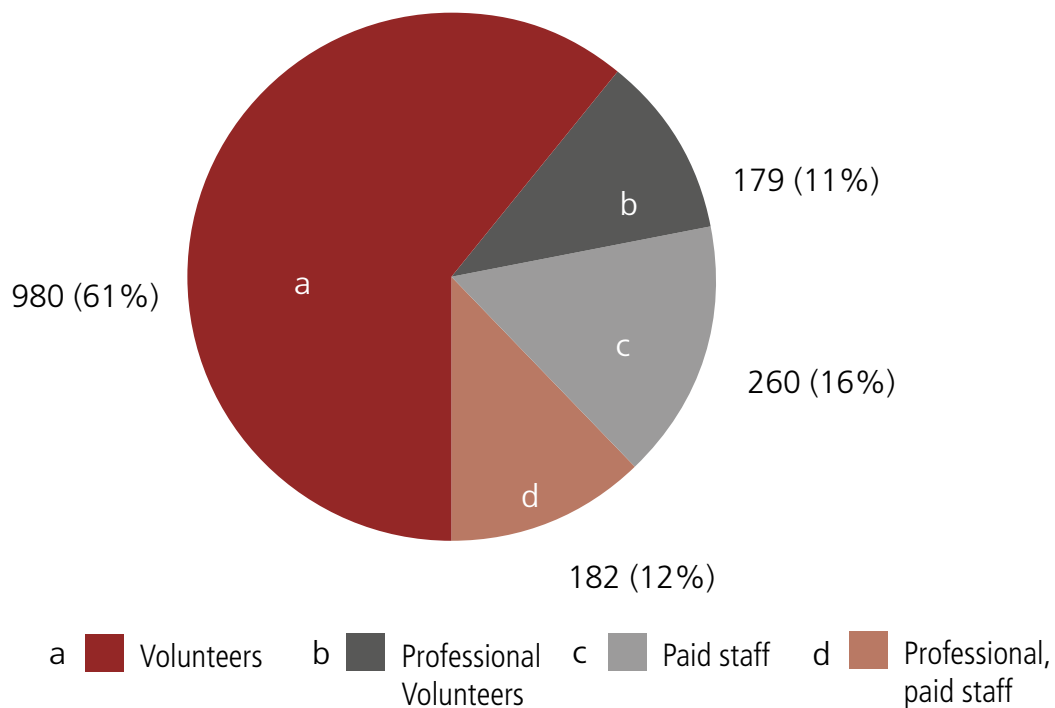
⁸ A full list of Accredited museums in Wales is provided at Appendix 4.

⁹ These are individual Accredited Museums, as opposed to museum services.

¹⁰ *Spotlight on Museums 2011* (Welsh Government 2013) p74

¹¹ The term professional is defined as any worker with a minimum of five years museum experience, a relevant qualification and a commitment to continuing professional development.

Figure 2: The proportion of volunteers and paid staff in local museums¹²



Source: Spotlight on Museums 2011 (Welsh Government 2013)

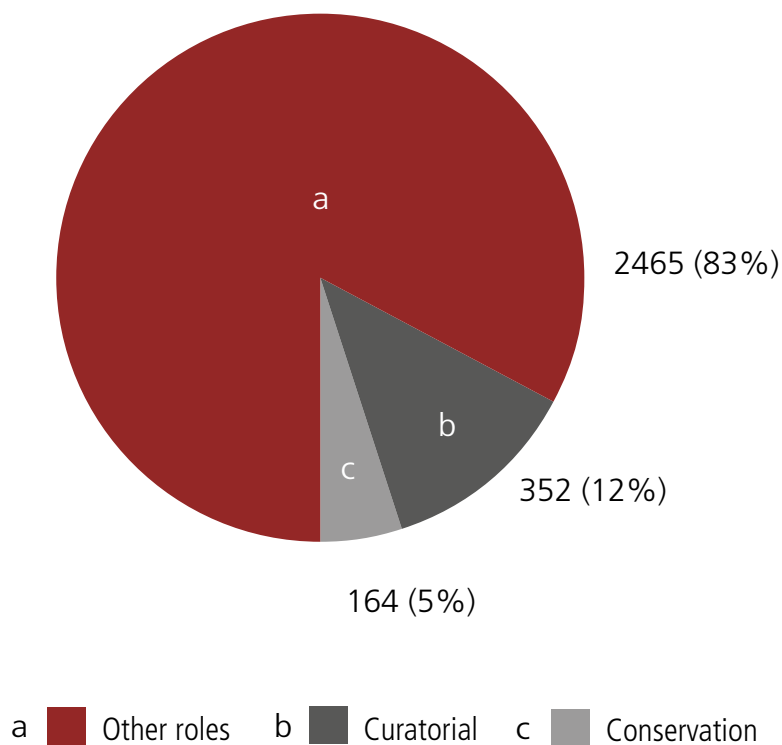
17. Volunteers have traditionally helped to deliver museum services in both the local authority and independent sectors. They add value to the work of professional staff in local authority museums and form 88% of the independent museum workforce.

18. Successful museums need access to a broad range of skills and expertise but curatorial and conservation skills are very specific to museums and crucial for developing, understanding and caring for collections.

19. Figure 3 shows the proportion of the workforce across all museums in curatorial and conservation roles as a proportion of the whole workforce and, in comparison, figure 4 shows the proportions only in local museums. Other roles in these figures include education and learning specialists, access, front-of-house and management.

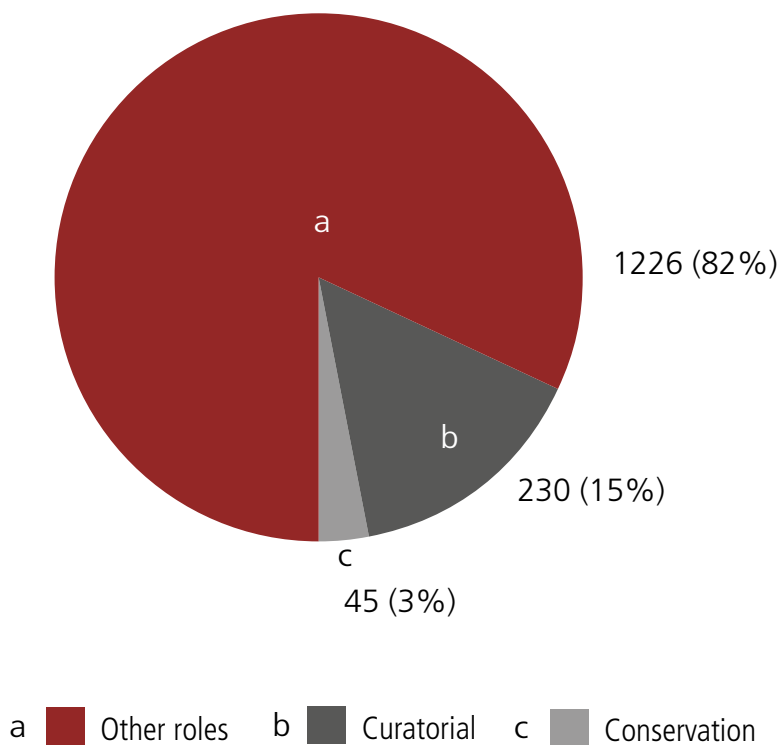
¹² Excludes Amgueddfa Cymru and National Trust which are national organisations and do not fall within the focus of the review.

Figure 3: Curatorial and conservation roles as a proportion of the total museum workforce



Source: Spotlight on Museums 2011 (Welsh Government 2013)

Figure 4: Curatorial and conservation roles as a proportion of the local museum workforce¹²



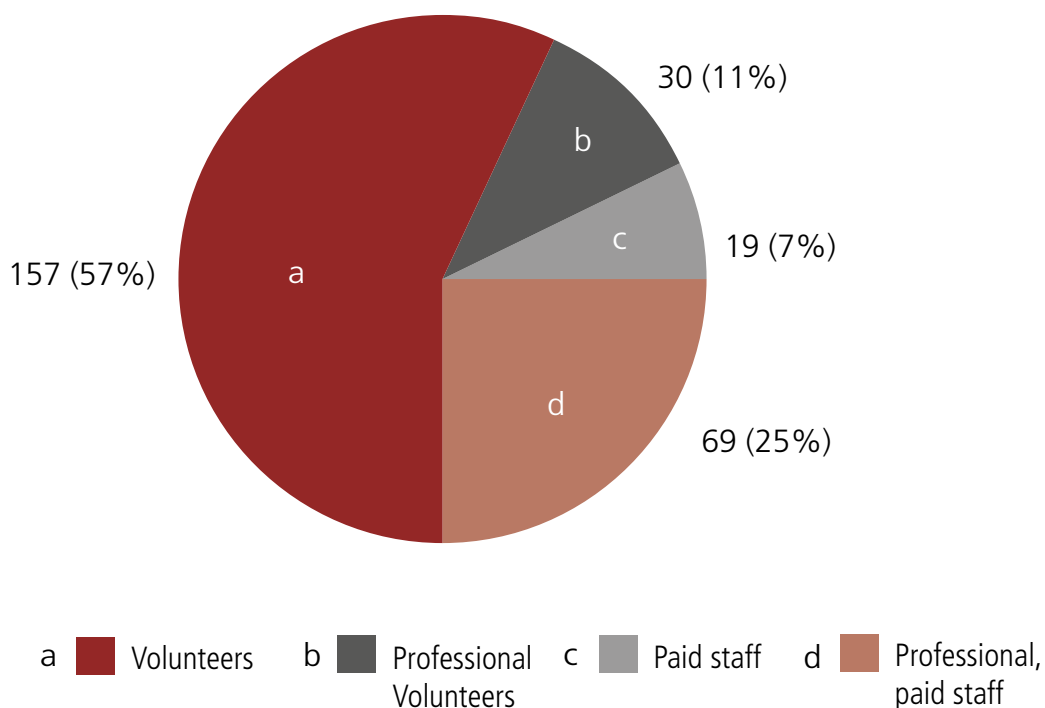
Source: Spotlight on Museums 2011 (Welsh Government 2013)

¹² Excludes Amgueddfa Cymru and National Trust which are national organisations and do not fall within the focus of the review.

20. Figure 5 shows the breakdown of the local workforce in curatorial and conservation roles between volunteers and paid staff. Since 2011, staffing levels have fallen as a result of savings on vacant posts being used to fund budget cuts.

21. In addition to volunteers, the majority of museums also receive support from a further 7000 people through Friends of Museums groups, special interest groups and other membership bodies. This support ranges from providing specialist talks to raising awareness of museums and fundraising.

Figure 5: Proportions of volunteers and paid staff in curatorial and conservation roles in local museums¹²



Source: Spotlight on Museums 2011 (Welsh Government 2013)

¹² Excludes Amgueddfa Cymru and National Trust which are national organisations and do not fall within the focus of the review.

Amgueddfa Cymru

22. Amgueddfa Cymru has had a long relationship with local museums in Wales since the launch of its affiliation scheme in 1923 which, until it fell into abeyance in the 1980s, enabled a means of formal collaboration. Amgueddfa Cymru provided curatorial expertise and training, and local museums agreed to provide proper care, custody and registration of collections. Loans in both directions were encouraged.

23. The scheme worked well for as long as the number of affiliated museums was modest (thirteen in 1924), but growth in local museum numbers from the 1970s meant that it became unmanageable. Most of its functions were absorbed within the Council of Museums in Wales (which had been established in 1965 under the aegis of Amgueddfa Cymru), and the Federation of Museums and Art Galleries of Wales, created in 1975. Previous reports have referred to the 'shadow of the National', with 'its umbrella providing welcome shade, but keeping off both sun and rain' from local museums.¹³

24. Today, Amgueddfa Cymru is generally seen as a generous and enthusiastic collaborator. Schemes such as the Welsh Government funded *Sharing Treasures*¹⁴ have done much to break down any barriers that did exist, and contacts at all levels have grown stronger over recent years. In 2010, 73% of local museums accessed services provided by Amgueddfa Cymru.¹⁵

25. National and local museums have an inter-dependent relationship. Amgueddfa Cymru has collections that cannot be replicated locally, and expert staff.

Local museums hold collections which incorporate material of national importance but whose primary significance is to their local communities, with whom they often have strong relationships. Thus, while both Amgueddfa Cymru and local museums have distinct strengths, they share similar opportunities, especially in creative and innovative approaches to the challenges that are common to both. There are many opportunities for them to learn from and support one another.

Independent Museums

26. A number of county councils provide direct financial support for independent museums. This represents core funding in only a few cases, the level of which has generally remained unchanged or has been reduced over the past ten years. Some museums are regular recipients of small grants (normally less than £2k) from county and / or community councils. A few county councils, such as Conwy, provide development support for independent museums in their administrative areas. In 2010, at least 76 museums were run by local authorities, or received local authority support in some form.

27. Those independent museums that are charities benefit from mandatory relief at 80% of the National Non-Domestic Rates (also called business rates) on the premises they occupy. The costs of these rates are met from the national rate pool. Local councils may award discretionary relief on part or all of the other 20%, but almost all of this cost falls on their budgets. The total benefit of this discretionary relief to independent museums in Wales is estimated to be not more than £50k per year.¹⁶

¹³ Morris, Prof. B., Standing Commission on Museums and Galleries *Report on Museums in Wales* (Her Majesty's Stationery Office 1981)

¹⁴ *Sharing Treasures Past and Future* (Welsh Government 2011)

¹⁵ *Spotlight on Museums 2011* (Welsh Government 2013) p98

¹⁶ Based on Valuation Office Agency 2010 rateable values.

28. Some independent museums are housed in local authority premises, either as the sole occupant, or sharing facilities with council services (e.g. a library) and / or other community groups. Generally such use is at a rent below market value, or on a grace-and-favour basis. In the case of shared facilities the council usually meets repair and utilities costs (estimated at around £75k per annum), and there is also the opportunity cost¹⁷ to the authority represented by museum use.

29. There are a number of examples of help in kind to independent museums including staff secondments and provision of front of house staff. Not all such help is evident, and the full cost of utilities, grounds maintenance and other services is not always passed on from local authorities to the museum.

30. Such support is particularly vulnerable at a time of financial pressure, either because local councils often see their priority as protecting their own in-house services rather than those provided by other institutions in the community, or as collateral damage due to policy changes (for example, a blanket cessation of discretionary rate relief and full cost recovery asset management plans on council property) as well as strategies to realise the values of building assets.

31. The impact on independent museums of such changes can be sudden and, where a relationship is informal or undocumented, potentially destructive, even when the principles of the Welsh Government's Third Sector Scheme (2014)¹⁸ have been adopted by a local council. Where informal arrangements exist, they should be defined

by formal, binding agreements, and should include (where relevant) security of tenure and adequate periods of notice.

Legislative framework for museums in Wales

Welsh Government

32. Welsh Ministers have a general power to do anything they consider appropriate to support museums and galleries in Wales,¹⁹ alongside similar powers for libraries, archives and historical records.

Local Authorities

33. Welsh county councils, but not community councils, are enabled but not required to exercise museum powers, though there is no statutory definition of the term museum.²⁰ These are broad in scope and enable councils to do 'anything necessary or expedient' in connection with the provision or maintenance of its museums, including:

- providing and maintaining museums, whether in their own area(s), or anywhere in England and Wales, by themselves, or jointly with other councils;
- making a charge for admission to the museums they provide directly, ensuring that in doing so those museums are able play a full part in education within their area, especially in respect of children and students;
- supporting museums run by other bodies;²¹
- providing premises on a peppercorn / nominal rent basis;²² and

¹⁷ The value of the best alternative use for which those premises might be used.

¹⁸ *Third Sector Scheme* (Welsh Government 2014)

¹⁹ Government of Wales Act 2006 s 61 (f)

²⁰ Local Government Act 1972 s 206 and Local Government (Wales) Act 1994 s 1

²¹ Public Libraries & Museums Act 1964 s 12 – 14

²² Local Government Act 1972 ss 123 and 127 and Local Government Act 1972: General Disposal Consent (Wales) 2003

- awarding discretionary relief on National Non-Domestic Rates additional to the 80% mandatory relief for charities.²³

34. Although community and town councils are not empowered to provide or fund museum services they may:

- provide museum services delegated to them by a county council;²⁴
- provide funding for museums that are charitable bodies or provide public services,²⁵ or to promote or improve economic, social or environmental well-being, subject to an annual cash limit;²⁶ and
- accept, hold and administer as trustee gifts of property for the benefit of their community, which may include collections and museums.²⁷

Charities

35. Local museums not provided by councils are generally constituted as charities. Some local authorities are also associated with charitable entities, whether as sole trustee of a charitable endowment, or in connection with a charity that has been created to fundraise for museum activities. In some cases local authorities have the right to nominate some of the trustees of independent museums.

36. The law requires that charities meet the following characteristics:

- have a charitable purpose²⁸ i.e. the charity's purpose must be of benefit to the public (or some section of the public), and not simply a small group of private individuals;

- charities must not be run to distribute profit, and their trustees (those who have the ultimate responsibility for a charity) are not allowed to profit or benefit otherwise from acting in that capacity – they must always act in the best interests of the charity;
- they must be independent of other entities (such as a local authority);
- the charity's activities must be limited to those that further its own charitable purpose, being wholly and exclusively charitable and no others (even if these are capable of being registered as charitable in their own right), nor must it engage in commercial trading, other than as part of delivering its charitable purpose (and so trading for fundraising is not permissible, and has to be conducted through a non-charitable trading entity); and
- a charity is required to publish an annual report and financial statements, which must be in a form, and provides a level of detail, required by regulations.²⁹

The European Context for Local Museum Provision

37. We took account of the situation of museums in Wales within the context of European Union (EU) Member States and autonomous regions with populations of similar size, that is between 1.3 million and 4.6 million (Table 1). Given the lack of common practice in collecting these figures, they can only be indicative, but are perhaps sufficient to demonstrate the range of experience.

²³ Local Government Finance Act 1988 ss 43 and 47

²⁴ Local Government Act 1972 s 101

²⁵ Local Government Act 1972 s 137

²⁶ Local Government Act 2000: Statutory Guidance to Welsh Local Authorities on the Power to Promote or improve Economic, Social or Environmental Well-Being para 2.1 (iii)

²⁷ Local Government Act 1972 s 139

²⁸ Charities Act 2011 Part I

²⁹ Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 (SI 2008 no. 629)

Table 1: Museum information from other countries / regions

Country	Estimated population	Rank	Estimated number of museums	Museums per 10,000 inhabitants	Rank	Estimated number of visitors	Visits per 100,000 inhabitants	Rank
Croatia ¹	4,435,056	1	221	4.96	6	2,427,000	54,801	7
Ireland ²	4,111,672	2	258	6.27	5	4,500,000	109,444	6
Lithuania ³	2,979,527	3	104	3.49	8	3,757,000	126,093	5
Wales ⁴	3,063,456	4	120	3.92	7	4,270,000	139,385	3
Galicia ⁵	2,772,927	5	76	2.80	9	Not available		
Slovenia ⁶	2,061,085	6	168	8.15	3	3,558,000	172,654	2
Latvia ⁶	2,023,825	7	144	7.10	4	2,636,000	130,248	4
Sardinia ⁷	1,675,411	8	225	13.43	2	1,579,000	94,245	7
Estonia ⁶	1,317,917	9	250	18.97	1	3,693,000	280,220	1

Sources: ¹European Group on Museum Statistics (EGMUS) (2005 figures); ²EGMUS (2005 figures), grossed figures based on surveys by Fáilte Ireland Visits Attractions Survey 2013; ³Statistics Lithuania (2013 figures); ⁴Welsh Government (2013); ⁵Statistics on Museums and Museum Collections 2012 (Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport 2014); ⁶EGMUS (2013 figures); ⁷Sintesi Statistiche sul Sistema Museale in Sardegna Anno 2011 (Regione Autonoma della Sardegna 2014)

National Funding of Museums

38. National governments in the UK provide direct funding for more than sixty museums. All are established as charities and are independent of government, and Accredited. This arrangement applies to Amgueddfa Cymru, a charity that is a Welsh Government Sponsored Body. It is governed under a Royal Charter through a Board of Trustees, appointed jointly by Amgueddfa Cymru and Welsh Ministers. Bodelwyddan Castle has a strategic partnership with the London-based National Portrait Gallery, and displays a significant group of portraits from the Gallery's 19th century collection.

39. Local museums in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland receive some support from national governments, and funding is generally distributed through government-sponsored bodies: Arts Council England (ACE), Museums Galleries Scotland and the Northern Ireland Museums Council. In Wales, support is provided directly by the Welsh Government through its Museums, Archives and Libraries Division, though this does not extend to revenue funding.

Museum Standards and Strategy in Wales

Welsh Government Museums, Archives and Libraries Division

40. The Welsh Government's Museums, Archives and Libraries Division (formerly known as CyMAL) was established in 2004 as a specialist policy division. The Division currently has around 28 members of staff, many of whom have specialist qualifications and/or expertise in the sector.

41. Its remit includes:

- advising relevant Welsh Minister(s);
- providing specialist advice and strategic support for local museums, archives and libraries;
- sponsorship of Amgueddfa Cymru and the National Library of Wales; and
- monitoring delivery of Casgliad y Werin Cymru / People's Collection Wales.

42. The Welsh Government's Museums, Archives and Libraries Division is the main provider of specialist sector training courses in Wales and administers grant schemes to support relevant Welsh Government policies and initiatives, including raising standards through the Accreditation scheme and delivery of *A Museums Strategy for Wales 2010-2015*.

43. The division also currently leads on the Welsh Government programme of activities to commemorate the centenary of the First World War, and delivery of the Welsh Government's Culture and Poverty programme.

A Museums Strategy for Wales 2010-2015

44. Wales was the first nation in the UK to publish a national strategy for museums. The strategy was developed by the Welsh Government in close consultation with the museum sector. The strategy sets out priorities for the sector under three guiding principles that underpin the place of museums in Welsh life:

- **Museums for Everyone**
Museums will contribute to living communities, promote the values of a fair and just society and provide lifelong learning opportunities for all.
- **A Collection for the Nation**
Museums will hold, care for and continue to develop collections for the nation which represent our rich and diverse culture.
- **Working Effectively**
Museums will manage their sites, operations, collections, and people more effectively to continue providing services for citizens that are relevant, robust and sustainable.

45. The strategy was the first attempt to provide an agreed direction of travel for all museums in Wales. It has been warmly welcomed and supported across the sector. Overseeing the delivery of the strategy is a steering group drawn from stakeholders, which comprises representatives from Amgueddfa Cymru, the Federation of Museums and Art Galleries of Wales, the National Trust, the Museums Association, the Association of Independent Museums, Welsh Local Government Association and the Welsh Council for Voluntary Action.

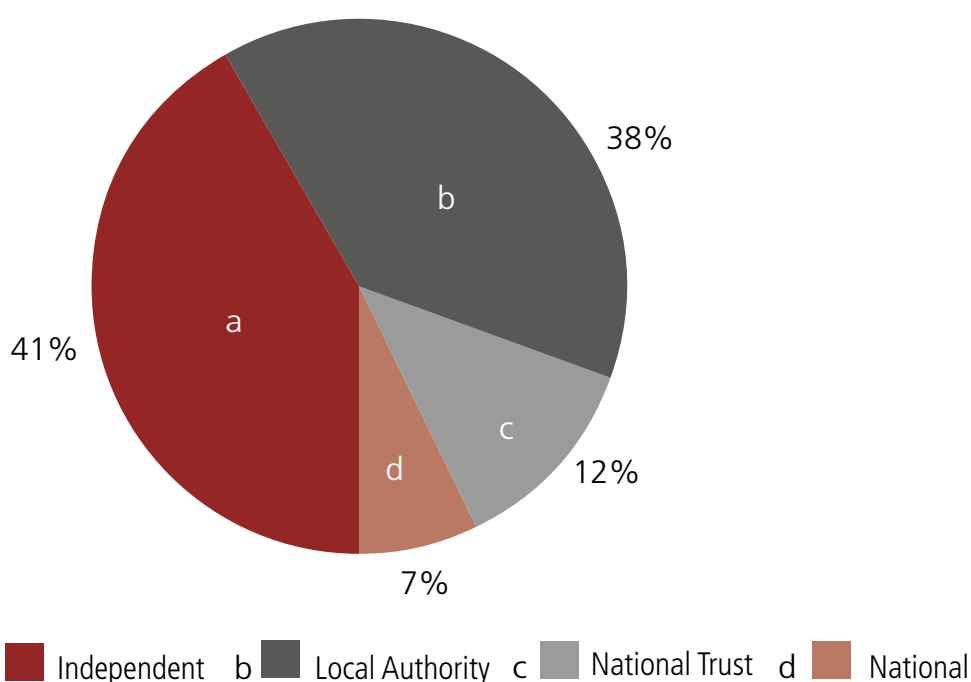
Quality Standards

46. The standards and quality systems in most frequent use in Wales are the Accreditation Scheme for Museums in the UK and Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme Cymru (VAQAS). Other relevant standards, including Investors in People,³⁰ Investing in Volunteers,³¹ PQASSO³² and EFQM³³ are available, but the cost of participation makes the achievement or maintenance of such standards beyond the means of most museums.

Accreditation Scheme for Museums in the UK

47. The Accreditation scheme sets minimum standards for museum provision. It is managed by ACE, which provides many key administrative functions, including its secretariat, and instigates any required revisions to the scheme and its processes. The government-sponsored sector organisations in other Home Nations, and the Welsh Government, through its Museums, Archives and Libraries Division, are responsible for administering the scheme in their respective countries and work in partnership with ACE. There are (at May 2015), 1,630 Accredited museums in the UK and figure 6 shows a breakdown of the 98 in Wales.

Figure 6: Number of Museums in the Accreditation Scheme by type across Wales



Source: Accreditation scheme update 5 March 2015 (Arts Council England 2015)³⁴

³⁰ Investors in People, The Journey to Accreditation (www.investorsinpeople.co.uk 2015)

³¹ The National Council for Voluntary Organisations, Investing in Volunteers (iiv.investinginvolunteers.org.uk 2015)

³² PQASSO is a quality standard developed for the third sector. It is managed by Charities Evaluation Services, part of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO). Under PQASSO, organisations are independently assessed under 12 quality areas which include planning and governance, leadership and management, users, learning, communication and evaluation. The National Council for Voluntary Organisations, Charities Evaluation Services, PQASSO (www.ces-vol.org.uk 2015)

³³ The EFQM Excellence Model is a quality assurance framework developed by the European Foundation for Quality Management (now known as EFQM). The Model is regularly reviewed and the last update was published in 2013. EFQM, The EFQM Excellence Model (www.efqm.org 2015)

³⁴ The figures were the same in May 2015.

48. Overarching requirements are set out in the Accreditation Standard,³⁵ which is supported by guidance documents detailing expectations for different types and sizes of museums. Accreditation requires museums to demonstrate compliance with agreed standards for the three characteristics of museums which are: *Organisational Health, Collections* and *Users and their Experiences*.

49. To retain Accreditation, museums must demonstrate compliance with all aspects of the standard through a return made every three years. Museums are required to inform the Welsh Government's Museums, Archives and Libraries Division of any planned significant changes to their operations. Non-compliance with scheme standards can result in Accreditation status being withdrawn. In Wales this would result in museums becoming ineligible for Welsh Government grants.

The Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme (VAQAS)

50. The Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme (VAQAS)³⁶ provides tools for tourist attraction operators to enhance quality and disseminate best practice. It offers a consumer-focused quality assessment to identify strengths and highlight developmental areas. This Visit Wales Quality Marque is only awarded to attractions that have been independently assessed against national standards. These extend visitor and user standards already reached for Museum Accreditation, and the Welsh Government's Museums, Archives and Libraries Division therefore provides funding to enable all fully Accredited museums to participate in VAQAS.

51. VAQAS does not attempt to grade attractions but assesses each attraction on its own merits and from 2014 scores are being awarded for all key areas provided by individual attractions. They must achieve 60% for all areas provided. So far, the median score for museums is 78% and only one museum has failed to meet the pass score of 60%. Key areas include pre-arrival information, initial welcome and the welcome from other staff throughout the attraction; general presentation, from entry to departure; clarity of interpretation for all visitors; quality of catering and retail (if provided); and staff efficiency, customer care and knowledge (including disability and equality awareness).

Who Visits Museums in Wales?

52. Recent data suggest that Welsh residents may be less likely to visit museums and galleries than people in the UK in general, although directly comparable figures are not available. Headline results from the National Survey for Wales 2014-15 showed that 39% of Welsh residents used museums in Wales.³⁷ In England, the Taking Part survey³⁸ showed that, in the same period, 52% of adults had visited a museum though not necessarily in England. A 2013 survey of visitors to Ceredigion Museum indicated that 44% had not visited any other museum in Wales during the last year, and only 5% had visited the Amgueddfa Cymru museums in Cardiff, and 2% its museums in Swansea and Carmarthenshire.

³⁵ *Accreditation Scheme for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom: Accreditation Standard* (Arts Council England 2015)

³⁶ *The Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme (VAQAS)* (Welsh Government 2015)

³⁷ *National Survey for Wales: Headline results, April 2014 – March 2015* (Welsh Government 2015) p40-4. Usage could include hearing a talk given by a museum curator or using a museum café or shop.

³⁸ *Taking Part 2014/15 Quarter 3 Statistical Release March 2015* (Department for Culture, Media and Sport 2015) p22

53. We estimate³⁹ the total number of visits to Welsh museums operated by governmental / not-for-profit organisations (i.e. those that have the potential to match the Museum Accreditation Standard) to have been around 4.27 million in 2013, of which around 1.34 million (31%) were to museums run directly by local authority services. This represented a 7% growth in a constant sample of museums since 2009,⁴⁰ compared to 4% for Welsh museums as whole. Factors such as the impact of 'staycations' and local authority museums offering free admission during a time of economic recession, may explain the differential.

54. Individually, local museums in Wales attract relatively low visitor numbers in absolute terms. Half of museums run by local authorities had fewer than 10,400 visits per year, and only a quarter more than 31,000. Market research suggests that, in general terms, the majority of these visits are made by Welsh residents (whether local or on holiday), who are predominantly female, from older age ranges and the ABC1 socio-economic groups).

55. Though half of overseas visitors report that they intend to make a museum visit,⁴¹ in fact they are only half as likely to visit a museum as visitors to the UK as a whole (23% as opposed to 48%),⁴² so that even those who might visit museums elsewhere are not motivated to visit a museum in Wales.

Collections

56. In total, local museums in Wales have a collective responsibility for over one million artefacts and specimens, including 603,300 in local authority museums and 440,000 in independent museums. Together with the collections held by Amgueddfa Cymru (some 4.5 million artefacts and specimens), these make up a substantial resource for the display, interpretation, study, and enjoyment of Wales' past for the public. Most of those museums that have been created over the past fifty years tend to focus on the history of the recent past either in their locality or covering a specific subject area, such as transport, though longer-established museums include significant collections of archaeology, fine and decorative art and natural sciences. Social history artefacts form, numerically, the largest proportion of local museum collections with 200,000 items, followed by photographic and archaeological collections with 165,000 and 144,000 items respectively.⁴³ Archaeology, natural science and ethnographic collections have all benefitted from Wales-wide developmental surveys.

57. Most locally held collections reflect local or specialist interests, but many also include items that have a regional, national or international significance. For example there are collections related to the Chartist Movement in Newport City Museum and Art Gallery, artwork by Sir Kyffin Williams in Oriol Ynys Môn, the first spare wheel for motor cars in Carmarthenshire Museums, material relating to Admiral Lord Nelson in Monmouth Museum, and to Robert Recorde, inventor of the mathematical

³⁹ Based on museums' returns to the annual Welsh Government survey *Visits to Tourist Attractions in Wales* (gov.wales) survey and information provided by individual museums.

⁴⁰ Based on museums' annual returns to the Welsh Government survey *Visits to Tourist Attractions in Wales* (gov.wales) from 2009 to 2013; *Spotlight on Museums 2011* (Welsh Government 2013), and information provided by individual museums.

⁴¹ *Visit Wales Visitor Survey 2013. CyMAL Booster* (Strategic Marketing 2013) p8

⁴² *Inbound Tourism to Britain's Nations and Regions* (VisitBritain 2013) p69

⁴³ *Spotlight on Museums 2011* (Welsh Government 2013) p54 and 55

equals sign, at Tenby Museum. All collections held by the Royal Mint Museum in Llantrisant are of international renown and those at the Internal Fire Museum in Ceredigion have significance well beyond Wales.

58. Not all of a museum's collections can be displayed in its exhibition galleries. Usually the majority are held in store as reserve collections, from where they can be used in other museum activities or be made available to students and researchers. These stores need to be of a standard that ensures collections are easily accessible and the conditions of the objects held will not deteriorate.

Sector support organisations

59. There are several organisations that support museums and museum professionals in Wales, some of which are organisations with a specific interest in museums, and others which have a wider remit. Brief information is provided below on some of these, though this is not an exhaustive list.

Museum and Heritage specific

60. **Federation of Museums and Art Galleries of Wales** supports museums in Wales. It is a volunteer-run membership organisation with committee posts filled by people working in or with museums in Wales. The Federation is an important partner for the Welsh Government in the delivery of the museums strategy and operates a grants scheme funded by the Welsh Government. It is the only advocacy organisation that works specifically for museums in Wales and the people who work in them.

61. **Museums Association (MA)** is a membership organisation representing museums and galleries and the people who work in them. It offers advocacy to governments, leadership on developing UK wide initiatives and development opportunities and services including professional development.

62. **Association of Independent Museums (AIM)** represents the interests of and provides targeted information and support to museums that operate independently of local authorities and national government. At a strategic level it seeks to provide a strong voice in support of AIM members and museums generally. It offers a range of resources including evidence-based advocacy materials, toolkits for impact evaluation and a series of focus papers.

63. **British Association of Friends of Museums (BAfM)** is an independent organisation established in 1973 for Friends, volunteers and supporters in museums, galleries and heritage sites and represents more than 200,000 Friends and volunteers across the UK. It offers a practical network of support from people with first-hand experience of running Friends' organisations, acts as a clearing house for common problems and their solutions, and is a central source of information about Friends for Friends.

64. **Collections Trust** is charity that assists museums, galleries, libraries and archives to improve the management and use of their collections through the provision of information and advice, developing and promoting standards in documentation and collections management, and providing opportunities for networking.

65. **Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)** is the distributor of National Lottery funds for projects aimed at preserving and making accessible the nation's heritage. It is the principal provider of investment in museums, including for acquisitions, building projects and activities.

Related organisations

66. **Welsh Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA)** provides advice and support for third sector organisations, much of which is relevant to museums and especially to the trustees of independent museums. The Welsh Government's Museums, Archives and Libraries Division is currently working with WCVA to deliver the HLF-funded *Catalyst Cymru – Heritage Fundraising Wales* programme which is targeted at the wider heritage sector. The programme aims to build confidence and effectiveness in fundraising from private donors, corporate sources and trusts and foundations.

67. **Visit Wales** is the Welsh Government's tourism arm, responsible for formulating tourism policy, encouraging investment in Wales, and improving the quality of the visitor experience. It is also responsible for marketing Wales within the UK and internationally. There are four main areas of work within Visit Wales; Marketing, Partnerships and Policy, Enterprise and Operations.

68. **The Wales Co-operative Centre** was set up by the Trades Unions around 30 years ago and is the largest development agency of its type in the UK. It is Wales' national body for co-operatives, mutuals, social enterprises and employee owned businesses. They apply co-operative values to strengthening communities and services as well as supporting these businesses.

69. **The Development Trusts Association Wales (DTA Wales)**, is the community enterprise and regeneration network for Development Trusts in Wales, and is part of a UK wide network of more than 800 development trusts. DTA Wales is an independent, practitioner-based membership organisation promoting the work of, and supporting, the growing development trust movement in Wales. Development Trusts are community based organisations that operate as community or social enterprises. DTA Wales has supported, on a consultancy basis, individual museums involved in asset transfer and developing social enterprise models. It also manages an Energy Action Group for AIM, developing group energy buying options for their members, across the UK.

Concluding comments

70. In reviewing the background to museum service delivery in Wales, we concluded that we are dealing with a small and diverse but important museum sector. In the following chapters we consider the evidence which was presented to us and begin to draw our conclusions as to the current situation and what is required to move the sector forward.



Winding House, New Tredegar
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Chapter 2: The Evidence

71. As part of our deliberations, we considered evidence from a variety of sources, and utilised it to consider the current picture in relation to a number of specific areas. These are discussed in detail within this chapter.

Audiences

72. Local museums (both those run directly by local authorities and independent) attract around two million visits each year, and this represents a 24% increase since 2004, a period during which the number of non-national museums in Wales increased by 8%. Between 2011 and 2013 the proportion of visitors to Welsh museums:

- saying that they enjoy visiting museums rose from 75% to 85%;
- believing that museums are 'friendly and welcoming places' increased from 75% to 84%; and
- responding that they are not interested in any museums dropped from 14% to 10%.

73. While there is information about the supply side of Welsh museums, evidence on the demand side is poor. Data from museums is patchy and precludes much-needed analysis of usage from demographic and other viewpoints. In particular, the amount of consistent information on local museum audiences, including schools and colleges, is pitifully small and represents a deficiency. Besides a lack of data reflecting changes in trends in museum audiences and usages, there is little published information as to whether the educational activities provided by Welsh museums genuinely result in knowledge gain, increased perception or personal development.

74. This lack of robust information makes planning and responding to public needs all the more difficult. Evidence of changing trends, of reasons for – and for not – participating in museum programmes, and barriers to engagement, tends to be localised and incomplete. This is compounded by the lack of broader data on public engagement at a strategic level in Wales, which might shed some light on socio-demographic usage and frequency of engagement.

75. Without accurate data, there can be no effective planning for community engagement, nor understanding of how best to meet the needs of marginalised or special groups. Similarly, there can be no development of effective communication on museum events and activities and delivery becomes random.

76. Much mention was made of local authority corporate policies inhibiting their museums from developing websites, and preventing engagement in direct marketing. While there is an evident gap in expertise in both these areas, this may obscure a larger problem in some cases regarding the setting of priorities. The absence of entries from local authority museums in the 2014 Wales Marketing Excellence Awards for museums, libraries and archives may indicate the scale of the problem. Without marketing plans, based on recent research, and the wherewithal for their implementation, there can be no improvement.

77. *The Museums Marketing Strategy*⁴⁴ published in 2013 identified the need to research user and non-user perception and needs, which we support. Nationally collected data that meet National Statistics standards is key to understanding both users and non-users and will enable museums to adapt their services for contemporary audiences.

Collections

78. It is universally accepted that museums are responsible for securing and safeguarding specially selected objects and specimens, along with their records, that are representative of diverse cultures and environments. They do this for the long term, and for tomorrow's generations as much as for those of today. This is a task that requires skill and foresight if the material gathered is to be truly worthwhile and relevant. Further, the complexities of caring for such material into the next century and beyond are substantial, forcing important questions about what should be recorded and collected, and what should be ignored or discarded.

79. In 2011, 41% of museum stores were already full and a further 25% were estimated to be full by 2016.⁴⁵ Moreover, many local museums seem to have ceased proactive collecting and recording altogether, so that vital evidence of life in Wales is being lost. Should this situation continue local museums in Wales may become little more than cabinets of curiosities that are increasingly remote from and irrelevant to the people of Wales.

Thus by 2016 two-thirds of the museums in Wales will have ceased to perform a core function.

80. This is not to say that the sector does not understand what needs to be done. In 2010 the Welsh Government and the museum community gave a very firm steer on what was required. The three guiding principles, published in *A Museum Strategy for Wales: Museums for Everyone, A Collection for the Nation, and Working Effectively*, were perceptive and remain fully relevant today. However, they have not led to the required results; there has been no setting of specific objectives or established programmes of work to take the sector forward.

81. As an example, the concept of the distributed national collection (DNC) was identified within the *Museums Strategy*⁴⁶ and has been discussed at both national and international events.⁴⁷ Some good practice is already apparent.⁴⁸ However, the overall impact has not been substantial and this is due to the lack of strategic management in addressing collections rationalisation and development across Wales.

82. Accreditation has had a positive impact on museums in terms of ensuring identification of what they own and what has come to them on loan. While local authorities may be the legal owners of the majority of collections held in the museums they operate, some items are on loan, and others carry terms and conditions. Although Accreditation demands a professional approach to record keeping, it does not provide any guidance on the relevance of collections, nor does it test approaches to acquisition and recording.

⁴⁴ *Museums Marketing Strategy for Wales 2013-2016. Executive Summary* (Creative Cultures Associates 2013) p7

⁴⁵ *Spotlight on Museums 2011* (Welsh Government 2013) p66

⁴⁶ *A Museum Strategy for Wales* (Welsh Government 2010) p22-23

⁴⁷ Henderson, J., Kerr, L-A., and Gwilt, D *The Distributed National Collection in Wales – Conservation on the national agenda*. In ICOM-CC 17th Triennial Conference Preprints, Melbourne, 15–19 September 2014, ed. J. Bridgland, art. 1501, 9 pp. Paris: International Council of Museums.

⁴⁸ For example, collections reviews to establish the nature and extent of natural science collections, which will be digitised and made accessible online through Casgliad y Werin Cymru – Peoples' Collection Wales (www.peoplescollection.wales), and the *doliau* project which looks at the development of Welsh national costume by studying 19th century dolls.

83. It is currently impossible to gauge what proportion of the collections held have sufficient information on their ownership, location and context to be of value. Equally, it is not clear whether museums are holding collections that are always relevant to the histories of their areas, and if not, there is a possible loss of valuable evidence that is never recorded, collected and safeguarded. The proportion of current museum collections that warrant ethically-driven systems of disposal has yet to be quantified. Such issues need to be addressed as part of a well-considered programme of collections rationalisation in accordance with the Museums Association's ethical requirements. Without this, local museums will be unable to manage collections within the space and other resources available to them.

84. We consider that a major review of collections and current approaches to collecting is essential. This would be a sizeable undertaking and could not be completed without full commitment from the local museums and dedicated funding. Leadership is essential, as is a timetable for change and access to specialist staff to achieve required objectives.

Buildings

85. Many museums in the UK are housed in accommodation that is currently unsatisfactory. Part of this problem lies in a common assumption that a good way of maintaining an historic property is to use it to house a local museum without suitable investment in its adaptation or extension.

86. Few of the buildings housing museums were purpose-built; in 2011, more than 90% of Welsh local museums were housed in protected buildings. Those few that were purpose-built as museums were designed in an era where access requirements were defined differently. The stock of museum accommodation in Wales presents a number of problems that in turn inhibit

and sometimes disable what a museum can achieve for the people of its area.

87. Many museums cannot be improved without substantial investment. Lacking this, access for visitors is restricted and there is an inability to serve specific, often marginalised, groups. This also presents a barrier to change or improve exhibitions, expand the range of activities, provide adequate access to research collections, or create proper museum storage.

88. The future of local authority museums in Wales cannot be progressed without a realistic approach to their accommodation. This may well require a rationalisation of stores and changed approaches to reserve collections. It will mean differentiating from historic buildings that need to function as such and those historic buildings that can suitably house museums with all that means in terms of their ancillary functions.

89. A building's listed status is not an argument for doing nothing. There are a number of excellent examples across the UK of museums in historic properties that have been adapted to meet the requirements of their audiences. Such work requires investment and imagination.

Finance

90. In 2013/14 national and local government spent £33.6 million on museums and galleries in Wales, of which £9.3 million (28%) was spent as current expenditure by local councils, whether on the museums they operate directly, or support through grant aid. Additionally, £3.7 million was spent under the heading of 'heritage', which includes the management and maintenance of historic buildings, and initiatives or services designed to develop or maintain an awareness of local history, which often comes within the scope of the local museum service. Table 2 provides detail on local authority income and expenditure on museums and galleries and heritage for 2013/14.

Table 2: Local authority income and expenditure on museums and heritage 2013/14

		Museums and Galleries £ millions	Heritage £ millions	TOTAL £ millions
	INCOME			
	Admissions, sales and charges	1.080	4.224	5.304
	Other income	0.421	0.700	1.121
A	Total Income*	1.501	4.924	6.425
	EXPENDITURE			
	Direct spend on employees and services	-9.498	-7.761	-17.259
	Central and departmental support	-1.358	-0.946	-2.304
B	Total Expenditure	-10.856	-8.707	-19.563
	NET CURRENT EXPENDITURE	-9.355	-3.783	-13.138
C	<i>less specific and government grants*</i>	0.605	0.885	1.490
	NET EXPENDITURE	8.750	2.898	11.648
	<i>*Income from all sources (A + C)</i>	2.106	5.809	7.915

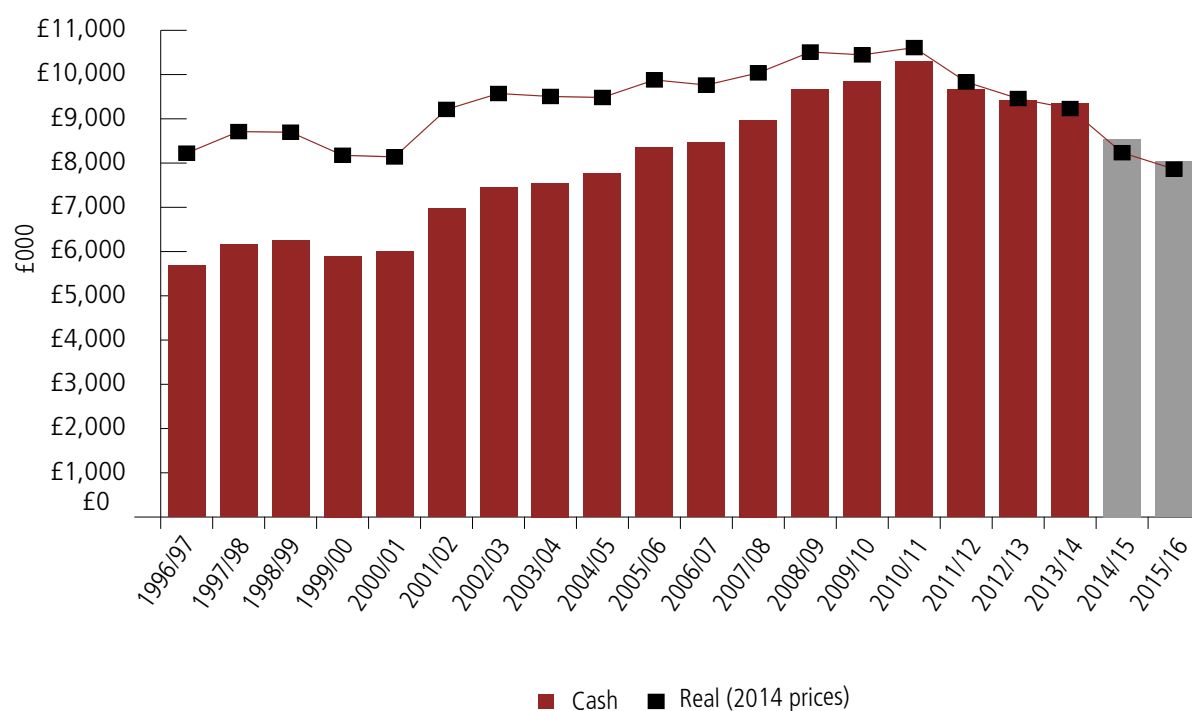
Source: Revenue Outturn Forms, Local Government Finance Statistics (Welsh Government 2014. Unpublished)

91. Welsh local government spends £3.03 per head of population on museums and galleries which is less than both Scotland (£7.84) and England (£3.61). The support of museums and galleries represents a marginal cost for Welsh councils: between 2004/05 and 2013/14 it averaged 3% of their total revenue spend on culture, heritage and sport, and was 0.13% of total council expenditure.



Newtown Textile Museum
© Crown copyright (2014) Visit Wales

Figure 7: Local Authority expenditure on museums and galleries 1996–2014



Source: *Local Government Financial Statistics for Wales 1996/07–2013/14*,⁴⁹ *2014/15–2015/16 spending plans of a sample of local authorities*

92. Figure 7 shows net expenditure by local authorities in both cash and real terms from 1996 to 2014, with forecasts for the two years that follow. The period until 2010 is characterised by real-terms growth of 24%, though this is more a reflection of additional commitments than increased spend on existing activities. Thereafter, to 2014, net expenditure fell by 14%, and forward projections to 2015/16 suggest a further fall of 15% will be experienced during those years. Within this general trend there is a wide variety of experience. Some authorities have maintained (and in a few cases increased) the value of spend during the past ten years, while others have cut museum budgets by as much as 50%.

93. While the projections in figure 7 may prove to be pessimistic, forecasts by the Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) suggest that, even if public expenditure started to grow again, the need for both the Welsh Government and local authorities to make difficult choices will continue. The calls on health and social services budgets from an ageing population lead IFS to suggest that, even from an optimistic perspective, spending on cultural services might be 24% less in real terms in 2025/26 than it was in 2013/14.⁵⁰ Cuts of this magnitude applied to museums would result in funding being on the same level in real terms as in the 1950s, when the number of council-run museums was only a quarter of that of today.

⁴⁹ *Welsh Local Government Financial Statistics* (Welsh Government 1998–2013)

⁵⁰ Deaner, B. & Phillips, D. *Scenarios for the Welsh Government Budget to 2025–26* (Institute for Fiscal Studies 2013)

94. Current arrangements provide no scope for a strategic approach to reductions of expenditure on this scale. The oldest museums often have a higher cost base because they tend to contain large collections that include material from outside their own area. This makes them particularly vulnerable. While local museums have a special significance for their own communities, those that hold material of wider importance to cultural life and scientific enquiry, both in Wales and beyond, should have a special place in the patrimony of Wales.

95. Low visitor numbers mean that the capacity to generate real profit from trading activities (such as retail and catering) is limited. Turnover derived from trading activities usually represents costs recovered rather than profit, and it is likely that, after expenses are deducted, few make a substantial contribution to running costs. Many councils appear to regard the income achieved as trivial, to the extent that income-generating activities have been curtailed as a consequence of spending cuts, so that earned income reduced by 22% in cash terms from 2010/11 to 2013/14.

96. Overall, local authority museums recover around 19% of their expenditure from a number of sources. Admission fees, sales and charges contributed £1,080 million in 2013/14, or around 80p per visitor. While the majority of local authority museums reflect Welsh Government policy, which is that entry to Amgueddfa Cymru should be free, those councils that do charge (and in 2011 a third of local authority museums in Wales did so⁵¹) generate the largest income. There is considerable variation in the admission charged by local authorities, with a family ticket typically ranging

between £9 and £18. In 2011 only 11% of charging local authority museums believed the monies collected were greater than the costs of making the charge.⁵²

97. A few council-run museums benefit from investments and other funds associated with charitable trusts, or from property rental income which, with other sundry income, contributed £0.421 million, or 20% of museum and gallery income from all sources, in 2013/14. Government grants and funding from National Lottery distributors provided 29% of income from all sources (£0.605 million). Between 2004 and 2014 the Welsh Government Museums, Archives and Libraries Division, either directly or through the agency of the Federation of Museums and Galleries of Wales, awarded grants totalling £5.2 million, of which £2.8 million went to local authority museum services. Without grants such as these many museums would find it impossible to conduct their core business.

Investment

98. Museums need to be dynamic places if they are to retain public interest and remain a relevant part of local lives. This means continuous investment in exhibitions and buildings, in the context of challenge and rightful expectation of better service.

99. Since 1996, capital spend by local authorities on museums has averaged around £2 million each year – about 0.2% of total local authority capital spend. This equates to around £40k per museum per year. The majority of council-run museums have not applied for long-term investment in their product.

⁵¹ *Spotlight on Museums 2011* (Welsh Government 2013) p79

⁵² *Spotlight on Museums 2011* (Welsh Government 2013) p96

100. Since it was set up in 1994, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has contributed over £1 billion to UK museums. However, it has only made awards totalling some £24 million to local museums in Wales, of which two-thirds has gone to local authority museum services. Of these, £13 million was awarded to projects that were substantially of a capital nature, and of which £5 million has been awarded since 2010. Taking into account lottery-funded capital spend by Arts Council Wales on gallery developments, notably at the Glynn Vivian Gallery in Swansea, the total lottery-funded investment in Welsh museum and gallery buildings, exhibits and visitor services is around £15 million, or an average of £750k per annum since 1995.

101. By any standard, investment in the local museums in Wales, from whatever sources, has been small scale. This has done little to improve the quality of what Welsh museums offer, especially in relation to the developments that have taken place elsewhere in the UK.

102. Change and development of local museums in Wales needs to be driven by a clear vision of what they should be delivering to the people of Wales. Significant capital investment is needed, but this has to be based on excellent strategic planning and high operational standards, aimed at fulfilling a set of well-defined priorities. Without this, local museums in Wales will continue to decline, both in terms of their public offer and the well-being of their collections.

Fundraising

103. Most local authority museum services in Wales are heavily reliant on grant funding. Most of this comes from government funding, whether from central or local government, or National Lottery distributors. Otherwise, fundraising is limited to contributions by Friends groups and the proceeds of donations boxes, where they exist.

104. Few local authority run museums in Wales have a strategic approach to fundraising, and indeed council financial management systems can act as a barrier. Two local museums have an associated development trust, the purpose of which is to develop individual giving to support the museum (maximising the benefit from Gift Aid), to seek legacies, and to attract contributions from trusts and foundations. Development trusts, and indeed Friends groups, can represent powerful external pressure groups as they have control over the development resources they create.

105. Fundraising also requires resources. The current capacity available within museums means Welsh Government and smaller HLF activity grants are probably the only opportunities within reach. The number of awards from museum-sector bodies is relatively small, and those from trusts and foundations negligible. Such contributions probably total less than £50,000 each year, and in some years substantially less.

106. Fundraising for Welsh charities is challenging (a recent survey has shown that in general charitable giving in Wales is lower than anywhere else in the UK⁵³). Income from individual and corporate giving to the four largest cultural charities based in Wales in 2013/14⁵⁴ was £6.629 million, and cost £1.202 million to raise, an invest to

⁵³ Third Sector, *Fundraising survey: Giving is still strong - but what about trust?* (www.thirdsector.co.uk 2015) p32

⁵⁴ Amgueddfa Cymru (includes value of heritage assets given), Wales Millennium Centre, Welsh National Opera (includes sponsorship) and National Library of Wales.

earn ratio of 1 : 5. These funds represented a modest 7% of the gross income of these charities. The potential for achievement is so much less in smaller organisations where, without dedicated fundraisers, there is difficulty not only in committing time to fundraising against the pressures of other needs, but also in managing the time pressures associated with the completion of complex funding packages. If it decides to employ an experienced fundraiser, even if on a part-time basis, a museum needs to be confident of raising at least £30k in unrestricted funds, merely to meet its fundraising overheads.

107. The position is even more challenging for museums run by local authorities. Many people see the funding of museums as a call on public expenditure rather than their own pockets, and local people may be unlikely to be enthusiastic about voluntary contributions on top of what they pay as council tax. Modern techniques of fundraising such as crowd funding are likely to be less successful in those museums that cannot offer traction to the appeal by offering a reward for their gift. This is often based on free admission, which is not an option for a non-charging local authority museum.

Workforce and Networks

108. We were struck not only by the dedication of the specialist staff we met, but also by how many were remote from access to best practice in the sector. Past reports on museums in Wales⁵⁵ have referred to museum workers being remote not only from each other, but from awareness of mainstream museum developments elsewhere. It is generally recognised that such isolation risks the capability of staff and the quality of the museum offer. While

a number of factors, including the internet, have helped to mitigate isolation in the museum workforce, the horizons of many who run Welsh museums are narrow. In the words of one museum worker, 'we need to get out more'.

109. In terms of training, the main provider of specialist sector training courses in Wales is the Welsh Government, through its Museums, Archives and Libraries Division. All courses offered are free and are open to anyone who works in Accredited museums whether paid or as a volunteer. They cover a wide range of subjects from change management to disaster planning, collections care to volunteer management. The programme is based on an annual survey of training needs combined with advice from advisers. There is no requirement to attend and courses are generally not credit bearing.

110. Using funding from the Welsh Government, the Federation of Museums and Art Galleries of Wales offers training and development grants to support the museum workforce to undertake specialist training, such as the Associateship of the Museums Association, or engage in networking through attending sector conferences. No assessment has been carried out to determine whether this resource is being spent effectively and whether the level of spend is sufficient.

111. There is no route to a recognised museum qualification through the Higher Education sector in Wales, nor is there an effective route to advancement through NVQs. The sector contains many committed individuals, but they do not have the opportunity to reach their potential and this is a loss for Wales. Agored Cymru has, however, now developed new level 4 and 5 NVQs related to collections management.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Morris, Prof. B., Standing Commission on Museums and Galleries *Report on Museums in Wales* (Her Majesty's Stationery Office 1981) p38

⁵⁶ Agored Cymru, Qualification Directory (www.agored.cymru, 2015)

112. UK-wide organisations such as the Museums Association and the Association of Independent Museums have made conscious efforts to make their programmes and activities accessible to those who work in Wales. The Federation of Museums and Art Galleries of Wales has become a vital part of the Welsh museum sector, facilitating communication and contacts on a self-help basis. Yet it remains disappointing that attendance at meetings and conferences by Welsh museum staff outside Wales is often reliant on grant-aid from external funders.

113. In addition there is no system of, or requirement for, Continuous Professional Development other than CPD Plus operated by the Museums Association⁵⁷ and there are few opportunities for secondments, mentoring or work shadowing.

114. We are aware of the gradual erosion of specialist collections posts that has taken place in recent years. The need for the recent *Taxonomy and Taxidermy: Linking Natural Science Collections in Wales* project, funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation through the Museums Association, was generated by the loss of almost all the natural science posts in local museums across Wales. While not every museum requires a natural scientist on the staff, there is a need for such expertise to be available to museums with relevant collections. There are similar issues affecting other collection types, including archaeology. Sharing expertise, not only in connection with collections, but related to other museum functions, could be done through partnership arrangements.

115. Many respondents referred to partnership both as a means of meeting current pressures and enabling future sustainability. There are a number of informal networks across Wales, and these

offer an opportunity for sector professionals to share experiences and develop joint working. North Wales has been particularly strong in partnership initiatives over the years but these have relied on external funding, at the end of which projects either wind up or go into limbo.

116. Joint working of this type requires no substantial sharing of resources and risks. In some cases project outcomes have not always been evaluated to the extent necessary to make a persuasive case for continuation. While middle management officer level conversations continue, sometimes leading to commissioning reports from leading museum consultants that encourage progress, the level of engagement by senior management or Elected Members necessary to convert words into action seems invariably to be absent. Nor is partnership working in single areas such as education, marketing, or temporary exhibitions a solution in itself. One distinguished museum consultant commented that 'if a museums service is not sustainable now, collaboration on some aspects will not make it so and minor tinkering will not ensure sustainability'.

117. Overall, there is a lack of opportunity to develop and demonstrate the skills and leadership required to drive services forward. Arguably, this has diminished the ability to attract and retain high-quality staff and contributed to the lack of profile of museums within local authorities and their slide down through the organisational structure.

118. Volunteers also play a key role in the delivery of museum provision and their contribution should not be underestimated. The independent sector, in particular, relies upon them and 16 independent museums are run solely by volunteers with no paid staff.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Museums Association, Professional Development (*Museumsassociation.org* 2015)

⁵⁸ *Spotlight on Museums 2011* (Welsh Government 2013) p73

119. The National Trust, an independent charitable trust, is one of the major single employers of paid professional staff in Wales, with 400-500 staff (full and part-time). It has an enviable reputation in attracting volunteers and providing excellent and varied opportunities, including working holidays as well as providing excellent training and support. In 2015 volunteers in Wales provided over a quarter of a million hours of time. Paid staff are required to manage volunteers, and must have the skills and confidence to do so. The National Trust has stated that it never replaces paid staff with volunteers and that it could continue to operate at a basic level without volunteer input.

120. Local authority museums also have volunteers and good examples of volunteer practice and projects, offering their volunteers a range of skills and opportunities. They tend to be fewer in number than within the independent sector, but are clearly valued for the commitment and expertise that they bring.

121. We believe that individuals working in museums should feel they are part of a wider sector and we hold the view that an independent assessment of sector workforce development needs to be undertaken. It should consider the strategic needs of the museum sector in Wales, identifying the gaps in knowledge, skills and expertise. This is of particular importance given the transformation of the museum sector proposed in this report.

Structures

122. Museum provision across Wales is highly fragmented in terms of governance, delivery mechanisms, and workforce. Within the local authority system, museum services sit in a variety of different departments which themselves have undergone almost continuous change since the 1970s. The days when a museum constituted a separate operating unit, with its head reporting to a committee of the council, are long gone. The advent of the cabinet system of governance has led to decision-making moving from committees to individual executive / cabinet members or senior management under schemes of delegation.

123. Thus museums find themselves a unit within one of a small number of multi-functional council departments, aligned with services that are based on different business and operating models. The most senior museum officer within many authorities is at third tier or lower, far removed from the key decision makers in the authority. The consequence of these arrangements is the corporate invisibility of most museums run by local authorities in Wales.

124. The 1996 reorganisation of local government exacerbated these difficulties. The disaggregation of the larger county councils into unitary authorities, often based on the administrative areas of former district councils, brought with it budget pressures as well as a loss of service specific expertise at a senior level. This already unsatisfactory situation became untenable following the post-2010 reductions in public expenditure. The position has now been reached where a growing number of local authorities wish to cease to provide museums as a directly managed service. A number of councils are developing trusts as a means of limiting their financial responsibility, without necessarily ceding control.

125. Whilst local authority structures within which museums are located seem no longer fit for purpose, there is also an absence of regional and national infrastructure. This infrastructure is necessary to provide strategic direction, availability of expertise and coordination of services, especially across authority boundaries. While the Welsh Government provides support and advice, as well as some strategic direction through its Museums, Archives and Libraries Division, and its Museums Strategy, this is reliant on a small team of specialists. There can be no guarantee that this will continue in its current form.

126. We conclude that there is a need to develop a new structure that provides strategic and operational support to local museums in Wales. This structure should not be limited by current local authority boundaries and should have a national and regional focus, while delivery is retained at the local level, where it is most valued and able to meet community needs.

Governance and Management

127. Currently many local museums are facing the most significant pressure on funding they have ever experienced. At the same time, people's expectations are changing. Within this environment, different models for delivering (non-statutory) museum services are being considered and implemented.

128. Changes to the type of governing body are nothing new; Swansea Museum has been run by a learned society as a charity, a university and local authority at different times in its 169-year history. The wide powers available to local authorities enable alternatives to direct provision. Two museum organisations (Torfaen

Museum Trust and Bodelwyddan Castle Trust) were formerly local authority services that, in 1978 and 1994 respectively, were devolved to specially-created charities. In both cases some or all of the assets remained the property of the respective council, but strategy, policy and operation were ceded to the museums.

129. However, changes are taking place in the current configuration of local authority museums. More recently, in 2015, Merthyr Tydfil's museums transferred to a newly-created leisure trust, and similar changes are proposed elsewhere. Such bodies include a wide range of cultural, sporting and other activities. The relatively small scale of museum operations within a culture / leisure trust's operations can transfer the difficulties they face within local authorities, while potentially placing an additional barrier in making a case for support to the council.

130. For those museums remaining as directly-provided services, the priorities of local authorities are increasingly the statutory functions that consume the bulk of their resources. Museum services therefore operate at their margins, and are often invisible in a council's corporate structure. Most decision-making takes place at management level, and consideration of policy by Elected Members is infrequent. Museums rarely warrant a separate budget line which, together with a lack of visible performance reporting, contributes to a transparency deficit.

131. Effective governance requires the four elements of foresight, strategy, management oversight and accountability.⁵⁹ Currently it is questionable whether the governance of local authority museums in Wales matches these requirements. Nor does the future offer any certainty of improvement. Local government in Wales is

⁵⁹ Babbidge, Adrian *Successful Governance in Independent Museums* (Association of Independent Museums 2013) p3

in flux, with a major reorganisation on the horizon. The trend appears to be towards bigger councils that prioritise statutory functions, reconfiguration of organisational structures, alignment of activities with those of other public authorities, and commissioning (and sometimes decommissioning) services. There is a risk that these trends will aggravate, rather than improve, the situation.

132. The small scale of museums means they are more likely to have synergies with other museums in adjacent counties than elsewhere within their sponsoring authority. Even councils with the largest administrative area have some functions that are so small in scale it makes more sense for a number of authorities to act co-operatively with others than to go it alone.

133. There is already some experience in Wales of working on this basis in the heritage sector, the partnership between Swansea City Council and Amgueddfa Cymru to operate the National Waterfront Museum in Swansea, and the joint archives services in Glamorgan and Gwent being the most noteworthy. However, we saw little evidence of extending this type of co-operation in the museum sector.

134. We are firmly of the opinion that the current state of the local museum sector in Wales means that its future governance is too urgent a matter to wait on implementing a final decision on the future local government structure. While we acknowledge that there are several options open to local authorities, what must underpin future arrangements is the fundamental need to protect the heritage of Wales to encourage effective decision-making, transparency and accountability and to deliver excellence to the public.

Organisational Culture

135. Over the last decade museum staff, along with the public sector generally, have had to deal with substantial reductions in the resources at their disposal. There are examples of creative and imaginative thinking that have mitigated some of the impact of cuts. However, museums are a low priority for local authorities in Wales; consequently, they are generally on the periphery of corporate structures and at the edge of their policy range. This has inhibited the development of effective museum strategies and resulted in constraints on those employed to run museums. There appears to be little ambition for local museums in Wales from the authorities responsible for them. In turn, staff feel remote from decision making and are unable to influence change.

136. This has resulted in a culture of provision that is slow to react, subject to short-term thinking, and unable to take risks. We heard that morale is low, resulting in an inability to be ambitious and innovative. There is a significant loss of confidence and direction. We also discovered that museums appear to be a poor fit in many of the local authority structures, which has disempowered effective forward planning and opportunities to develop good practice. Overall, local authority museums in Wales are not moving forward. There can be no future for local museums in Wales without a profound shift in their organisational culture, the introduction of SMART⁶⁰ strategies and operational requirements that go far beyond what is in place at the present time.

⁶⁰ Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely.

Accreditation and Performance

137. To retain Accreditation, museums must demonstrate compliance with all aspects of the standard by completing a return every three years. In the interim, museums are required to inform the Welsh Government's Museums, Archives and Libraries Division of any planned significant changes to their operations. More recently, museum staff have had to do this retrospectively, as they have not always been consulted on planned changes.

138. While Accreditation is a crucial method of ensuring that basic standards are met, its main strength, that it sets minimum standards that any museum must meet, is also a limitation. It does not establish targets for continuous improvement, nor provide any means of measurement that enables a museum to demonstrate how it is delivering on set areas of its work. We are of the view that, while Accreditation must remain as a minimum standard, a system of quality measurement is also required.

139. The development of a benchmark to define quality requirements is one way to address some of the shortcomings outlined. This would need to be maintained through a robust system of performance review and measurement of achievement. It would inevitably involve more rigorous self-assessment and compulsory training. Its adoption and implementation would assure governing bodies, Welsh Ministers and the public that local museums are delivering.

Responsibility

140. The process of the review has brought this issue into startling focus. Despite letters from the Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism, and the Chair of the Expert Panel, to local authority Leaders and Chief Officers, there was little engagement in the Review from any Elected Members or corporate directors. Rather, it was the museum officers who participated though they have neither the status nor the means to champion change within their authority.

141. In chapter 1, comparison was drawn with a number of other European countries and regions (table 1). This comparison is taken further in table 3, looking at where responsibility for local museums services lies. It should be borne in mind that many of these nations were part of the Soviet Bloc and are re-emerging nations for whom their culture and history are of crucial importance in expressing their identity.



Lloyd George Museum, Llanystumdwy
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Table 3: Characteristics of local museums systems in European countries and autonomous regions

Country	Legislative Framework	State-managed museums system	Registration/ Accreditation scheme	State Council/ Committee	State Revenue Funding	Project Grants
Ireland			•	(1)		•
Croatia	•	•	•	•	•	
Wales			•		(3)	•
Galicia	•	•	•	(2)	•	•
Lithuania	•	•	•	•	•	•
Sardinia	•	•	•	•	•	•
Slovenia	•		•		•	•
Latvia	•	•	•	•	•	•
Estonia	•	•			•	•

Notes: (1) Heritage Council (2) Cultural Council (3) Central Government support grant may be applied to museum services

142. This demonstrates that Wales and Ireland belong to a different tradition compared to the other nations. Neither has a legislative basis that embraces all museums, and although central government sponsors national institutions and provides modest funding for some projects in local museums, there is no support for revenue budgets in local museums. This is a very different arrangement from the other members of the group, which share the following characteristics in all or most cases:

- a statutory basis for museum activity, usually based on primary legislation or decree;
- a museums system that connects museums, whether by geography or type (and sometimes both);

- a council or advisory committee appointed by ministers to advise both them and the museums on good practice and how to respond to key issues;
- a state-operated accreditation / evaluation system that sets standards (sometimes statute-based) which is a prerequisite for financial support; and
- revenue funding by central government for key local museums, as well as project grants to take forward specific projects.

143. These characteristics are not just a feature of smaller nations and regions, but represent an administrative tradition that is well established in many European nations. This contrasts with the position in Wales where, rather than being seen as a valued social asset, museums seem to be viewed by almost all local authorities as a liability and a responsibility they feel unable to discharge to an appropriate

standard within the current funding climate. This applies as much to museums that have been recently created with substantial investment of public and other funds, as to long established museums and galleries that have been at the heart of their local communities for a century or more.

144. It is our view that local authorities collectively are unable to deliver on this responsibility alone. If Wales is to be seen to take its own culture seriously, then responsibility for it needs to be taken at the highest level. We believe Welsh Ministers should accept local museums as national cultural assets that require direction, resourcing and, if necessary, legislation to ensure ongoing and long-term protection of the national inheritance and maximisation of its public benefit.

Concluding comments

145. The evidence presented in this chapter shows local museums in difficulty with major challenges that need to be addressed. Changes are required in almost every area of activity if the sector is to flourish in future. We have seen some good examples of developments but these are exceptions. Other parts of the sector are static whilst decline seems to be a dominant theme for many. The evidence presented to us by the sector has not been inspiring and very few individuals could address wider issues beyond their own responsibilities. Two questions became evident during our evaluation of the evidence: where are the measurable good practices? What are the options for change to address current challenges? These two issues are discussed in the next chapter.



Bodelwyddan Castle
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Chapter 3: Evaluation

146. At an early stage, it became clear that we needed to determine the extent to which museums in Wales were succeeding or failing. We needed to identify if there was a tipping point between museum provision that was meeting reasonable expectations and that which was falling short. In tandem, we had to determine and appraise what options for change were available to local authorities.

An Appraisal of Local Museum Provision in Wales

147. As part of the review process we visited a number of local museums in Wales. There are examples of achievement, with committed community involvement and a clear sense of drive and purpose. Such museums are proactive and resourceful organisations, with clear objectives, and make the most of opportunities, especially when external funding can be secured.

148. However, it is also true that too many were found to be disappointing. In these, faults found included: lack of basic housekeeping; rudimentary exhibition standards; poor grasp of how best to derive meaning from the collections; displays that were at best simplistic; stereotypical rather than insightful collections; and minimal educational provision and work with marginalised groups.

149. We needed to have some indication of museum quality to inform the report and we sought measures by which the quality and relative stability of local authority museums in Wales could be assessed and understood. We evolved a means to provide an indication of quality and standards and tested these levels against a sample of 52 Accredited museums that are either directly run, or supported by, local government in Wales. The sample also included a representative selection of eight independent museums which received indirect local authority support in 2010.⁶¹ Indirect support could include:

- support for independent museums from professional staff;
- discretionary non-domestic rate relief;
- free or peppercorn occupancy of council owned buildings; and / or
- fees to provide educational activities for school groups.

150. Ideally, we would have liked to have available some rigorous measurement of standards, against agreed national criteria, based on regular inspection and independent scrutiny, as is common in a number of areas of public life, not least education. However, for the museum sector, no such system exists in Wales nor indeed has been developed in the UK. The assessment used information from the Welsh Government's Spotlight 2011 survey, along with 2013 visit figures, plus indicative spend and end of 2014 season satisfaction ratings from TripAdvisor.

⁶¹ Based on responses to *Spotlight on Museums 2011* (Welsh Government 2013)

151. Other measures could have been added, but were precluded through lack of data. For example, we would have liked to include information on educational use of local museums, but this was not fully available and where it was, its reliability was in doubt. Some correlation of information on visitor profiles with the size and demographic profile of the communities being served by the museums would also have been valuable. Similarly, informed analysis of the relevance of collections; details of activities that involved worthwhile recording; work with different audiences; or educational impact, would have been beneficial, but was not easily available.

152. Museum Accreditation is, and remains, a means of recognising the achievement of minimum standards. It is not, nor is it intended to be, an absolute guarantee of the quality, relevance, or effectiveness of any museum. Notwithstanding the importance of Accreditation, in the context of this Review we were not content with it either as the sole measure of quality, or as evidence of stability. This was in part due to the unambiguous indicators of difficulty signalled in a wide variety of independent consultants' reports on museums in Wales, as well as in evidence given directly to us.

153. We were faced with a view of local authority museums in Wales that indicated systemic shortcomings on a significant scale. In this, Accreditation may have militated against greater failures, but it could not have prevented the decline in the quality of provision.

154. The results from our assessment must be taken as indicative, rather than absolute. Nevertheless, they were not altogether surprising. They reflected much of the commentary given in a number of independent reports, as well as evidence submitted within the Review, along with our own experience of visiting a sample of the museums in Wales.

155. The assessment system was based on four levels of provision, which are as follows and the information is pulled together in table 4.

Sustained provision

156. Those museums that were deemed, in general terms, to be sustained demonstrated this through:

- progressive, strategic and proactive collecting and recording;
- planned storage capacity;
- exhibition programmes with regular planned updates; and
- pro-active collection management.

157. The assessment indicated that 25% of the 52 institutions listed were sustained; just 13 in all. The average local government spend on each of the sustained museums in 2013 was £258,923. Their visitor figures were an average of 61,455 visits in 2013. Visitor satisfaction on TripAdvisor was 91% positive. This was the lead group of local museums in Wales. This is not to say that provision in these museums could not be improved, but it did indicate a quality of provision not evident elsewhere.

Passive provision

158. Those museums that were deemed, in general terms, to be passive indicated this through having:

- minimal passive collecting and recording;
- very limited storage capacity;
- limited collection management; and
- little change to exhibitions.

159. The assessment demonstrated that 46% of the 52 institutions listed were passive; in effect, 24 in all. The average local government spend on each of the passive museums in 2013 was £157,426. There were, on average, 18,545 visits in 2013, and TripAdvisor visitor satisfaction was 80%. This represented the greater proportion of local museums in Wales.

Unsustainable provision

160. Those which were deemed in general terms to be unsustainable which demonstrated this through:

- no or hardly any collecting and recording;
- full or near full stores;
- exhibitions unchanged for over 5 years; and
- passive approach to collection management

161. The assessment demonstrated that 10% of the 52 institutions listed were unsustainable; in effect, five in all. The average local government spend on each of the unsustainable museums in 2013 was £30,875 and there were, on average, 12,777 visits that year. TripAdvisor visitor satisfaction was 64%.

Unclassified

162. During assessment of the 52 museums, we identified 10 that are primarily historic properties where the building, fixtures and fittings are as, or more, important than the collections held and therefore have limited museum functions. In this regard, they are considered peripheral to the report. This constituted 19% of the establishments on the list. They present a different set of issues and concerns and therefore would need to be considered separately by those with experience in the built environment.

Table 4: Breakdown of assessment sample

Museum Provider	Sustained	Passive	Unsustained	Unclassified	Total sample
Directly managed by a local authority	10	14	5	9	38
Managed by an independent trust but reliant on core funding from a local authority	2	4			6
Managed by an independent trust but in receipt of indirect support from a local authority	1	6		1	8
Total	13	24	5	10	52
% of Total	25%	46%	10%	19%	100%
Average local government spend 2013	£258,923	£157,426	£30,875		
Visit figures	61,455	18,545	12,777		
TripAdvisor rating	91%	80%	64%		

163. In addition to the 52 museums considered in the sample, two local authorities directly fund museum support services. This provision is acknowledged but was not considered appropriate for the sustainability assessment.

Further Analysis

164. In essence, only a quarter of the local museums in Wales are operating at the level it is reasonable to expect of a funded, professionally-run service. Not surprisingly, these were the better-funded museums and the ones that received greater visitor satisfaction. The rest, which amount to just over half of local authority museum provision in Wales that can be defined as such, fall below a reasonable expectation of the level of quality one should expect from a local authority. Passive approaches are likely to damage the cultural record of Wales and will certainly be short-changing communities on the kind of museum service they might expect.

165. This picture raises questions about local government commitment to and funding of museums, not least the capacity to recruit and retain appropriate staff, with the skill range needed to take museums forward for Wales. There are questions too about the degree to which the level of physical and other resources essential to the delivery of effective museum services has been properly provided.

166. Alongside issues of funding, there appear to be a range of deep-rooted problems, for example: in strategic direction and the setting of priorities; appropriate training and development of staff; decision making and advocacy at all levels; informed retail, grant and fund-raising experience; and ability to engage with both educational and community providers.

167. In the midst of all this are the people of Wales who deserve greater reassurance of the care of their histories. In many instances, the wealth of collections relating to Wales and the world, collected in the name of the people of Wales, are at risk.

Options for future service delivery

168. From the evidence provided and the conclusions arrived at, we identified and considered a number of possible options for the way forward. These are described below.

Option 1 – Do Nothing

169. Museums provision in Wales has developed in an unstructured way over the past one hundred and fifty years. Rooted in communities of place, reflecting local appetite for museums, and controlled by local people, they have demonstrated adaptability in responding to changing circumstances. However, current arrangements do not recognise that collections in Welsh museums, as a key part of the national inheritance, have an importance beyond the administrative boundary of the local authority that funds them. This importance is to the people of Wales as a whole, and the Welsh diaspora.

170. Welsh museums are small, and there is an argument that there is benefit from economies of scale from managing them conjointly within other local cultural services (e.g. libraries, arts and archives), whether these are delivered directly by a council or through a leisure trust, or through funding relationships with independent museums. Many local authority museums in Wales are already run on this basis.

171. However, when part of conglomerate structures, whether within a local authority or outside, the small scale of museum services often leads to their being marginalised to the extent of invisibility. As their business model is often different to other functions with which they are co-located, the structures in which they find themselves are often inappropriate; for example, what in a corporate sense may be regarded as synergies (e.g. museum galleries in branch libraries) are often merely tokenism that falls below what would be considered as adequate museum provision.

172. Future trends in public administration are likely to see many local authorities covering larger areas that will separate control and management of their museums from the communities in which they were founded. Some museums, barely visible to their governing bodies, and already in a debilitated state, face continuing pressures on local authority funding for the foreseeable future.

173. Evidence suggests that a cycle of decline has already started which will at best lead to 'zombie' museums where funding would only be sufficient to maintain collections, with no 'doing money' for improvement, activities and events that encourage access by the widest audience. The consequence will be waning interest, which will lead in turn to further funding cuts and to closures.

174. As one consultee remarked, neglect is as effective in destroying cultural heritage as picks, drills and sledgehammers, albeit less visible and more protracted. Doing nothing is only an option if the Welsh Government disowns responsibility for the national cultural inheritance.

Option 2 – Legislation & State Care

175. The museums of most European nations and autonomous regions of a similar size to Wales operate under a legislative framework, which typically include some or all of the following elements:

- a definition of what is meant by museum;
- an assertion of the responsibilities of the government concerned;
- creation of an executive or advisory committee in respect of the legislative requirements;
- the basis on which government-funded museums are to operate;
- recognition by the government of standards under which museums should operate;
- regulation of the process of documentation and disposal; and
- an indemnity scheme for loaned material.

176. Traditionally, UK legislation has focused on the governance of national institutions and enabling local authorities to run museums, rather than creating a strategic and ethical framework. Irrespective of other considerations, there is a case for the Welsh Government to provide a coherent approach to safeguarding Welsh cultural property, and for Ministers to have a formal responsibility rather than be expected to respond to situations, often at short notice, in an ad hoc manner.

177. How far the current approach to legislation fits with the concept of a distributed national collection (paragraph 81) and the need to safeguard a nation's cultural inheritance is open to question. However, it is paradoxical that while there are laws that protect the built heritage in general, there is no equivalent for moveable cultural heritage, even for that held in the public domain. At a minimum, a safety net for nationally-

significant cultural property held in Welsh museums might be expected, which would make Welsh Ministers responsible where local owners feel unable to maintain it for the future. Owners might retain title to these assets, but the Welsh Government would take a long term interest to ensure that this heritage remained in the public domain.

178. Not only would such an arrangement be expensive to establish, the costs associated with its operation would create an uncertain future liability on the Welsh Government, as well as removing local control. As the scope would be limited to nationally-significant cultural property, some locally-significant collections might fall outside its remit, leading to an uncertain future for those collections.

Option 3 – Devolution

179. We defined devolution as the delegation of the operation of museum services to specially-created charities. This was pioneered in Wales (at Torfaen and Bodolwyddan) in the 1970s and 1990s respectively, and has only now come to the fore. Recent transfers have largely been driven by potential short-term fiscal benefits of relief from National Non-Domestic Rates and other putative financial advantages. The real benefit lies in the longer-term potential to improve efficiency and effectiveness and to provide opportunities for Welsh people to be more active in the care of their heritage through opportunities for volunteering in their governance and operation.

180. In general the full benefits of devolution, including a clear vision and sense of direction, will come only if devolution is to a museum-specific charity. In some places, however, transfers have been to leisure trusts, which discharge the responsibilities for all cultural and leisure services formerly managed by local councils. As most of these transfers in Wales are of

relatively recent date, it is not yet clear whether the change will be of benefit to museums, and lead to more effective management and additional investment, or whether new arrangements have merely exported the disadvantages of one conglomerate organisation to another.

181. The process of devolution is not a solution in itself. It does not guarantee adequate funding, nor is there a guarantee of investment or the capacity and capability to generate income, whether by way of subsidy or profit. Recruiting high-calibre trustees and other volunteers from relatively small populations, against a background of growing competition, is an increasing challenge; and the complexities of running what are effectively small businesses may be beyond the skill sets or comfort zones of many museum workers.

182. There are also risks in transferring the most negative features of local authorities (risk aversion and inappropriate working practices) and, if transferred organisations fail, there is no guarantee of return to the pre-transfer situation within local authorities.

Option 4 – Partnerships

183. The term partnership is widely used to describe arrangements of varying degrees of formality. Here it is taken to mean a long-term, legally-binding relationship that requires partners to agree to share resources, benefits and risks underpinned by mutual trust and a preparedness to relinquish exclusive control over their assets. Two forms of partnership have been identified:

a. Joint Working

184. Local authority joint working is a long-established arrangement for delivering small-scale, specialist services; for example, both the Gwent and Glamorgan archives services, which have been operating effectively for more than fifty years are built

on this model. Such agreements are based on joint committees, by which a group of councils come together, with one acting as Lead and providing the legal personality for contractual matters. Although it is possible to constitute such arrangements as companies jointly-owned by the local authorities, there are no examples of such companies providing services in the cultural or heritage sectors in Wales.

185. While admirably suited to delivering services that change little over time, such arrangements are unsuited to situations where continuing change and improvement are necessary. They tend to be driven by the partner that wishes to spend the least, irrespective of issues of quality or value for money. Disputes can arise between participants, especially over cost-sharing, which can lead to councils withdrawing and in so doing incurring the costs of expensive disaggregation.

186. Further, such arrangements have no fiscal benefits, are linked to the working practices of a lead council which may be inappropriate to museums, and governance costs are higher as a result of having to meet the statutory requirements that fall on local government. Nor could such arrangements act as an umbrella for all museums, as independent or university museums could not participate as equal partners.

b. Regional Partnerships

187. Even the largest local museums in Wales are small entities, and amalgamations and mergers in most cases will make them less small rather than large. To provide anything like the necessary flexibilities and economies of scale, a structure of perhaps three regional organisations would be necessary, which might also create the potential to share resources such as fundraising, social media and back-office. It would present a bigger catchment area from which to recruit trustees,

and provide the diversity necessary to stimulate innovation and differing solutions fundamental to creativity in museum practice.

188. Such an arrangement could be constituted as a local authority joint committee or wholly-owned company, though to gain the fiscal benefits associated with charitable status, and to enable independent and university museums to participate, a charitable entity would perhaps be best suited. Ownership of the assets and collections of each participant would remain with the current governing body each of these bodies would co-own the partnership entity.

189. The practical difficulties of this option are considerable. The bringing together of a large number of entities at the same time represents a major organisational task, and probably could not be achieved in a single big-bang. As each participant would carry the legal costs of transfer, implementation could be costly, though costs could be substantially reduced by the use of a standard process.

190. The economies of smallness enjoyed by some museums would also be lost, as would a measure of local control, and there is a high risk that any increased income might be offset by higher governance and management charges. Levels of subsidy from public funds would need to be both future proofed and guaranteed to encourage organisations to combine in this way.

Financial Implications

191. We have considered a range of approaches to funding as part of the review. None is without its difficulties. They have included:

- local councils pooling their current spend in support of a new system, recognising that commitments necessary to guarantee sustainability of future funding would diminish their financial flexibility (albeit to a trivial extent, as museums represent only 0.13% of local authority costs);
- 'hypothecating' part of the Welsh Government's Revenue Support Grant for local authorities for museum purposes, though the process of hypothecation focuses more attention on how money is spent rather than ensuring it is spent well, and carries an administrative burden for both the Welsh Government and local authorities;
- transfer (subject to agreement between the parties) of a sum that is the equivalent of the funding for local museums from the Main Expenditure Group for Local Government to the budget head that includes Welsh Government cultural spend, from which it would be distributed directly; and
- relieving local authorities of the cost of providing local museum services by substitution of Welsh Government funding, without any adjustment being made to the local government Revenue Support Grant.

192. Which one of these approaches is the most suitable would be contingent on the arrangements agreed between the Welsh Government and local authorities to implement our recommendations, based on the understanding that to enable a sustainable museum sector in Wales, an adequate level of core funding from government, whether national or local, must be maintained.

Concluding comments

193. Within this section we have sought to identify the elements we would expect to see in a sustainable museum service, and have offered some analysis on the current situation in our local museums using the evidence with which we have been provided. What is clear is that we have a sector that is failing and we considered available options to arrest and reverse that decline. Chapter 4 brings together and builds on our thinking to provide a set of recommendations that we believe will begin the journey back to a progressive local museum sector which does justice to the achievements of the people of Wales both past and present.



Ceredigion Museum, Aberystwyth
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Chapter 4: Recommendations and Vision

194. The recommendations in this chapter are strategic and interrelated. They address issues of structure, finance, quality and other developments for the sector. The chapter concludes with our vision for the future of local museums in Wales.

A Regional Framework for Museums in Wales

195. Most local authorities in their current configuration lack the critical mass to develop and support an effective museum service. The small scale of museums means they are more likely to have greater synergies with other museums in adjacent counties than elsewhere within their existing local authority.

196. While it is possible that this could be remedied by a future reorganisation of local government, this is not an inevitable outcome, and indeed experience suggests that it is more likely to promote (and perhaps accelerate) decline. In the meantime, the condition of local museums will continue to deteriorate. There is an urgent need for change to start well before the onset of any local government reorganisation.

197. We considered the possibility of establishing one national agency or 8-10 regional bodies to provide management, support and development opportunities but reached the view that, for a relatively small sector, three Regional Bodies would provide the necessary balance between local knowledge and the need for critical mass. These would serve the north, south west and south east and there is the possibility that they could be co-terminous with other relevant regional services for local authorities, heritage, education or

economic development. However, the main criteria should be the number of museums in a region, geography, current partnership arrangements and estimated income, to ensure there is an appropriate balance throughout Wales.

198. The role of the Regional Bodies would be to provide direction and support to local authority and other museums in terms of areas such as:

- collection strategy and the development of exhibitions;
- finances and strategies for fund raising;
- advice on marketing and community engagement;
- support for workforce development, including the role of volunteers;
- providing a bridge with national initiatives;
- support in changing the whole culture and approach of the new emerging museum sector;
- ensuring partnerships work effectively and good practice is shared within and from outside Wales; and
- taking on direct management of local museums in the area when this is requested by a governing body.

199. We discussed at length the functions, structure and relationship of the proposed three Regional Bodies and reached the view that the Report should not be too prescriptive in terms of legal status and governance, which will be a matter to be agreed between the local partners and the Welsh Government, and may well evolve over time. Several options have been discussed in chapter 3 and in some

parts of Wales the Regional Body could well be a joint committee of its local authority members. Elsewhere, it could be created as a charity, enabling it to gain the fiscal advantage were it to take over management of some local authority museum services and / or museums already transferred to multi-service non-profit organisations by local authorities. In each situation there will need to be clearly defined relationships between the museums' governing bodies and their Regional counterpart.

200. The three Regional Bodies would be established following discussions between the Welsh Government, local authorities and museums in each region. The Regional Bodies will be established and funded by the Welsh Government and their budgets would be determined in relation to the level of support required. The Welsh Government would also, during this phase of establishing the three Regional Bodies, ensure they do not duplicate specialist expertise, such as curatorial skills. Some expertise for the whole local museums sector in Wales could be provided by a single Regional Body.

201. It is not our role to provide detailed business cases for the three Regional Bodies but secondments from local museums might provide much needed development opportunities for museum professionals. The involvement of independent museums in these bodies would contribute a different ethos and impact that might be of benefit. The Regional Bodies must be the vehicle for major changes in this sector and to be successful they must have effective leadership and sound governance arrangements.

202. For this recommendation to be fully implemented there needs to be agreement between local authorities and the Welsh Government on the full role and remit of these new bodies including the area being served, their legal status, governance and process of establishment. We are

aware that the map of proposals for local government mergers will be available before the National Assembly for Wales' Summer Recess and could well influence the exact geographical coverage of the three Regional Bodies, though what suits local authorities may not necessarily be the best fit for local museums.

Recommendation 1

Welsh Government, in partnership with Welsh Local Government Association, to create three Regional Bodies to provide operational direction, management and support to locally delivered museums.

National Leadership

203. Taking into account the position in comparable nations and regions, and to complement the regional framework, a national Museums Council should be established. Its primary role would be to provide leadership and ensure that the improvements noted in this report are implemented.

204. The main work of the proposed Museums Council would be to:

- develop successive national Museum Strategies;
- develop and oversee the definition of museum services the public should expect to receive;
- establish and manage a programme of practical work on collections rationalisation and development across Wales;
- establish new partnership arrangements to avoid unnecessary duplication of services, including between council members;
- implement work outlined in annual remit letters from the Welsh Government;

- provide direction and support to the three Regional Bodies;
- communicate with key funding partners;
- oversee workforce development;
- monitor changes in ethos and style required for the sector to succeed; and
- liaise with equivalent bodies within the UK and beyond.

205. The Welsh Government would fund the Museums Council subject to the provisions of an annual remit letter, which would include a requirement that the council would present an annual report on its progress and its forward plan. Given the central role of Amgueddfa Cymru, in the curatorial advice it provides, research experience, its UK and international perspective and other expertise, we suggest that Amgueddfa Cymru should be given the resources to provide the Council secretariat, as well as funding for any one-off projects agreed with the Welsh Government. Such projects would be independent of Amgueddfa Cymru's governance structure.

206. The new Council should have an independent chair, and draw its membership from the three Regional Bodies, local and independent museums, Amgueddfa Cymru, Cadw, National Library, National Trust and also representative bodies such as the Museums Association, the Association of Independent Museums and the Federation of Museums and Art Galleries of Wales. The Welsh Government would appoint an observer.

207. We are of the view that a well-defined relationship between the Museums Council and the Regional Bodies, has the potential to deliver a more balanced and supportive structure, which will bring both short- and long-term benefits over time.

Recommendation 2

The Welsh Government should establish a national Museums' Council in order to provide collective leadership and co-ordinated activities at national level for the museum sector.

Charter

208. We believe in the development of a Charter for museums in Wales. The Charter defines the elements of an effective museum service and establishes the standards expected. Most importantly, the Charter makes those who run museums accountable to the people of Wales, through the obligation for museums to measure and demonstrate their achievement of Charter precepts. The Charter binds together those local museums whose governance bodies fully commit to membership of a new national and regional structure and to meeting the following Charter precepts:

- local museums operate through the Charter, meet objectives set annually, publicly account for progress against targets, and are subject to regular review of performance;
- they provide robust evidence annually on the extent to which they have provided for local social and educational interests, with all due regard to social equity;
- they act consistently with probity and ethical awareness, earning and holding the trust of their various communities and service groups;
- local / regional museums hold and develop collections and information as part of the distributed national collection of Wales that are demonstrable evidence of the people of Wales, their histories, cultures and lives, or relate to the natural environment of Wales;

- they have measures in place to care for these collections, with priorities for improving systems / facilities to ensure long-term survival of well-documented evidence;
- they can articulate the intrinsic and extrinsic worth attached to the material, oral and written records which they hold and develop;
- objects that are of national and international importance, held in local museums, are safeguarded and held in public trust for the Nation;
- they serve the people of Wales and visitors to Wales through exhibitions and other communication methods that are based on well informed and critical understanding;
- they use exhibitions as a specialised system of communication and a means of engaging with audiences in discovering new things;
- they deliver informal and formal learning opportunities that result in valued and measurable knowledge gains;
- they are proactive in developing provision for their audiences, and in involving their communities in developing that provision, not least in terms of marginalised and disadvantaged groups; and
- they work with providers of educational and social services, along with industry and community groups to better inform and deliver effective services for the people of Wales.

Recommendation 3

The Welsh Government should develop a Museums' Charter to set expectations for public museums in Wales and the requirement to measure their progress and standards achieved.

Service Review

209. Local authorities provide museums as a service to their communities and we are firmly of the view that local authorities themselves must also determine their future. This report provides the framework for that process to take place in partnership with other bodies. Many local authorities have or are already reviewing their museum services and some have reached specific conclusions about future direction.

210. We have been concerned that the criteria used by many local authorities in reaching their decisions are incomplete and, as a result, will lead to further instability in the sector. We would wish local authorities to review their decisions and consider the following issues:

- financial outlook including sources of funds and viability;
- an assessment of their museum services against the three categories of sustainability and quality standards (paragraphs 156 to 161 in chapter 3);
- the support of the new Regional Bodies and new Museums Council;
- effective service and sound governance;
- meeting the standards in the Museums Charter and ensuring ownership of collections is clear; and
- arrangements being developed by neighbouring authorities and the opportunity for partnership working.

211. Having undertaken such a process, one of several options is available for the service including:

- the retention of the museum service by a local authority. Such a decision would need investment and leadership to ensure the standards set out in this Report are met;
- the transfer of the service to another entity. This could be a neighbouring authority, an independent trust, a university, the regional body or other opportunities that could be available in certain parts of Wales. Such a transfer must take place in a planned way and there are several agencies available that would provide advice and guidance; or
- the service could be closed, with the collection de-accessioned ethically. From our analysis of the sector in chapter 3 this would be the realistic option for a number of museums due to lack of recent investment, lack of critical mass in terms of expertise, low visitor numbers and a complete lack of ambition.

212. We are however aware that several local authorities have already taken decisions about the future of their museum services and many have or are in the process of transferring them to a specially created not-for-profit body. In some cases these also include leisure facilities, libraries, theatres, parks and other services and will result in museums remaining on the margins and lacking the expert support necessary to maximize their public benefit. We recognise that some decisions taken cannot be changed immediately but we are of the view that museums should be brought together and new opportunities will emerge once the new Regional Bodies are established. By uniting with the museum family and by maximizing the mutual support created, their resilience could be restored or enhanced.

213. This recommendation therefore is applicable to all local authorities and

options for change need to be thoroughly evaluated in order that the sector is significantly improved over the next five years. If transfer to another body is the preferred option then all aspects of the new structure need to be considered and support should be available to assist with the transition. Where changes have already been made a further museum-specific review is necessary to ensure that the transfer continues to be in the best interests of the museum and its audiences.

Recommendation 4

Local authorities, when reviewing their museums services, should consider all options including retention of present operation, transfer to alternative delivery model or closure and do this in consultation with Welsh Government.

Development of Collections

214. The evidence provided to us raised concerns in relation to the development of collections held by museums across Wales. We are supportive of the distributed national collection and believe this needs to move from a concept to a viable and vigorous way of managing Wales' collections in a strategic and progressive manner under the banner of Collections Wales.

215. Museum stores are almost full and there is little coherent, consistent active collecting taking place. The development of Collections Wales needs to include a considered approach to assessing existing holdings and to identify a programme of ethical rationalisation. This would then enable an identification of gaps in collections, and enable the development of a programme of contemporary collecting, adding to our material record and ensuring future generations are not deprived of their right to understand the past through its material culture. This is an area where Amgueddfa Cymru has a clear role to play in terms of expertise relating to specific

collection types and collection care. The Welsh Government and / or the national Museums Council would also have a role in setting out a programme of work with demonstrable timescales and outputs.

216. Developing the concept of Collections Wales offers a number of opportunities to raise the wider profile of the work of museums and improve services to the public, including the provision of a digital presence through People's Collection Wales, and in high quality touring exhibitions. Developing a clear understanding of the material culture we hold, being able to articulate its value in terms of the stories of Wales and being able to work in partnership with colleagues and our users in terms of co-production, is vital if the relevance of our collections to the public and funders is to be maintained.

Recommendation 5

Welsh Government should put measures in place to establish Collections Wales which will rationalise, develop and safeguard collections of significance to the histories and cultures of Wales.

Workforce Development

217. During the review we have become aware of the paucity of opportunity for those seeking a museum career in Wales. The low level of museums within local authority structures and lack of investment in services has led to extremely small teams, where professional curators are forced to cover many different roles and are unable to gain the depth of experience required to progress. Currently it seems almost inevitable that people have to move away from Wales to have a museum career. Good people are being lost to the sector and, currently, they are not being replaced.

218. The new structure we are recommending provides the opportunity for people to stay in Wales and progress to roles that will stretch and develop them. This helps to strengthen the sector in Wales, to ensure skills required are in place and specialist roles, where required, can be made available to different museums. In the light of the changes suggested in this report, workforce training and development is a necessity. Strategic skills, particularly those related to change management and transition, will be required.

219. The positive contribution of volunteers has been emphasised by a number of those providing evidence, especially the National Trust. Any new structure should seek to continue traditional support to the voluntary sector and offer volunteering opportunities within local museums. Enhancing the skills required to manage volunteers and encouraging volunteers to undertake development opportunities, are part of upskilling the workforce in Wales.

220. We believe a review of available training and development opportunities should be carried out, considering the qualifications in place, their levels, how those can be accessed by the workforce in Wales and what else might be required.

Recommendation 6

Welsh Government, local authorities, other governing bodies and sector bodies to collaborate to identify and provide the skills development needed to support the workforce during the transition and beyond, in order for it to be able to fully achieve the requirements of the Museums Charter.

Finance

221. Any change carries a cost implication. Currently, the net cost of local museums in Wales is around £9.3 million per annum. Given the financial pressures on public funding expected in the coming years, that figure is not expected to increase in the short term. However, it might not be unreasonable for such a sum, trivial in relation to Wales' total public expenditure, to be used as a benchmark for the future, with the challenge being to enhance the value it achieves. This will not only require a keener eye on how money is spent and earned locally, but reform of the machinery which delivers that money.

222. Our proposals for three Regional Bodies would create organisations with annual incomes of between £2 million and £4 million, which would place them in the top quartile of non-National museum organisations in the UK. The balance between activities undertaken regionally and those carried out locally, and between fixed costs and 'doing money', can only be decided on the basis of business cases created by the partners in the new arrangements. However, our view is that the aim should be to enable local museums to continue to make a valuable contribution with limited (and possibly declining) resources at their disposal. Thus in terms of annual running costs, the new arrangements should have the potential to operate at no greater cost to public funds. This does, though, presuppose the achievement of some economies of scale, and the greater the scale of activities reserved for local management the fewer the opportunities for savings that will arise. Clearly, were there to be lack of agreement on the way forward during this initial phase, funding and other benefits would not be available for museums in those regions.

223. Additionally, there will be a need for investment to enable the implementation of our recommendations. Our view is that a sum in the range of £500,000 to £750,000 over a five year period would be sufficient to enable transitional costs to be met, with 90% of this funding going to establish and commission the regional structure, and the balance going to launch the national body. In the longer term, once the structure is bedded-in, there may also be a case for Welsh Government grants for specific projects (for example, relating to Collections Wales) but this should be based on one-off allocations, perhaps to match successful bids to Lottery Distributors and others.

Recommendation 7

Welsh Government should establish a transformation fund in order to facilitate the major changes required in the museum sector in Wales.

Free entry and entry charges

224. Evidence from the local museum sector has brought the issue of charging to the fore. Currently there is no extant rationale that guides whether a museum charges or not, or what the ticket price is when it does. We have noted that the sector as a whole breaks down into three main areas:

- Amgueddfa Cymru, is a Welsh Government Sponsored Body and entry to all seven sites is currently free. Free entry has been offered since April 2001 and is a Welsh Government commitment;
- independent museums: a high percentage of independent museums charge as this tends to be the main revenue generator. These organisations are charities and do not tend to receive core revenue funding from a local authority, although some do; and

- 33% of local authority museums levy a charge. There is no consistency in whether they charge or not and no indication of how ticket prices are arrived at, or assessment of the costs involved in levying the charge.

225. We believe this lack of consistency is confusing for the public and would suggest a review of current practice should be carried out to determine criteria for application across the sector.

Recommendation 8

The Welsh Government should review, in partnership with museum governing bodies, the policy and practice of charging for museum entry and from this to provide guidance.

National Non-Domestic Rates

226. A major incentive that leads local authorities to devolve the provision of culture and leisure services to charities is the statutory relief on National Non-Domestic Rates which reduces the business rates payable by such bodies by 80%. As the Welsh Government has primary competence over business rates policy, the Welsh Local Government Association has argued that local authority cultural facilities should be taxed for business rates on the same basis as charities which, it argues, would allow local councils to save money as well as provide authorities with a greater choice when deciding which service delivery models would work best within their localities.

227. We also consider it anomalous that a museum's business rates status should be different depending on whether it is run by a charity or by a local authority, and suggest that any local government function, including the provision of museum services, that would meet the requirements for charitable status if it were not operated by a local authority, should be given equal

treatment with charities in respect of National Non-Domestic Rates.

Recommendation 9

The Welsh Government should ensure that museums directly provided by local authorities should be given relief from National Non-Domestic Rates on the same basis as museums that are operated by charities.

Leadership Responsibility

228. The rationale for this review arose from the parlous state in which local authority museums find themselves. That this was recognised by the Welsh Government is positive, and we hope the recommendations contained within this report will offer a positive way forward. Local museums are responsible for material which is of considerable significance to Welsh identity and which demonstrates the contribution Wales has made and still makes to the world. However, it has become clear that within the local authority framework there is no real sense of responsibility or understanding of the role of local museums in preserving the tangible evidence of the histories, cultures and environment of Wales.

229. We believe the responsibility for overall leadership in respect of our moveable cultural heritage is too important to be left to individual local authorities. We call on the Welsh Ministers to accept that role and to acknowledge the need to put systems and processes in place to secure well-managed and accessible services for the people of Wales and those who visit.

230. The structures recommended within the report, together with the other recommendations supported by a robust system of evidence gathering and performance measures, could provide the people of Wales with confidence that their heritage is protected for future generations.

231. Further discussion needs to take place on how this responsibility might be carried out, and whether there should be some consideration of the place of legislation in ensuring that the neglect and decline in local museums is not allowed to happen again.

Recommendation 10

Welsh Ministers should be formally responsible for supporting and developing all public museums in Wales.

The vision for the local museum sector in Wales

232. Local museums in Wales should be innovative, enterprising and accountable. They should be driven by a set of clear strategic imperatives, based on best practice, run on astute business lines with a high regard for the public as both their 'customers' and partners. They should be the pride of local communities and should deliver a genuinely rewarding experience for visitors. They should be places where people learn things and exchange information, visiting regularly and with delight. Moreover, they should be sufficiently successful that reports such as this would not need to be written.

233. We have reviewed and analysed a significant body of evidence on the history and current configurations of local museums in Wales and have made far-reaching recommendations for change. These are based not just on an understanding of the need to engage with difficult funding priorities currently facing local government in Wales, central as these have been to our thinking. Our recommendations are also informed by perceptions of what the local museum sector in Wales both could and should be delivering to the people of Wales.

234. With the full implementation of the recommendations, however and in time, we believe that local museum provision could be transformed, even to the point of setting a European standard. It should certainly set itself that goal. The histories, environment and changing culture of Wales are worthy of this. The people of Wales deserve nothing less. In essence, museums should be seen, held and resourced as places where local communities are able to connect with the richness, complexity and contradictions of life in Wales.

235. In this, local museums are potentially powerful agents for enabling profound senses of both place and belonging. This is not to say by any means that they should be purveying sentimental or unreflective views of the past and present. The senses of place and belonging are created as much by discord and difficulty as they are by comfort and romance.

236. A transformation is needed to achieve this vision. Local museums need to be visible and credible. They need to be proactive and relevant, astutely run with a good business sense and an informed understanding of audience. At times local museums should be thought-provoking and be allowed to be so. This means they should always be changing, with active programmes for social engagement and lifelong learning.

237. To achieve this, there needs to be a significant change in the way local collections are viewed and developed. A lifeline is needed; a fundamental review of collections is the first step. In this, there will be tough choices but there will be opportunities too. Established collections can be rediscovered by asking new questions and raising issues of context that spring from other forms of evidence, whether oral or documentary.

238. In parallel, for the transformational change needed, there has to be a far better informed understanding of how display and exhibition, as forms of communication and engagement, can be developed to reach a wider demographic range of visitors. There are enough examples of best practice and innovation in the world to indicate what could be done. Defaulting to the application of new technologies rather misses the point, although this has an important role.

239. New relationships need to be forged with communities, allowing for an inclusive approach. Too often community involvement has been interpreted as simply meaning volunteering. This is only a small part of what could develop. By engaging with communities, museums can learn much about the changing needs of audiences, particularly those least represented in the current profile of museum visitors.

240. As is clear from our recommendations, the vision can be achieved through change that is led by the Welsh Government taking a firm and imaginative lead on the quality, expectation and standards of local museums. With regional coordination in the operational delivery of Welsh Government strategy, expressed through the Charter and with full buy-in from the local authorities themselves, the local museums in Wales could be achieving an inspired level of performance against a range of targets. This in turn could provide a service of extraordinary worth to the people of Wales and all who visit.



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Appendix A – Terms of Reference

1. Introduction

1.1. Following an announcement at the conference of the Federation of Museums and Galleries of Wales in March, the Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism has confirmed that, based on the example set by libraries, he is commissioning an expert review of the current and future plans by local authorities to deliver local museum services in Wales. The review will also be tasked to consider the potential for new delivery models based on partnership working.

1.2. All legislation relating to local museum provision in England and Wales is enabling. There are no statutory obligations to provide local museums.

1.3. The Accreditation Scheme for Museums and Galleries in the UK is a baseline quality standard that helps guide museums to be the best they can be, for current and future users. It defines agreed standards for museums in:

- how they are run
- how they manage their collections; and
- the experiences of users.

Only local museums which participate in the Accreditation Scheme are included in the scope of this review.

2. Background

2.1. Accredited Museums in Wales are currently delivered by 19 local authority museum services, 30 independent charitable trusts (including four Regimental museums), the National Trust (operates 12 museums) and four universities. A further nine museums are working towards achieving Accreditation.

2.2. Since 2004, the Welsh Government through CyMAL has led a strategic approach to museum development in partnership with local authorities and the Federation of Museums and Galleries in Wales. Over £5m has been invested in improving local museums, a national training scheme and encouraging regional partnerships. As a result, Wales had the first national strategy for museum development in the UK.

2.3. The Museums Strategy for Wales was written following extensive consultation with the sector which has embraced it. It sets out a common agenda for development, based on the Accreditation standard, and offers realistic actions that museums of all sizes can take to improve services and to demonstrate the benefits of museums to society as a whole, particularly in difficult times.

2.4. The Strategy places an emphasis on partnership working both within and outside the sector.

2.5. In response to the current challenging financial context, most local authorities are pursuing or considering proposals that will have a significant impact on the delivery of museum services in Wales. In order to establish a more resilient and sustainable delivery and management model for local museum provision, the Deputy Minister has commissioned an expert review.

3. Purpose of the Expert Review

3.1. The purpose of the Review is two-fold:

- It will review the proposed changes by local authorities to local museum provision from April 2014 in order to assess if revised delivery mechanisms provide a comprehensive and efficient service throughout Wales, highlighting best practice and any areas of concern.
- It will identify potential sustainable future models of service delivery which will maximise the opportunities obtained through collaboration, partnership and innovation.

4. Scope of the Review

4.1. The scope of the Review will be limited to Accredited Museums in Wales which are run by local authorities or independent museums which receive financial or in-kind support from local authorities. It will consider opportunities for partnership working with other organisations and existing collaborations between local museums, People's Collection Wales and Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales to increase access to collections, share knowledge and promote museums as places to visit.

4.2. The Review will be evidence based. Detailed evidence will be collected in relation to:

- current provision
- proposals for the future delivery of local authority museum services after April 2014 in terms of,
 - local strategies
 - consultations undertaken
 - impact assessments (public body equality duties under Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010)
- stakeholder views
- the likely impact of changes on performance for the Museums Strategy for Wales 2016-2021
- existing examples of best practice in joint working and co-location of services
- comparisons with other national museum strategies.

4.3. Following an examination of the existing position, the Review will consider potential sustainable models of service delivery identified from research (UK and abroad) and stakeholder evidence on:

- future trends in museum provision
- suitable models of service delivery
- suitable legislative frameworks.

5. Process

5.1. The Deputy Minister has agreed the terms of reference and has appointed an independent expert panel chaired by Dr Haydn E Edwards.

5.2. The Panel will be supported by officials in CyMAL: Museums Archives and Libraries division.

5.3. The Review will:

- note the findings of the Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery and the Baroness Kay Andrews report Culture and Poverty; Harnessing the Power of the Arts, Culture and Heritage to Promote Social Justice in Wales. Together with the subsequent delivery plan.
- note the policy direction for tourism in Wales as set out in 'Partnership for Growth: The Welsh Government Strategy for Tourism 2013-2020'
- note the findings of the following reports funded by CyMAL :
 - 'Common Cause North and Mid Wales Museum Partnership Study', 2008, Kathy Gee & Jane Arthur, Volition Associates http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/english/heritage/common_cause/
 - 'A Feasibility Study to Investigate Potential Collaboration in North East Wales', Hilary McGowan 2011
 - Business Sustainability Report, Kathy Gee, 2013
- consider evidence from the Spotlight on Museums 2011 survey
- consider evidence collated from local museum budget plans as submitted for Accreditation purposes
- consider the findings of relevant literature reviews and comparative surveys.

6. Interested Stakeholders

In addition, the Reference Panel will consider evidence in relation to:

- Impact of proposed local authority changes on independent museums
- Museum users and non-users
- Community groups
- Professional organisations

- Public sector bodies
- Other third sector organisations
- Private sector organisations and trusts

7. Timescale and Key Milestones

Phase 1	
October 2014	Draft Terms of Reference developed Expert Reference Panel members appointed by the Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism
May 2015	Initial draft report submitted to the Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism
Phase 2	
June – July 2015	Review Report agreed with the Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism Sector consultation on potential future models of service delivery starts
Sept 2015 – Oct 2015	The Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism considers the evidence from the report and consultation
Autumn 2015	New proposals announced and planning work commenced

8. Outputs

8.1. In Phase 1, the review will culminate in an all Wales report by the Expert Panel which will provide research, analysis and comment on the current delivery of local museum services, together with recommendations for a limited number of potential models for future delivery.

8.2. In Phase 2, a consultation process on the potential new models for service delivery will be followed by the development of a delivery plan for local museum provision as part of the next national strategy for museums to be published in 2016.

Appendix B – The Panel

Dr Haydn E Edwards is the Vice President of the National Museum of Wales – Amgueddfa Cymru – and a non-Executive Director with Estyn. Following a career in science and educational management he retired as Principal and Chief Executive of Coleg Menai in 2009. He has recently chaired two reviews for Welsh Government – the Career service and the Welsh for Adults provision.

Adrian Babbidge is an independent adviser in the museums and heritage sector whose work spans governance, strategy, organisation, business planning, finance and legal issues. A native of Torfaen, he is now London-based and works with a wide range of clients in the UK and overseas, which he combines with teaching, research and commentating.

Professor Gaynor Kavanagh, originally from Pontypool, is Dean of Cardiff School of Art & Design, Cardiff Metropolitan University. She has published three books on museums, including *Museums and the First World War* (1994) and *Dream Spaces: Memory and the Museum* (2000) and has edited seven anthologies of essays on museum practice. She has been an advisor to the National Railway Museum, York, the National Museum of Wales and the National Audit Office.

Peter Gomer is representing the Welsh Local Government Association. Following a career in Local Government in the areas of Leisure, Culture, Libraries, Lifelong Learning, and Youth Services, he retired in 2011 as Assistant Director of Education at Caerphilly County Borough Council. Since 2011 he has worked for the WLGA as Policy Officer covering Leisure, Libraries, Culture, Tourism, Heritage and Culture before retiring in 2014. He was a Panel member representing the WLGA on the Expert Review of Public Libraries in Wales 2014.



Left to Right Top: Dr Haydn E Edwards , Peter Gomer
Bottom: Professor Gaynor Kavanagh, Adrian Babbidge

Appendix C – List of Contributors / Stakeholder Responses Received

Written Responses

The Chardon Trust / Llandudno Museum
Aneurin Leisure Trust, Blaenau Gwent
Ann Dorsett
Bob Trett
Lieutenant-General Jonathon Riley,
Royal Welch Fusiliers Museum Trust
Jack Hanbury, Pontypool Park Estate
Tenby Museum and Art Gallery
Monmouthshire Antiquarian Association
Ken Davies, Bodelwyddan Castle Trust.
Pembrokeshire County Council
Christian Baars
Swansea Museum
Wendy James, Garbers & James
Friends of Newport Ship
Winding House Museum, Caerphilly County
Borough Council
Rhondda Cynon Taf Council Heritage
Services
Kidwelly Heritage Centre and Tinplate
Museum Trust
Richard Davies, The Regimental Museum
of The Royal Welsh
Gwyneth Kensler, Denbigh Museum Board
Carmarthenshire County Council
Federation of Museums and Art Galleries
of Wales
Monmouthshire Museums Service
Sam Hunt
Kevin Mason
Fiona Talbott, Heritage Lottery Fund
ICON: The Institute of Conservation

Sally Moss

Development Trusts Association Wales
Gwynedd Museums Service

Meetings with Sector Representatives

Kevin Mason, Bodelwyddan Castle Trust
John Marjoram
David Anderson, Amgueddfa Cymru-
National Museum Wales
Judith Ingram, Amgueddfa Cymru-National
Museum Wales
Neil Wicks, Amgueddfa Cymru-National
Museum Wales
Jennifer Stewart, Heritage Lottery Fund
Martin Buckridge, Heritage Lottery Fund
Stephen Barlow, Heritage Lottery Fund
Sharon Heal, Museums Association
Heledd Fychan, Museums Association
Tamalie Newbery, Association of
Independent Museums
Justin Albert, National Trust
Elizabeth Green, National Trust
Emily Keenan, National Trust
Rachel Silverson, Federation of Museums
and Art Galleries of Wales
Rachael Rogers, Federation of Museums and
Art Galleries of Wales
Kate Clarke, Welsh Government
Rhian Edwards, Wales Co-Operative Centre
Peter Williams, Development Trusts
Association Wales
Linda Tomos, Welsh Government

Regional Meeting: 2 February 2015, Llandudno Junction

Sophie Fish, Flintshire County Council

Stephen Greuter, Wrexham Heritage Service

Roy Haley, The Chardon Trust, Llandudno Museum

Hazel Hawarden, Llandudno Museum

Peter Knox, Royal Welsh Fusiliers Museum, Caernarfon

John Marjoram, Federation of Museums and Art Galleries of Wales

Kevin Mason, Bodelwyddan Castle Trust

Morrigan Mason, Bodelwyddan Castle Trust

Delyth Molyneux, Isle of Anglesey County Council

Karen Murdoch, Wrexham Museum

Esther Roberts, Gwynedd Museum and Art Gallery, Bangor

Pat West, Isle of Anglesey County Council

Shirley Williams, Royal Welsh Fusiliers Museum, Caernarfon

Chris Wright, The Greenfield Valley Trust

Dennis Roberts, Penmaenmawr Cottages

Ann Lloyd Williams, Conwy County Borough Council

Morfanwy Baines, Penmaenmawr Cottages

Regional Meeting: 11 March 2015, Merthyr Tydfil

Barbara Bartl, Newport Museums and Heritage Service, Newport City Council

David Bassett, Cardiff Archaeological Society

Nigel Blackamore, Brecknock Museum, Powys County Council

Diane Brook, Cardiff Archaeological Society

Jeff Brooks, Friends of Newport Ship

Michael Cavanagh, Pembrokeshire County Council

Philip Cox, Friends of Newport Ship

Jane Davies, Carmarthenshire County Council

Steve Davies, Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Trust

Megan de Silva, Monmouthshire County Council Museums Service

Chris Delaney, Chris Delaney Associates

Peter Dutton

Harriet Eaton, Neath-Port Talbot County Borough Council

Gareth El Tawab, Swansea Museum, City and County of Swansea

Gavin Evans, Carmarthenshire County Council

Richard Frame, Friends of Newport Museum and Art Gallery

Christabel Hutchings, Monmouthshire Antiquarians Association

Jane Henderson, Cardiff University and Welsh Federation of Museums

Anita Hobbs, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Les James, Friends of Newport Museum and Art Gallery

Malcolm MacDonald, Kidwelly Industrial Museum

Nicholas McDonald, City & County of Swansea

David Moore, Crooked Window, Brecon

Sally Moss

Frank Olding, Aneurin Leisure Trust

David Osmond, Friends of Newport Museum and Art Gallery

Morwenna Perrott, Pontypridd Museum

Kelly Powell, Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Trust

Jonathon Poyner, Wales Millennium Centre
Anne Rainsbury, Monmouthshire County Council Museums Service
Victoria Rogers, Cardiff Story Museum, Cardiff City Council
Christopher Dale, Firing Line: Cardiff Castle Museum of the Welsh Soldier
Peter Strong, Gwent Local History Council
Kathy Talbot, Tenby Museum and Art Gallery
Ashleigh Taylor, Torfaen County Borough Council
Joanne Terry, Monmouthshire County Council Museums Service
Cath Thomas, Torfaen County Borough Council
Bob Trett, Friends of Newport Museum and Art Gallery
Neil Westerman, Tenby Museum and Art Gallery
Ian Williams, Tenby Museum and Art Gallery
Martin Little, Porthcawl Museum and Historical Society
Richard Davies, Regimental Museum of The Royal Welsh, Brecon
John Sellwood, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Corinne Havard, Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council

Responses Received from Local Authorities in 2014

Blaenau Gwent
Bridgend
Caerphilly
Cardiff
Carmarthenshire
Ceredigion
Conwy
Denbighshire
Flintshire
Gwynedd
Merthyr Tydfil
Monmouthshire
Neath Port Talbot
Newport
Pembrokeshire
Powys
Rhondda Cynon Taff
Swansea
Torfaen
Wrexham
Ynys Môn

Appendix D – List of Accredited Museums in Wales

National Museums

Big Pit: The National Mining Museum of Wales, Blaenafon
National Museum Cardiff
National Roman Legion Museum, Caerleon
National Slate Museum, Llanberis
National Waterfront Museum, Swansea
National Wool Museum, Dre-fach Felindre
St Fagans: National History Museum, Cardiff

Local Authority Museums

Caerphilly

Winding House

Cardiff

Cardiff Castle
The Cardiff Story Museum

Carmarthenshire

Carmarthen Town Museum
Carmarthenshire County Museum
Museum of Speed, Pendine
Parc Howard Museum and Gallery

Ceredigion

Ceredigion Museum

Denbighshire

Plas Newydd
Rhyl Museum
Ruthin Gaol

Flintshire

Buckley Library, Museum & Gallery
Mold Library, Museum & Gallery

Gwynedd

Gwynedd Museum and Art Gallery
Lloyd George Museum and Highgate

Isle Of Anglesey

Beaumaris Gaol and Courthouse
Llynnon Mill Museum
Oriol Ynys Môn

Merthyr Tydfil

Cyfarthfa Castle Museum and Art Gallery
Joseph Parry's Ironworker's Cottage

Monmouthshire

Abergavenny Museum
Caldicot Castle
Chepstow Museum
Nelson Museum and Local History Centre

Newport

Newport Museum and Art Gallery

Pembrokeshire

Penrhos Cottage
Scolton Manor Museum

Powys

Llanidloes Museum
Newtown Textile Museum
Powysland Museum
Radnorshire Museum
Brecknock Museum

Rhondda Cynon Taf

Cynon Valley Museum
Pontypridd Museum

Swansea

Glynn Vivian Art Gallery
Swansea Museum

Wrexham

Bersham Ironworks and Heritage Centre
Wrexham County Borough Museum

Independent Museums

Abertillery & District Museum
Andrew Logan Museum, Berriew
Barmouth Sailors' Institute
Blaina Heritage Museum
Bodelwyddan Castle Trust
Brynmawr & District Museum
Ebbw Vale Works Archival Trust Museum
Greenfield Valley Museum
Haverfordwest Town Museum
Holyhead Maritime Museum
Internal Fire Museum of Power, Tanygroes
Judge's Lodging, Presteigne
Kidwelly Industrial Museum
Llandudno Museum
Llangollen Museum
Menai Bridge Community Heritage Trust
Milford Haven Heritage & Maritime Museum
Narberth Museum
Narrow Gauge Railway Museum, Tywyn
Old Bell Museum, Montgomery
Oriol Plas Glyn y Weddw, Llanbedrog
Penmaenmawr Cottages
Pontypool Museum
Porthcawl Museum
Rhayader Museum and Gallery (CARAD)
Rhyl Miniature Railway
Robert Owen Museum, Newtown
Royal Mint Museum, Llantrisant

Sir Henry Jones Museum, Llangernyw
Tenby Museum and Art Gallery
Tredegar and District Museum
Wireless in Wales Museum, Denbigh

University Museums

Aberystwyth University Ceramics Gallery
Aberystwyth University School of Art Gallery & Museum
Egypt Centre, Swansea University
University Of Glamorgan, Art Collection Museum

National Trust Museums

Aberconwy House
Chirk Castle
Dinefwr Park and Castle
Erddig
Llanerchaeron
Penrhyn Castle
Plas Newydd, Llanfairpwllgwyngyll
Plas yn Rhiw
Tollhouse, Conwy Suspension Bridge
Tredegar House and Park
Tudor Merchant's House, Tenby
Tŷ Mawr Wybrnant, Dolwyddelan

Regimental Museums

Castle and Regimental Museum Monmouth
Firing Line: Cardiff Castle Museum of the Welsh Soldier
Regimental Museum of the Royal Welsh, Brecon
The Royal Welch Fusiliers Regimental Museum, Caernarfon

Museums working towards Accreditation

Aber Valley Heritage Museum

Blaenavon Community Heritage & Cordell
Museum

Cowbridge and District Museum

Llyn Maritime Museum, Nefyn

Museum of Modern Art Wales, Machynlleth

Porthmadog Maritime Museum

Quarry Hospital, Llanberis

South Wales Miner's Museum, Afan Valley

St Winefride's Well Museum, Holywell

Yr Ysgwrn, Trawsfynydd

Further information and related documents

Large print, Braille and alternate language versions of this document are available on request.

Contact details

Museums Development Team
Museums, Archives and Libraries Division
Welsh Government
Rhodfa Padarn
Llanbadarn Fawr
Aberystwyth
SY23 3UR

E-mail: MALD@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Telephone: 0300 062 2112

Website: <http://gov.wales/topics/cultureandsport/museums-archives-libraries/?lang=en>