Transformation Capital Grant Programme Evaluation 2017-2022

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Transformation Capital Grant Programme Evaluation 2017-2022

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Views expressed in this report are those of the researchers and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government

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Contents

List of tables and figures

Glossary

Acronym/Key word	Definition
ACE	Arts Council England
BREEAM	Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method – an internationally recognised measure of a building's sustainability
CC	County Council
CBC	County Borough Council
CCLOW	Chief Culture and Leisure Officers in Wales
CIC	Community Interest Company
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease of 2019
DCMS	Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport
EoI	Expression of Interest
HE	Historic England
LA	Local Authority
LED	Light Emitting Diode
LIF	Libraries Improvement Fund
MALD	Museums, Arts, Archives and Libraries division
MEND	Museum Estate and Development Fund
MGS	Museums Galleries Scotland
NLHF	National Lottery Heritage Fund
PfG	Programme for Government
RCT	Rhondda Cynon Taf
SCL	Society of Chief Librarians
TCGP	Transformation Capital Grant Programme
UK	United Kingdom
VAQAS	Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Service
VAT	Value Added Tax
WG	Welsh Government
WLGA	Welsh Local Government Association

1.   Introduction

1.1   OB3 Research was commissioned by the Welsh Government to undertake a process evaluation of the Transformation Capital Grant programme from 2017 to 2022.

1.2   The Transformation Capital Grant programme (the Programme) is a fund established to support local museums, archives, and libraries to modernise their facilities, create more sustainable models of delivery, enable joint service working and improve the offer to people and communities. It is managed by the Welsh Government's Culture Division and has distributed just under £5.2 million of grant funding between 2017 and 2022.

1.3   The focus of the evaluation is on understanding the functionality of the Programme's process and delivery mechanisms, and whether investments are best targeted to deliver desired outcomes. The findings will inform the design and delivery of the 2022/23 programme.

1.4   The programme has been in operation since 2010, however the period of review for this evaluation is from 2017 to date, which reflects the stage when the Programme encompassed archives and museums. Prior to 2017 the fund was only available for libraries.

1.5   To address the overarching aim, the following specific objectives were developed:

- evaluate programme management, monitoring and evaluation processes and governance; and provide an assessment of whether they effectively support delivery and provide value for money.
- examine the profile and motivations of successful applicants and explore why eligible organisations who do not apply choose not to.
- evaluate grant recipient, and wider sector stakeholders' perceptions and satisfaction of the appropriateness and effectiveness of the programme delivery.
- consider whether the programme effectively targets and funds the organisations in most need, and whether certain groups have missed support. If required, recommend changes to the programme scope.

- evaluate the extent to which the operations are aligned to key policies and address strategic priorities of the Welsh Government and make suggestions for further alignment.

- evaluate whether the objectives of the Programme address the needs of the sector, and whether they may be improved to respond to identified future priorities.

- provide an indicative assessment of whether funded projects may achieve longer term outcomes.

- identify any key lessons learnt and make practical recommendations relevant to any future programme funding rounds.

1.6 This report sets out the findings of the desk-review, interviews with Welsh Government and relevant stakeholders, as well as fieldwork with successful applicants and those who were eligible to apply but had not yet done so.

1.7 This report is presented in nine chapters as follows:

- chapter one: this introduction to the report

- chapter two: outlines the study methodology

- chapter three: sets out the policy context within which the Programme operates

- chapter four: provides an overview of the Programme

- chapter five: presents the key findings of a UK wide review of capital funding for the museums, libraries, and archive sector

- chapter six to nine: considers the feedback gathered from fieldwork with Welsh Government officials, key sector stakeholders, successful and unsuccessful grant recipients and those eligible but have not yet applied

- chapter ten: presents our conclusions based on the study findings and offers recommendations for the Welsh Government to consider.

2. Methodology

2.1 This chapter sets out the method deployed for undertaking the review, the profile of those interviewed and discusses some of the key methodological considerations.

Evaluation approach

2.2 The study was undertaken between December 2021 and June 2022. It involved the following elements of work:

Inception

2.3 An inception meeting with the evaluation steering group at Welsh Government was held via Teams to discuss and agree:

- the methodology and proposed work programme

- access to relevant documentation and data

- options to sample, approach and engage organisations

- a detailed risk register and dependency matrix and

- progress reporting.

2.4 Minutes of the meeting and a detailed inception report were produced setting out an agreed work programme.

Desk review and scoping

2.5 A desk-based exercise was undertaken to review:

- relevant policy documents

- other documents that provide the background to the establishment of the programme

- programme level documentation including programme specification; Expression of Interest (EoI) criteria; guidance and template forms for applicants; project applications submitted 2017-21 and project monitoring forms.

2.6   The findings of the desk-based review have informed chapters three and four within this report setting out the context for the study and inform a narrative of achievements over the review period.

Review of UK-wide evidence sources

2.7   A further desk-based review of UK-wide evidence sources was included to consider:

- strategic documents, or position papers developed by relevant sector bodies
- any evidence or evaluative materials relating to similar schemes in England, Scotland or Northern Ireland or any UK-wide grant schemes by various cultural trusts and foundations.

2.8   The findings of this element of the desk-based review can be found in chapter five.

Scoping interviews

2.9   Initial scoping interviews were arranged and conducted via Microsoft Teams with sector teams (Museums, Libraries and Archives) at Welsh Government specifically to support the process of developing the Theory of Change logic model for the Programme. A total of eight Welsh Government staff members contributed to this stage. Each interview lasted around an hour.

Drafting a Programme Logic Model

2.10   Following the desk-based and scoping interview phases, the findings were synthesised and a visual representation of the programme's Theory of Change logic model developed (see chapter four). A progress meeting was held with the evaluation steering group so that the draft logic model could be discussed and further refined.

Drafting of research instruments and sampling

2.11   A series of qualitative discussion guides were drafted to be used during interviews with Welsh Government and key sector stakeholders, grant recipients (both successful and unsuccessful) and eligible organisations who did not apply or receive support.

2.12   The discussion guides reflected the logic model and built upon the research questions outlined in the specification, as well as findings from the desk review.

2.13   Two bilingual online surveys for distribution to all organisations eligible for the grant were also prepared. One survey was created for previous grant applicants with routing within the survey to ask specific questions of those who had been successful or unsuccessful. A second survey was for eligible organisations who have never applied to the fund. Each survey were drafted so as to take no more than approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. The surveys were anonymous and did not require respondents to provide contact details or to identify the organisations for which they represented.

2.14   All draft research tools and the Privacy Notice were presented to the client for comment and agreed before the fieldwork stage commenced.

Online Survey

2.15   An online survey for all previous grant applicants was distributed directly by Welsh Government to 48 applicant organisations with a follow up reminder email also sent. 16 responses were received which equates to a response rate of 33 per cent. Of those who replied, half (8) of the responses were from local authority run public library services, a further five from local authority run museums, three archive services, one from a trust delivering a library service on behalf of a local authority and one from an independent museum.

2.16   A total of 75 eligible organisations who have yet to apply were contacted directly by the Welsh Government with an online survey link with two follow-up reminder email also distributed. A total of nine eligible organisations responded to the survey which is a relatively low response rate of 15 per cent. Of those who replied, five were independent museums, three were archive services and one was a trust running a library service on behalf of a local authority.

2.17   Contact details for those eligible but who have never applied were requested at the end of the survey. Six organisations provided their details, and each were subsequently contacted with an invitation to contribute to an interview and a link to a privacy notice.

Sampling

2.18   A sample of 20 organisations who have been funded through the Programme was generated for the purposes of interviewing. The sample was selected at random but offered a cross-section by:

- the split between Band A and Band B grants awarded
- sector (libraries, museums, and archives)
- geographical location
- type of organisation (e.g., local authority, independent, not-for-profit companies; trusts)

2.19   These organisations were chosen from the full database, to eliminate any selection bias. Back-up options were also chosen, and a further sample of four organisations that had applied but were not successful was selected as possible substitutes.

Fieldwork

2.20   Ten Welsh Government staff and a further nine stakeholders were interviewed via Teams for this evaluation including representatives from key sector organisations.

2.21   Welsh Government notified sampled grant recipients of our intention to contact them and sought agreement to contribute to the study. OB3 prepared a form of bilingual words for this purpose and once participants' consent to contribute was secured an invitation and a link to a bilingual Privacy Notice was sent to each contributor.

2.22   A total of 20 successful grant recipients covering 25 grant funded projects were interviewed via Teams. Interviews with four unsuccessful grant recipients and two eligible organisations who did not receive support from the capital grant fund were also held.

Analysis of findings

2.23   The evidence gathered during fieldwork was analysed thematically utilising the key evaluation questions set out in the specification. Each researcher prepared detailed write-ups for each organisation interviewed using an internal word template (which followed the key themes set out in the

discussion guide) and fed the responses into an Excel analysis document. Researchers also contributed to an internal de-briefing discussion session. The evidence gathered will be analysed by the key themes set out in the discussion guide.

2.24 The key findings and emerging recommendations were presented to the evaluation steering group via a PowerPoint presentation and notes were made of the ensuing discussion. A draft report was prepared drawing together evidence from the desk-based review and fieldwork and offered succinct recommendations for Welsh Government to consider for the future.

Methodological considerations

2.25 A high number of organisations eligible for the Programme have been contacted and offered the opportunity to provide their views either via interview or via the survey. The survey was anonymous and sent to more than one contact in some organisations (e.g. it could have been sent to different individual at the library service, archive service and museums service at a local authority). Therefore, it is not possible to report on the exact total number of organisations that have contributed, but at least half of all library services and archive services appear to have done so. Fewer responses, in terms of number and percentage of total population, have been achieved from the museum sector. The sample did not provide for any responses from community libraries.

2.26 In the analysis of all responses received via the survey and interviews, many similar comments were received from successful organisations and those who were eligible but had not applied. In order to avoid unnecessary duplication, the findings from the survey and all fieldwork are presented collectively. Where there were differing views or experiences by sector (museums, archives, libraries), by type (local authority or independent) or by experience (successful, unsuccessful or have not applied) these have been highlighted and described accordingly in the presentation of findings.

3.   Policy context

3.1   This chapter sets out a review of key policy documents which are relevant to the Transformation Capital Grant programme.

Expert Review of Public Libraries in Wales (2014)

3.2   The Expert Review of Public Libraries in Wales (2014) was undertaken in recognition that public libraries needed to 'adopt…innovative and [find] proactive solutions' so that they could continue to provide all the expected traditional services alongside a 'whole range of new, digital and community-based services.'[1]

3.3   The purpose of the review was two-fold:

- 'to review the proposed changes by local authorities for the delivery of library services from April 2014' to assess whether they continued to respond to the statutory duty, and highlight any best practice or areas of concern

- 'to identify potential sustainable future models of service delivery which will maximise the opportunities obtained through collaboration, partnership and innovation.'[2]

3.4   Under the Public Libraries and Museums Act (1964), it is a statutory duty for every local authority in Wales to provide 'a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof'[3], but the review recognised that local authority funding in Wales from 2014-15 onwards would be under pressure and it was likely to result in a reduction in public library provision in Wales[4].

3.5   The review recognised several future trends that were likely to impact upon public library service delivery including:

- technology – the pace of technological change makes keeping up with developments an expensive challenge for public libraries, but

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[1] Welsh Government (2014), Expert Review of Public Libraries in Wales, p.5
[2] Ibid., p.11
[3] Public Libraries and Museums Act (1964)
[4] Ibid., p.7

also provides opportunities to enhance the service and reach new users[5]

- library buildings – there was evidence of continued growth in use of modernised service points in libraries although there is a decrease in the number of borrowed books which highlights the challenge of balancing the changing demands between print and electronic resources. The review also recognised the 'continuing and evolving role at the heart of the library service as creative cultural and educational community hubs' and as a result the interior design of the library increasingly needed to be flexible to deliver a wide programme of activities, with an increasing trend 'to co-locate other public services alongside library services in a shared facility'[6].

3.6　The review concluded that a step-change was needed in the level of collaboration between local authorities, Welsh Government, and other stakeholders to address the financial challenges facing public library provision. The review recommended that the Welsh Government identify opportunities for collaboration and co-location arrangements in the delivery of library services to make them more sustainable in future[7]. Furthermore, it suggested that Welsh Government should consider introducing new legislation to reflect the changing requirements for public libraries to 'deliver services collaboratively in digital environments.'[8]

Expert Review of Local Museum Provision in Wales (2015)

3.7　In October 2014, the then Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism commissioned an expert review with two main purposes:

- 'to review the proposed changes by local authorities to local museum provision from April 2014' and

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[5] Ibid., p39
[6] Ibid., p.39
[7] National Assembly for Wales Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee (2014), Public Libraries in Wales
[8] Ibid., p.9

- 'to identify sustainable future models of service delivery, which will maximise opportunities offered through collaboration, partnership, and innovation'[9].

3.8 The review acknowledged that the Museum Accreditation Scheme[10] has had a positive impact on museums' professional approach to record keeping yet suggested that there remained a lack of information on ownership, location, and context of many collections. The review also concluded that many museums were currently housed in accommodation that was deemed 'unsatisfactory,' with historic properties often used to house local museums without the necessary investment to adapt or extend and make it fit for purpose. It stated that more than 90 per cent of Welsh local museums were housed in protected buildings rather than purpose-built accommodation and that even those that were purpose built were designed in an era when access requirements were very different to today's expectations: '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'[11].

3.9 The review also reported that Welsh local government spends less per head of population on museums and galleries (£3.03) than both Scotland (£7.84) and England (£3.61). Between 2004-05 and 2013-14 total local government expenditure in Wales on museums averaged 3 per cent of their total spend on culture, heritage, and sport, and was just 0.13 per cent of total council expenditure[12]. The review states that museums need to be maintained as dynamic places to remain relevant to the public which requires continuous investment in exhibitions and buildings. Since 1996, the average capital spend by local authorities on museums has been around £2 million each year (about 0.2 per cent of total local authority capital spend) with very few examples of any long-term investment. The National Lottery Heritage Fund

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[9] Welsh Government (2015), Expert Review of Local Museum Provision in Wales, p.6
[10] The Museum Accreditation Scheme is a voluntary, UK-wide partnership scheme run by Arts Council England. Welsh Government manage the scheme in Wales. The Scheme is a set of nationally agreed standards to ensure all museums are sustainable, focused and trusted, and able to inspire confidence of the public, funding and governing bodies.
[11] Ibid., p.23
[12] Ibid., p.24

(NLHF) has contributed over £1 billion to UK museums (of which around £24 million has been awarded to local museums in Wales) since it was established in 1994. £13 million of the funding provided to Wales was awarded to projects of a substantially capital nature.

3.10   The review acknowledges that investment to date in local museums in Wales, from any source, has been small scale and that many museums cannot be improved without substantial capital investment to… '[improve] access for visitors…change or improve exhibitions, expand the range of activities, provide adequate access to research collections, or create proper museum storage'[13]. It calls for a realistic approach to the accommodation of museums in the future, which could require rationalisation and change to collections and storage, but which can be achieved with appropriate investment and imagination. It also clearly sets out the need for capital investment to be based on 'excellent strategic planning and high operational standards aimed at fulfilling a set of well-defined priorities'[14].

3.11   The review makes a series of recommendations including that Welsh Government should 'establish a transformation fund to facilitate the major changes required in the museum sector in Wales.'[15] However, this recommendation is in the context of revenue funding rather than specifically for capital investment. It further suggests that in parallel with the transformation change required, is a need for better informed understanding of how display and exhibition can be developed to reach a wider demographic range of visitors.

3.12   In responding to the recommendations of the review, Welsh Government committed to 'identify more equitable ways to fund regional facilities and improve sustainability and resilience.'[16] It also extended the Community Learning Libraries Capital fund to include local museums and archives to support capital improvements (which thus became known as the Transformation Capital Grant Programme discussed in this report).

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[13] Ibid., p.23
[14] Ibid., p.27
[15] Ibid., p.50
[16] Written Statement on the Expert Review of Local Museum Provision in Wales

Light springs through the dark: a vision for culture in Wales (2016)

3.13   The Welsh Government's vision statement, Light springs through the dark: a vision for culture in Wales (2016), recognised that the quality of local cultural facilities often influence where companies decide to invest, and how new or refurbished cultural venues, including libraries and museums can be 'a catalyst for further regeneration'[17] and how such investment in the visitor experience can support the development of cultural tourism[18]. Welsh Government commits to 'encourage local authorities to make the case for culture' and to working with them, and other partners, 'to identify more equitable ways to fund regional and national facilities'[19]. The document urges local authorities to utilise the duties within the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act to develop a local strategy for culture that provides 'a framework for cooperation' where individuals, organisations and institutions can 'achieve outcomes together.' It also calls on local government to enable 'the creative use of public assets for social purposes'[20].

Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

3.14   The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires public bodies in Wales to think about the longer-term impact of their decisions to enable positive change for future generations. Each public body listed in the Act must work to improve the social, economic, environmental, and cultural wellbeing of Wales. The Act includes a legally-binding common purpose – the seven wellbeing goals, for national and local government and other specified public bodies. Each listed public body must set and publish their wellbeing objectives to show how they intend to achieve the wellbeing goals and report annually on their progress against objectives.

3.15   The goal for a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language is for 'a society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and

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[17] Welsh Government (2016), Arts and Culture Vision Statement – Light Springs through the Dark, p.9
[18] Ibid., p.8
[19] Ibid., p.22
[20] Ibid., p.23

which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation'[21].

3.16 The Future Generations of Wales Commission's update report in 2020 states that access to physical venues that 'improve places,' with a focus on 'low-carbon, zero-waste' is important for A Prosperous Wales[22]. It further states that the Wales of the future needs 'well-equipped, accessible cultural facilities …' and that Welsh Government should develop 'specific capital pots to deal with overarching building developments that are needed'[23].

Welsh Government's Programme for Government (PfG) 2016-21

3.17 The 2016-21 PfG 'Taking Wales Forward' which corresponds to the timescale of this review, identifies the need to support sustainable services that meet the needs of today while preparing for the challenges of the future. It commits to investing in infrastructure that will boost the economy and communities of Wales and pledges 'to protect local facilities that bring people together, including…libraries, museums'[24]. Specifically, it commits to the investment of 'more than £1 million each year in the continued transformation of our libraries and local museums[25].

Cultural Resilience Fund, 2020

3.18 A £1 million Cultural Resilience Fund for museums, archives and libraries was established in 2020 to provide help with the urgent short-term pressures facing museums, archives, and libraries. The establishment of the fund came about as a result of the significant negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the sector. The immediate closure of sites and premises resulted in a loss of commercial income, with smaller organisations such as independent museums who are more reliant on such income particularly vulnerable. The pandemic risks shrinking the network of museums, libraries,

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[21] Wellbeing Future Generations Act 2015 – essential

[22] Future Generations of Wales Commission (2020), The Future Generations Report, p.7

[23] Future Generations Commissioner (2020), Future Generations Report 2020 – Summary, p.3

[24] Welsh Government, Programme for Government 2016-21, p.13

[25] Welsh Government (2016), Arts and Culture Vision Statement – Light Springs through the Fark, p.26

and archives in Wales, particularly those in rural areas where they provide a vital boost for the local economy[26].

3.19   There is a renewed call from sector stakeholders for continued capital investment by the Welsh Government, highlighting a historic lack of investment in buildings that needs to be addressed[27]. The recent Senedd Culture, Welsh Language and Communications committee 2020 report, 'The impact of Covid-19 on heritage, museums, and archives' emphasised the importance of capital investment in maintaining attractive and accessible buildings. The report stated that such buildings could increase local employment and benefit the economy and hoped that the 'short term re-prioritisation of funding to deal with COVID-19 challenges does not result in long-term underfunding of much needed capital improvements' within the libraries, museums, and archives sector[28].

Wales Cultural Recovery Fund, 2020-21

3.20   The Cultural Recovery Fund was launched in July 2020 and was delivered by the Welsh Government, Arts Council of Wales, and local authorities. The Welsh Government delivered the funds for the creative, cultural, events and heritage sectors to help negate the effects resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.21   An initial £53m was allocated in July 2020, with a further £10.7m of financial support provided in a second round of funding announced in November 2020 and a further £15.4m in a third round during January 2022.

3.22   A recent evaluation of the fund showed that 90 per cent of the grants awarded were for micro businesses and organisations. The funding was mainly utilised to pay bills, cover overheads and staff salaries. Just over half of recipient organisations also used the funding to revise their business model or services or invest in equipment. The evaluation found that the funding enabled many organisations to direct investment in different areas of their business 'including capital costs associated with the purchase of new

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[26] Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee (2020), The impact of Covid-19 on heritage, museums and archives, p.3
[27] Ibid., p.13
[28] Ibid., p.12

equipment or maintenance of a fixed asset' as well as training and development costs for staff and volunteers.

3.23   The evaluation makes a number of considerations, including that 'the Welsh Government and key sector bodies should ensure that the recovery from COVID-19 is considered and included in the development of the national Culture Strategy' to help move the sector from 'a survive to thrive stage'.[29]

Welsh Government's Programme for Government 2021-26

3.24   The latest Programme for Government (PfG) 2021-26 by the Welsh Government, which incorporates the Co-operation Agreement[30] includes several relevant commitments including:

- ensuring that 'the history and culture of our Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities are properly represented by investing further in our cultural sector and museum network'

- continuing 'our strong partnership with voluntary organisations across the range of our responsibilities'

- 'invest in our theatres and museums' and

- engaging 'with the arts, culture and heritage sectors to develop a new culture strategy'[31].

3.25   The PfG also includes 10 wellbeing objectives for the term and includes a commitment to make 'maximum progress towards decarbonisation', to 'celebrate diversity and…eliminate inequality in all of its forms' and to make Wales's cities, towns, and villages 'even better places in which to live and work'[32].

Review of UK-wide evidence – strategic priorities

A Manifesto for Museums in Wales (Museums Association)[33]

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[29] Evaluation of the Wales Cultural Recovery Fund Summary
[30] Welsh Government Ministers have agreed to work with Plaid Cymru on several areas covered by a Co-operation Agreement.
[31] Welsh Government (2021), Programme for Government, p.6
[32] Ibid., p.8
[33] A Manifesto for Museums in Wales – Museums Association

3.26   In its advocacy document for Wales, the Museums Association highlights the negative impact that austerity, Brexit, and the pandemic has had, with museums already struggling due to 'structural historic underinvestment' now finding it challenging to survive the loss of income from reduced visitor numbers. They call on politicians in Wales to rebuild museums' unique role in society by leading strategically and ensuring investment in:

- a new Cultural Strategy for Wales
- a strong, expert and fully staffed Museums, Arts, Archives and Libraries division (MALD)[34] so that there is sufficient capacity to develop 'the national infrastructure of museums'
- capital spending to ensure that local museums can work with and welcome local communities into their spaces
- digital infrastructure, capacity, and skills development to enable museums to create a sustainable hybrid model for engagement.

3.27   No similar documents could be found in relation to the libraries or archives sector in Wales.

Concluding remarks

3.28   The policies and priorities in place during the review period for this evaluation demonstrates that the TCGP has made a concerted effort to adapt its criteria regularly in order to align with policy developments. In particular, it has linked strongly with the priorities of the Wellbeing of Future Generations agenda. Similarly, it has sought to deliver against Programme for Government priorities throughout. However, the programme would benefit from more specific references to aims and priorities within a dedicated strategic document to which it could align. The highly-anticipated Cultural Strategy referenced in the latest Programme for Government could provide an important role in fulfilling that current gap.

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[34] This is now known as the Culture Division within Welsh Government. At the time of the review it was called the Museums, Arts, Archives and Libraries (MALD) division

4. Transformation Capital Grant Programme

4.1 This chapter sets out an overview of the Transformation Capital Grant Programme (the Programme), drawing upon key documents such as programme guidance.

Overview

4.2 The Programme was established to support local museums, archives, and libraries to modernise their facilities, create more sustainable models of delivery, enable joint service working and improve the offer to people and communities. It is managed by the Welsh Government's Culture Division.

4.3 The grant is available for:

- Libraries – local authority public library services (including those delivered by trusts or not for profit companies on behalf of a local authority)

- Museums – fully or provisionally accredited local authority or independently run museums[35]

- Archives – fully or provisionally accredited local authority archive services[36]

4.4 The Programme aims to enable successful organisations to transform services to:

- develop a more sustainable model of service delivery
- enhance services to people and their communities
- improve collections development, care, or access
- deliver against strategic priorities and outcomes
- maintain and develop the quality of services[37].

4.5 Whilst it has provided capital investment in public library services since 2010, its eligibility has been extended since 2017 to cover museums and

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[35] As part of the UK wide Museum Accreditation scheme
[36] As part of the UK wide Archive Service Accreditation scheme
[37] Welsh Government (2020), Evaluation of Transformation Capital Grants 2017-22 FINAL Specification, p.4

archives. Since 2017, over £5 million has been provided to museums, archives, and libraries in Wales.

Funding

4.6   The funding for the Programme is for capital costs only. Eligible expenditure can include:

- building and engineering work

- professional fees

- fittings/additional equipment integral to the wider development.

4.7   All library projects are expected to include an element of co-location as part of their plans and up to 10 per cent of the grant awarded can be utilised to support specific project management staff costs.

4.8   Services can also apply for funding for IT and digital infrastructure to enable them to address the increased need for digital access to collections and services. However, this funding is only provided for infrastructure where there is a clear long-term plan in place to support and sustain the systems. Priority is given to collaborative bids where a proposed IT or digital infrastructure system will be provided across several services.

4.9   Two bands of grants are available:

- Band A - grants of up to £150,000

- Band B - grants of up to £300,000

4.10   The grant programme provides Band A funding (up to £150,000) for improvements to internal and external appearance, quality of collection care and visitor experience, whilst the larger Band B grants are for strategic projects aimed at realigning services or developing joint working across authorities or regions.

4.11   The programme has a strong sustainability ethos, with a core condition attached to funding that any new building funded by the Welsh Government must achieve two construction standards:

- an overall 'Excellent' rating under the BREEAM[38] assessment framework, or a similar rating under an equivalent assessment framework.

- a minimum standard for recycled content. At least 10% of the total value of the materials used should derive from recycled and reused content in the products and materials selected.

4.12 Table 4.1 below shows the number grants awarded per year. Figures for 2020/21 are lower due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2021/22 grant claim figures are correct at the time of drafting. In a normal year – approximately £1.3 million is awarded to between nine and 13 projects.

Table 4.1 Transformation Capital Grant programme grants awarded[39]

Year	Number of applications received	Total grants requested	Number of successful applications	Grant awarded (£)	Grant claimed (£)
2017-18	n/a	n/a	13	£1,342,492	£1,339,222
2018-19	n/a	n/a	11	£1,403,703	£1,403,458
2019-20	24	£3,546,182	9	£1,137,814	£1,067,814
2020-21	23	£3,580,162	8	£990,850	£868,249
2021-22	13	£1,817,119	9	£1,296,915	£517,520[40]
Total			**50**	**£6,171,774**	**£5,196,263**

4.13 The data from 2019/20 onwards suggests that of the 60 applications received during this period, 26 were successful which equates to an overall success rate of 43 per cent for applicants. Several applicants have applied more than once and ultimately are successful, therefore the actual success rate is likely to be closer to half of all applications received.

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[38] BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method), first published by the Building Research Establishment (BRE) in 1990 is the world's longest established method of assessing, rating, and certifying the sustainability of buildings.

[40] This is the amount claimed to date during the current financial year. The total expected spend is £1,280,755 which would bring the total grant claimed to £5,959,498.

4.14   Table 4.2 below outlines the number of applications received per sector since 2017/18. Museums have made the greatest number of applications to date (30) with libraries having made 28, and just two from archive services (out of a total of seven eligible services). Museum services are much more likely to apply for the lower-level funding, Band A grants.

Table 4.2 Number of applications per sector[41]

| Year | Archives | | Libraries | | Museums | | Total | | |
	Band A	Band B	Band A	Band B	Band A	Band B	Total Band A	Total Band B	Total
2019-20	2	0	5	5	8	4	15	9	**24**
2020-21	0	0	5	5	9	4	14	9	**23**
2021-22	0	0	5	3	5	0	10	3	**13**
Total	**2**	**0**	**15**	**13**	**22**	**8**	**39**	**21**	**60**

4.15   Analysis of the total number of grants awarded by local authority area suggests a good spread overall, although North Wales are slightly under-represented in relative terms. There are 13 grants awards across North Wales, seven in Mid Wales, 12 to South west Wales and 18 in South east Wales.

4.16   Grants are awarded to local authorities at a 2:1 ratio compared to independent organisations or trusts, with 33 local grants awarded by the Programme from 2017-22 compared to 17 for independent organisations.

4.17   Some local authorities have been particularly successful in obtaining grants from the Programme over the 2017-22 period including Cardiff Council (six grants), Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (five grants), Carmarthenshire County Council (five grants), Pembrokeshire County Council (four grants) and Ceredigion County Council (three grants). Awen Trust, delivering on behalf of Bridgend County Borough Council have also been awarded three grants.

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[41] Information available from 2019-20 onwards only

4.18   Of the 50 grants awarded, only six are for a value over £250,000. The lowest value grant awarded is around £10,000 and the highest value is £300,000. The average grant amount is £117,092. The average grant amount awarded to local authorities is slightly higher, at £124,751 compared to the average amount awarded to independent organisations at £107,760.

Application process

4.19   The Programme application procedure involves a two-stage process.

- Stage 1 – An open call to the sectors to provide and Expression of Interest (EoI)
- Stage 2 – Applicants successful at Stage 1 are asked to develop and submit a full application which must be consistent with their initial proposal.

4.20   Organisations can submit up to two applications annually but must note the preferred priority in such circumstances and provide evidence of their ability to manage two capital projects simultaneously.

4.21   EoI proposals at Stage 1 are scored against five priority areas, each of which are weighted differently, as shown in Table 4.3 below:

Table 4.3 Priority Criteria for the Transformation Capital Grant programme

	Priority Criteria	Score	Weighting Band A	Weighting Band B
1	Sustainable Development	0-4	x 4	x 5
2	People	0-4	x 5	x 4
3	Collections	0-4	x 4	x 4
4	Strategic Fit	0-3	x 2	x 2
5	Standards	0-3	x 2	x 2

4.22   The priority criteria are mapped against the Welsh Government's Wellbeing Objectives. For the sustainable development criteria, projects are expected

to demonstrate how they will develop a more sustainable model of delivery that:

- *drives sustainable growth and combats climate change*[42] (e.g., by sustaining services, improving resource efficiency, reducing energy and water usage, or using renewable energy sources) or/and

- *delivers a more modern and connected infrastructure*[43] (e.g., by utilising digital and mobile technology, regional or partnership approaches or co-location of services).

4.23   Under the People priority criteria, proposals should demonstrate how the project can:

- *promote good health and wellbeing for everyone*[44] (by improving access or supporting services to become accessible to all)

- *support young people to make the most of their potential*[45] (e.g., through the development of new educational or community facilities or improved IT provision including Wi-Fi availability) or/and

- *build resilient communities, culture, and language*[46] (e.g., building improvements that provide a more modern and attractive service environment, contributes to wider community regeneration initiatives).

4.24   To score highly under the Collections priority criteria, applicants were required to demonstrate how collections development, care or access would be improved to *promote and protect Wales's place in the world*[47] (this could include new facilities and equipment for collections access, storage, and display, including improvements to environmental stability).

4.25   The Strategic Fit criteria required projects to demonstrate how they could deliver against strategic priorities and outcomes in line with local and

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[42] Wellbeing Objective 3
[43] Wellbeing Objective 11
[44] Wellbeing Objective 5
[45] Wellbeing Objective 7
[46] Wellbeing Objective 10
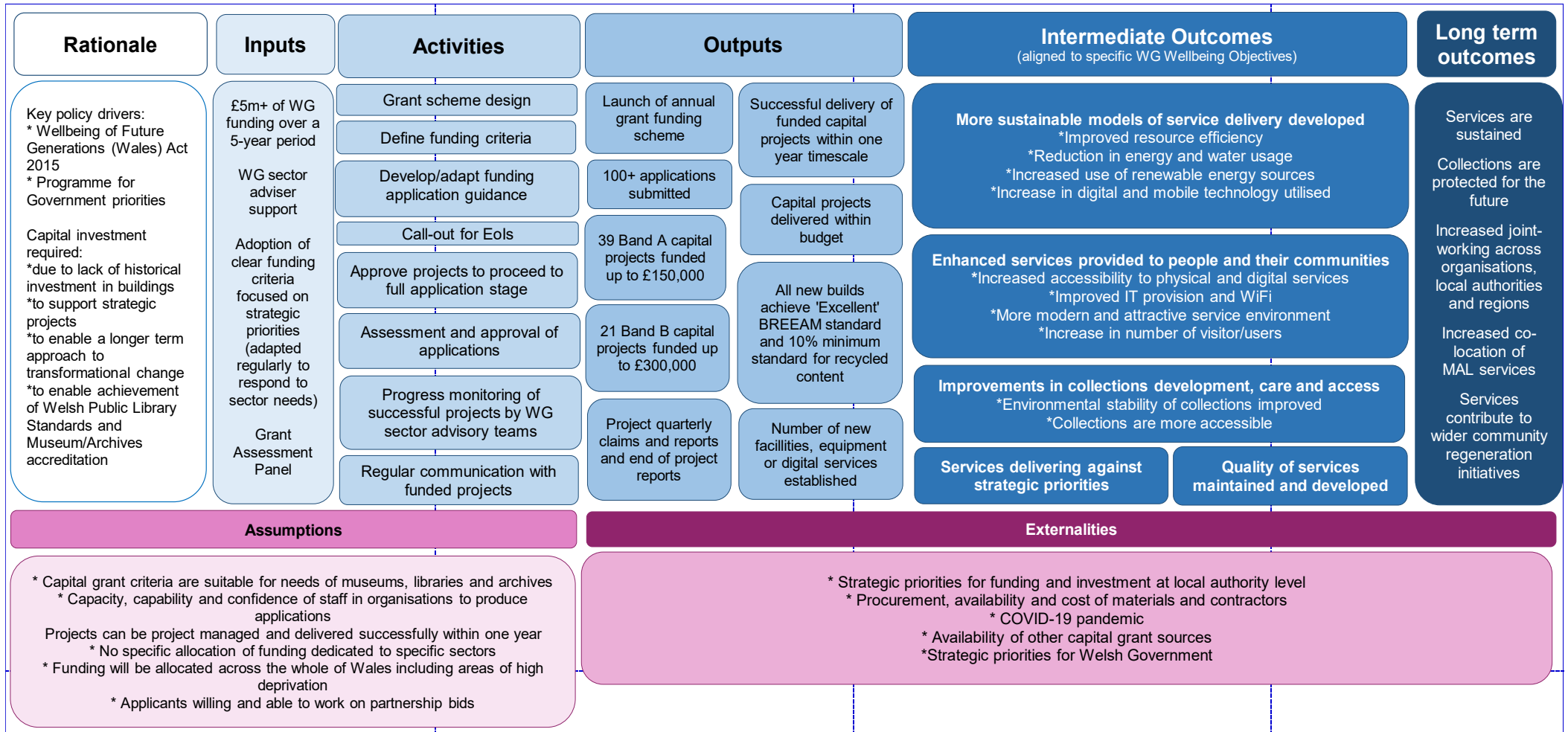[47] Wellbeing Objective 12

national policies, strategies, and legislation, whilst the Standards criteria requested that projects demonstrated how they intended to maintain and develop the quality of services in line with any relevant standards, schemes, and legislation[48].

Theory of Change logic model

4.26 On the basis of the above information regarding the Programme's criteria, and scoping interviews undertaken with key members of the Welsh Government's Culture Division, a theory of change logic model was created. This logic model, set out at Figure 4.1, was presented to core staff, with further revisions made so that it accurately reflected the inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes of the Programme.

4.27 A number of assumptions and externalities were also highlighted by the Culture Division during the scoping interviews, and these are reflected in the logic model. The logic model formed the basis of the questioning framework for the discussion guides utilised in the fieldwork for this evaluation, so that it could be further tested.

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[48] This included, but was not limited to Archive Service Accreditation, Museum Accreditation Scheme, Welsh Library Public Library Standards, Welsh Language Act, Equality Act 2010, Government Indemnity Scheme, Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme, BS4971:2017 Conservation and care of archive and library collections; BS EN 16893:2018 Conservation of Cultural Heritage Specification for location, construction and modification of buildings or rooms intended for the storage or use of heritage collections; BREEAM assessment framework.

Figure 4.1 Transformation Capital Grant programme Theory of Change logic model

Rationale	Inputs	Activities	Outputs		Intermediate Outcomes (aligned to specific WG Wellbeing Objectives)	Long term outcomes
Key policy drivers: * Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 * Programme for Government priorities Capital investment required: *due to lack of historical investment in buildings *to support strategic projects *to enable a longer term approach to transformational change *to enable achievement of Welsh Public Library Standards and Museum/Archives accreditation	£5m+ of WG funding over a 5-year period WG sector adviser support Adoption of clear funding criteria focused on strategic priorities (adapted regularly to respond to sector needs) Grant Assessment Panel	Grant scheme design	Launch of annual grant funding scheme	Successful delivery of funded capital projects within one year timescale	**More sustainable models of service delivery developed** *Improved resource efficiency *Reduction in energy and water usage *Increased use of renewable energy sources *Increase in digital and mobile technology utilised	Services are sustained Collections are protected for the future Increased joint-working across organisations, local authorities and regions Increased co-location of MAL services Services contribute to wider community regeneration initiatives
		Define funding criteria				
		Develop/adapt funding application guidance	100+ applications submitted	Capital projects delivered within budget		
		Call-out for EoIs	39 Band A capital projects funded up to £150,000		**Enhanced services provided to people and their communities** *Increased accessibility to physical and digital services *Improved IT provision and WiFi *More modern and attractive service environment *Increase in number of visitor/users	
		Approve projects to proceed to full application stage		All new builds achieve 'Excellent' BREEAM standard and 10% minimum standard for recycled content		
		Assessment and approval of applications	21 Band B capital projects funded up to £300,000			
		Progress monitoring of successful projects by WG sector advisory teams	Project quarterly claims and reports and end of project reports	Number of new facillities, equipment or digital services established	**Improvements in collections development, care and access** *Environmental stability of collections improved *Collections are more accessible	
		Regular communication with funded projects			**Services delivering against strategic priorities** / **Quality of services maintained and developed**	

Assumptions

* Capital grant criteria are suitable for needs of museums, libraries and archives
* Capacity, capability and confidence of staff in organisations to produce applications
Projects can be project managed and delivered successfully within one year
* No specific allocation of funding dedicated to specific sectors
* Funding will be allocated across the whole of Wales including areas of high deprivation
* Applicants willing and able to work on partnership bids

Externalities

* Strategic priorities for funding and investment at local authority level
* Procurement, availability and cost of materials and contractors
* COVID-19 pandemic
* Availability of other capital grant sources
*Strategic priorities for Welsh Government

5. UK-wide review of capital funding sources for the sector

5.1 This section sets out the key findings from a review of the various capital funding sources available in the sector across the UK to compare their aims and objectives and operational approach with that of the Transformation Capital Grant Programme (the Programme).

5.2 Detailed information for all the UK funding sources considered, including those available through Arts Council England, UK Government, Scottish Government, National Lottery Heritage Fund, and various trusts and foundations can be found in Annex C.

Strategic priorities and criteria

5.3 A wide range of strategic priorities are supported across the sector funding sources reviewed, but some commonalities can be identified including a focus on:

- improving the condition of buildings (e.g., for maintenance, urgent repairs or to enable them to become more flexible or commercial)

- improving inclusiveness and access (including digital access)

- future-proofing or making organisations more sustainable (e.g. to increase income generation via a retail or café space)

- contributing to the regeneration of the local economy

- supporting the connection with the local community (including community involvement and community wellbeing)

- enhancing the visitor experience or visitor numbers

- improving the environmental performance of buildings (e.g., through reducing carbon emissions, increased energy efficiency or improved conservation facilities).

Funding availability

5.4 In England a specific improvement fund is available for libraries (the Libraries Improvement Fund (LIF)). Museums have two possible funds to apply for in

England, and Scotland also have dedicated capital fund for the museums sector. The focus of both funds for museums in England is quite different: the MEND fund prioritises more urgent maintenance needs whilst grants via the DCMS/Wolfson Foundation are mainly to improve the interpretation of collections, storage, and conservation. No specific funds were found to support the archives sector in England or Scotland.

5.5   The funding available through the various funding streams reviewed varied considerably, but tended to provide a higher amount of grant funding than the Programme delivered by Welsh Government for more strategic projects as shown in Table 5.1:

Table 5.1 Capital funding amounts available within UK funds

Fund	Funding available
National Lottery Heritage Fund (UK wide)	Smaller grants (under £250,000) Larger grants (£250,000 to £5 million)
Libraries Improvement Fund (Arts Council England)	Between £50,000 and £5 million can be awarded.
Museum Estate and Development Fund (Arts Council England)	Between £50,000 and £5 million can be awarded.
DCMS/Wolfson Fund	Between £20,000 to £300,000
Cultural Development Fund (DCMS)	£2-5 million
Small Grants Fund (Museums Galleries Scotland)	Up to £15,000
Museum Capital Resilience Fund (Museums Galleries Scotland)	Between £3,000-£75,000 (capped at £20,000 for non-accredited museums)
Wolfson Foundation (UK wide)	£15,000-£500,000

Application process, management, and monitoring

5.6   In general, smaller capital funds (sub £250,000) tended to require a simplified one-stage application process whilst larger funds often had an early Expression of Interest (EoI) stage which required the submission of a

brief project proposal, followed by a more detailed, full application. EoIs were typically brief (for example the LIF required less than 400 words).

5.7   Full applications typically required details as to how the project fulfilled the aims and objectives of the fund, governance and management approach and financial statements (e.g., cash flow, costed risk register and a procurement method statement). Larger projects were also typically required to include a cost plan and design specifications or could be required to evidence match funding, partnership working or fundraising plans.

5.8   Grants awarded by the Arts Council England have also recently moved to a digital application process, using an online submission portal.

5.9   The review also highlighted some processes in place to consider applications. Often this consisted of a panel of experts, and typically considered applications against factors such as:

- geographical spread (with a desire to ensure funding reached all regions or more deprived areas)

- risk or deliverability

- strategic fit or demonstrated need

- type of project

- impact of the project.

Concluding remarks

5.10   Whilst a number of funds were identified as part of this review of funding across the UK, there are very few options available for the sector in Wales to apply for capital funding outside of what is provided via the Programme (although it is notable that the National Heritage Lottery Fund has identified in its strategic framework that applications from Wales are currently under-represented).

5.11   The review of available funding for the sector across the UK shows that the Programme has many similarities to that which is offered in other parts of the UK. The Programme is open to libraries, museums, and archives in Wales, whereas most of the funding available elsewhere is focused on the museums sector.

5.12   The application and assessment processes utilised by the Programme also seem to be similar to corresponding capital funds across the UK, although these seem to have a simplified EoI process, and are increasingly becoming online submissions.

5.13   Similar strategic funding priorities are seen across the UK. There is some evidence to suggest that there is stronger focus in England and Wales on providing maintenance funding, particularly for museums. Larger, more strategic level funding is also increasingly becoming made available in England.

6.   Aims, objectives and rationale

6.1   This chapter considers the views of contributors in relation to the Programme aims and objectives, and the extent to which they address the needs of the sector. It also considers the extent to which the Programme is deemed to address the strategic priorities of the Welsh Government.

6.2   Staff and stakeholders were aware of the background to the Programme in that it was initially a fund for libraries but was expanded to include archives and museums. Initially, the fund had been set up to respond to the library standards[49]. Analysis of the information collected on the standards within the Culture Division identified two specific areas of concern: the levels of professional standards and the lack of capital investment in buildings. The purpose of the small grants originally was to provide a 'facelift' for these places – to make libraries 'places that you wanted to be in' and to make them more suitable to host a range of activities. The purpose of the larger grants initially was to support strategic projects:

> *'Fundamentally, the objectives of the fund have remained the same. They are reinvented for new government priorities, but we still want them to be nice and safe places to visit.'*

6.3   There was a view, however, that the Programme had never been properly designed to meet cross-sector needs particularly in the case of museums, where their needs and requirements had been 'squashed into something that was already in existence rather than it being a fund that suits the sector.' It was argued that whilst the Museum Review had made a recommendation for transformation funding for the museum sector, that had been in relation to revenue funding to create three regional bodies to deliver museums services at a local level rather than capital funding.

6.4   In the main, stakeholders described the Programme as aiming to transform services so that the sector was more sustainable and fit for the future. By doing so, the service would be more interconnected with the community and more accessible to the public: 'it fits the needs of the sector really well.' It

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[49] The Welsh Public Library Standards framework provides a mechanism to measure the quality and provision of public library standards in Wales.

was described as the only 'easy' grant scheme for which the sector could apply for capital funding.

6.5 A minority of stakeholders described it as more of 'a bogs and boilers,' or maintenance type fund, established to fill a clear gap, but nonetheless, primarily for funding 'the boring stuff that nobody else wants to fund' or for funding minor improvements rather than anything big and truly transformative. The views as to whether the Programme should fund maintenance differed depending on the sector. There was a strong view that local authorities were responsible for the general upkeep and maintenance of their buildings, and that this should be done through their own resources. However, there was debate, in the case of museums particularly, that are often housed in historic buildings, as to whether maintenance for such museums could indeed be deemed 'transformational.' Some felt that the Programme's aims were not always entirely clear in its criteria on what could or could not be funded in terms of 'maintenance' nor that it was keeping up with the demand for such maintenance. There was a view that the Programme needed to fully recognise that, in terms of the museum sector in particular, the main need, after ten years and more of austerity, was maintenance funding.

6.6 Some stakeholders questioned whether the Programme was sufficiently ambitious and aspiring, and that it had huge potential to fund 'things that really make a difference,' although to achieve that, the fund would need to grow to around £10-20 million per annum.

'The name of the grant suggests it is meant to transform, but it does not.'

6.7 In terms of the Programme's strategic fit, stakeholders and local authority organisations alike felt that it had a strong fit with the Wellbeing for Future Generations Act. However, in terms of the Welsh Government's latest Programme for Government (PfG), there was a consensus amongst stakeholders of 'a strategic gap for culture.' Other than a commitment for a new culture strategy, stakeholders felt that there were few specific priorities to which the Programme could be easily aligned. In this respect, the Programme was described as being in a 'slight policy vacuum,' whilst

recognising that museums, archives, and libraries could contribute towards many PfG priorities around education, regeneration, and climate change.

6.8   It was further recognised that with libraries and archives now under a separate ministerial department to museums, this presented further challenges (or possible opportunities) to deliver across departments and across government. A few stakeholders suggested that greater alignment and links could be established between the Programme and wider regeneration and public service funding, particularly in terms of multi-agency collaboration within an area or region.

6.9   There is a general understanding amongst many eligible organisations that the Programme aims to support the sector to improve and develop the services that it provides. They explained that, from their point of view, the Programme aims to ensure libraries, museums and archives are fit for purpose, as well as providing support to modernise and transform their existing offer. While organisations acknowledge it is a capital grant programme, there is a general agreement that the final ambition is to provide high-quality services to communities.

'In a wider sense, transforming the culture and heritage information services, giving them capital that allows them to take that leap forward that they would struggle to do just on local authority core funding.'

6.10   Other organisations framed their understanding of the Programme in relation to their own projects. These organisations explained the aims of the Programme in a slightly narrower sense, for example suggesting the Programme aims to support renovations to facilities or address maintenance challenges.

'It is there to provide funding for the boring, mundane stuff that we need. It's not there as a sexy grant fund…it is there to cover the bricks and mortar stuff.'

6.11   Organisations commonly reported that the sector faces challenges which the Programme is designed to address. This includes challenges relating to the deterioration of buildings and ensuring appropriate access and facilities, as

well as the challenge of keeping pace with public expectations of service quality and modernisation.

'We will need support to ensure our collection remains protected in future years and we are particularly concerned about our art collection.'

6.12 Some organisations placed the Programme in a wider strategic context, noting that it aimed to help the sector meet its own priorities, strategies, and ambitions (for example, relating to co-location or accessibility of services). A minority also commented that the Programme aligns with and supports Welsh Government's strategic priorities for the sector, though they did not commonly identify specific Welsh Government strategies or priorities.

6.13 There was agreement amongst many organisations that there are limited alternative opportunities for capital funding available to them. Smaller, independent organisations reported that they do not have access to such capital funding, equally, larger organisations with access to local authority funding also reported needing grants from an additional source to meet their ambitions. A key benefit of the Programme highlighted by organisations is that it is tailored to the capital needs of the sector in Wales specifically; they therefore see it as a natural first step when considering grant funding. As such, there is a recognition that the Programme complements and adds value to other more generic heritage-sector funding which may be available.

'To us it seems an incredibly helpful funding pot because it allowed us to do something that other grants don't like to touch…it helped us to do some real nuts and bolts capital work that we needed that was very hard to justify to other funders.'

'It's appropriate funding to be in line for and you'd hope that they understand what we're trying to do as well…you'd hope that they'd get the context so that would give you an advantage straight away, rather than going to some random private funder and trying to explain what an archive is.'

6.14 Some organisations also reported that the objectives of the Programme are sufficiently broad to reflect the varying needs of the sector. For example, while some organisations need fundamental but small-scale refurbishment,

others need large-scale space transformation. They felt that the broad Programme objectives allow these diverse needs to be met. Those organisations who had not previously applied for a grant also agreed that the broad objectives of the Programme mean that it is likely to meet their capital funding requirements in the near future.

'We had some very run-down buildings that needed quite serious renovation, refurbishment and so I would say that in the original part of the Programme it was very easy for us to put bids in ….as time has gone on, if you go round to all our libraries the condition is actually very good…so then as it developed, we've looked to add value to the libraries we've got. For example, we've gone for meeting rooms, IT suites, teenage areas, where we can provide additional services to the public.'

7. Programme design and administration

7.1 This chapter considers the views captured during fieldwork on the design of the Programme including the application process for the fund. The management and support provided by Welsh Government, the monitoring and reporting requirements and the governance of the Programme are also discussed.

Finding out about the Programme

7.2 From the surveys responses received from 16 successful and unsuccessful applicants to the programme, 11 had heard about the Programme directly via the Welsh Government, either from individual Culture Division staff team members or a press release/email. A further eight mentioned that they had received correspondence relating to the Programme from sector organisations (e.g., Society of Chief Librarians Wales, Archives and Records Council Wales or the Welsh Museums Federation). All felt that it had been either fairly or very easy to access information about the programme. The only suggestion on ways to improve access to information was that it could be more widely promoted via local authority networks in addition to sector networks.

7.3 Of the nine respondents to the survey of eligible organisations who were yet to apply to the programme, five had heard about it previously through the same channels as those mentioned above. However, four respondents (all of which were independent museums) had not previously been aware of the Programme which suggests that the information is not reaching this cohort as well as it could. Of those who had not yet applied, three felt that they were either likely or fairly likely to apply in future – either to fulfil part of a wider funding package or to develop their current infrastructure. Four respondents felt that they were unlikely to apply either because their service did not have a specific capital need presently e.g., one respondent organisation was in a relatively new building with good IT provision, and therefore did not require grant support at present, or because they did not have sufficient knowledge of the Programme to make an assessment on this.

7.4   In order to improve access to information about the Programme, eligible organisations who had not yet applied suggested that a dedicated web page with further information on the criteria and application process, direct emails and workshops provided to the sector to outline how the Programme works with examples of successful applications would be welcomed. But despite such improvements in place, eligible organisations mentioned that they would continue to find it difficult to apply due to 'lack of grant funding application expertise' or lack of staff capacity (e.g., did not employ staff and were dependent on volunteers).

7.5   Stakeholders suggested a number of similar perceived barriers to applying currently, with lack of capacity being a particularly pertinent one. Within archive services, local authority run museums and independent, volunteer-run museums, capacity to prepare bids was perceived to be particularly scarce.

'It takes a lot of work to develop a bid – the two stages, and a challenging timetable. It's stressful to manage and there isn't much flex'

7.6   Other perceived barriers highlighted by stakeholders included:

- a lack of confidence to apply for funding and to project manage a capital project within the sector

- local authority-based organisations required to seek permission to apply for grants, resulting in further time-delays, or barriers further up the chain of command

- dependency on several other local authority departments (such as IT, planning or estates) in order to place a bid, and the challenges associated with accessing that expertise within tight timescales, particularly when competing against other departments with bigger capital funding requirements

- the ability to find match funding becoming even more difficult due to continued austerity within the public sector.

Programme design

7.7   Stakeholders generally felt that the fund's strategic priorities and criteria were appropriate and 'fine' although their importance varied by sector. Whilst there

was recognition that the current approach to setting the criteria was a 'one size fits all' it was also felt that the criteria were considered in a way that was flexible and considered the different priorities each sector might have. For example, it was recognised that the digital access agenda was a particularly pertinent one across the libraries, museums and archive sectors. Libraries in particular were keen to fund projects in relation to this priority. Archives were increasingly looking at IT and digital upgrades (particularly as many archive services were located in relatively new buildings), although this identified priority for the sector was not necessarily replicated as a priority at an individual local authority level. For the museum sector, capital investment in physical infrastructure was a greater focus for the immediate future as they tended to be more exhibition-led, but there was also interest in digital development opportunities.

7.8   In terms of grant criteria, stakeholders involved in the decision-making process described the funding limits for the Programme as being 'fairly arbitrary' but recognising that it was a small fund and therefore needed to benefit communities across Wales and support several smaller projects rather than a few larger projects. A few stakeholders felt that the grant criteria were more suitable for the libraries sector, and that archives, in particular, found it difficult to fulfil some of the Programme's strategic priorities e.g. the nature of the service meant that they would score lower on providing access. As such it was suggested that the weighting of the strategic priorities could be adapted to respond to sector requirements.

7.9   A few stakeholders also raised the issue of community libraries, particularly as the notion of 'community hubs' is on the rise within local authorities, with libraries often playing a core role. Eligibility criteria might need to be revised to adapt to this in due course. A minority of stakeholders also argued that some projects did not fit with any particular strategic aims and simply required funding for maintenance or for basic services (e.g., toilet refurbishment or new shelving). In such cases, usually for lower levels of funding, responding to grant criteria was seen to be overly onerous.

7.10   Most stakeholders and eligible organisations were comfortable with the higher and lower limits of funding available, although a minority of those interviewed

suggested that a higher cap on the funding would be welcomed and well-utilised (if it could be spent over a longer period).

7.11 Welsh Government staff were clear that there was no particular allocation made per sector from the funds available and that decisions were made on the basis of the strength of the project, although geography, areas of deprivation and engagement with communities were all additional criteria not necessarily outlined in the guidance that were utilised where it was difficult to decide between project submissions.

> *'it's a balancing exercise in the end – we try to get a geographical balance and reassure ourselves we've done the best we can.'*

7.12 12 of the 16 applicants who responded to the survey had found it either very or fairly easy to fit their application to the Programme's priorities and criteria, whilst four had found it fairly difficult.

7.13 Organisations often reported that the Programme's strategic priorities and grant criteria are appropriate. Many had found the process of demonstrating how their projects meet the Programme priorities and criteria straight-forward. This was partly attributed to the broad nature of the priorities and criteria, which organisations felt allowed them to propose diverse projects. They reported little difficulty in interpreting and understanding the priorities and criteria.

7.14 However, this was not the case for all organisations. A minority, particularly those with less experience applying for capital funding, smaller organisations and/or those applying for small-scale projects, reported that the grant criteria was not necessarily appropriate for all cases. They felt that it could be challenging and not always appropriate to expect small-scale, less complex projects to demonstrate clear alignment with all the grant criteria.

7.15 Organisations made some suggestions for improvements to the Programme in terms of priorities or changes to criteria. These included 'more realistic and sector specific priorities and criteria' or simply to remove the requirement to fit current priorities and agendas and simply recognise that:

'sometimes a building just needs investment and improvement to make a space safe, pleasant, warm, and fit for purpose. This should be reason enough to invest.'

7.16   The level of funding available was generally deemed appropriate and organisations often expressed gratitude for being awarded a grant. Organisations with smaller core budgets reported that the levels were far beyond anything they could have funded themselves, while others valued the way in which the grant could match-fund local authority core funding. In this sense, organisations reported that the Programme does respond well to their capital requirements. However, there was also recognition that the maximum grant amount is small compared to the demands of larger capital projects. In this case, it was acknowledged that the grant may not allow more ambitious large-scale transformations or could do so only as part of a wider funding package. Organisations understood the purpose of the differing funding levels available with Band A and B grants and felt they had applied for the appropriate Band.

'It was a perfect amount because these are sums of money that are way beyond small museums.'

'I think we always would have welcomed the opportunity to be able to apply for more money because [our museum] is a really complicated site…so actually when we're talking about big capital development, £300,000 for us isn't an awful lot of money but at the same time it was the grant scheme that was available and we designed a project that fit within the parameters of the scheme and were still happy to receive support.'

7.17   The main issue raised by stakeholders in relation to the grant criteria was around that of the annual funding cycle. This was deemed to be a challenging aspect of the design of the Programme across all sectors that could 'curtail ambition' at times. Applying for and managing capital funding grants was an unfamiliar process for many of the stakeholders interviewed, however it should be noted that such requirements are in line with the general conditions of Welsh Government grants and are not specific to this Programme. Several factors were highlighted by stakeholders including:

- local authorities and independent organisations are able to move money into different financial years and are therefore not used to having to spend within one financial year

- local authorities are required to work with central estates teams, who often work across numerous capital projects, and are not always able to respond in a timely manner

- many museums, and some libraries and archives are in historic buildings, which adds another layer of planning and consultation before any capital works can be undertaken, which causes further delays

- working to such a rigid timescale makes it difficult to align other match funding or to leverage grant money from elsewhere

- partnership bids are more complex in nature and less likely to be able to deliver within such a short timeframe due to dealing with multiple organisations or departments

- procurement and/or supply chain delays and issues in sourcing contractors do not always work within such tight and immovable deadlines.

7.18 Organisations often reported that they struggled to complete projects within the current one-year period, even when they had managed to deliver their projects within the financial year as intended. This was the case for both small-scale and large-scale projects since all procurement processes could potentially take a long time and construction delays were common. Larger projects, which included a grant from the Programme as part of a wider funding package, were more likely to be able to respond to the annual cycle, since they planned strategically to use each grant at the most appropriate time.

7.19 Stakeholders did not feel that the current structure of the Programme particularly encouraged partnership working. Whilst it would be of benefit to see joint purchasing of digital infrastructure across services this would be seen as complicated. It was suggested that organisations might be wary of

taking the lead on any collaborative bid lest it count as one of their two applications in any given year.

7.20 A similar response was received from organisations who did not feel that the Programme actively encourages or demands partnership working as part of the grant application or project delivery. Designing partnerships into their bids was therefore not a primary consideration for most organisations. However, many organisations had existing ambitions to work in partnership as part of their projects (particularly co-location projects) and felt that the Programme would support and encourage these existing ambitions. As such, organisations usually decided on their approach to partnership working independently of the Programme's strategic priorities and grant criteria. Partnership working was not necessarily deemed appropriate for all types of capital projects (for instance, when fundamental structural improvements to a building are needed).

'I have to say 'no' quite bluntly. We've gone down this road with [another funder] and we feel that [they] have a real edge on forcing people to work with communities and if we get another load of grants that we have to do this with, it's going to be really difficult. With the [other funder] we tried to do a relatively small project with them a few years ago and they wanted so much community involvement it actually just destroyed the project.'

The application process

7.21 Feedback from stakeholders was that the introduction of the Expression of Interest (EoI) stage had been an improvement on how the application process was structured as it ensured that only suitable applicants proceeded to the full application stage. It also meant that unsuitable applicants had not invested undue preparation time, and increased the odds of receiving funding, once reaching full application stage, to around 60-70%. Despite this, a few stakeholders argued that the EoI stage was not needed (particularly if projects received support from Culture Division staff upfront).

7.22 In terms of the full application process, a mixed response was received from stakeholders. Some felt that the process was as simple and lean as possible,

whilst others felt that it was overly onerous and could be further tweaked by making some of the following suggested changes:

- allowing for at least ten months between hearing that the EoI is successful and submitting the full application

- simplifying the EoI stage further so that it becomes an opportunity to outline the intended project with only a basic breakdown of expected costs rather than firm costs that cannot be adapted by the full application stage

- removing the requirement to fulfil strategic priorities in the criteria for smaller funding requests or for those requesting basic improvements or maintenance

- highlighting the excellent support on offer from Culture Division at this stage or even allocating a dedicated grant officer to each applicant

- changing the funding approach, so that the Programme funds a percentage of a larger project rather than specific and defined items. It was suggested that this would enable the funding to support more strategic projects rather than the 'end of project stuff' such as furniture that it currently does

- providing more flexibility when items come in over- or under- budget.

7.23 Amongst organisations who had applied to the Programme and those who had not, a few key factors can be identified as having influenced their decision whether or not to apply:

- the perceived likelihood of being successful in achieving a grant. Organisations felt that Welsh Government would be likely to fully understand the need for their capital project compared to other UK-based funders

- the inability to fund necessary capital work themselves. Some organisations had identified a clear need for capital work but felt it would be impossible to fund this work from their own core budgets

- others saw the grant as playing a key role within a wider funding package. When planning to deliver a large-scale, complex project, organisations considered the way in which the grant could add value to and complement other funding sources

- organisations also considered the timing of applying for a grant in relation to other development plans. This could include using alternative funding to support construction work, with the intention of using a capital grant from the Programme for internal renovations.

- whether or not their organisation has the capacity and expertise to apply for and deliver a capital project at that point in time. This challenge is discussed in further detail below.

7.24 All twelve applicant survey respondents who had accessed the support of the Culture Division stated that they had found their advice helpful and that it had made either some (7) or a significant (5) difference to their application.

'The work that the advisors do with the applications is really invaluable.'

7.25 Feedback from interviewed applicants was also positive about the support received from Welsh Government advisors describing them as accessible and helpful. They provided examples of how advisors had supported them, including providing advice on the design of their projects, on completing elements of the application form and on using appropriate terminology and key words. The role of advisors was seen as essential for facilitating the application process.

'I was fairly happy with the whole process and if I had any queries, I found the grants officers were great at pointing you in the right direction.'

7.26 They felt able to reach out to the advisers when they had any queries and felt that advisors were willing to work with them to address any challenges or barriers to project delivery too.

7.27 Similarly, organisations were generally positive about the quality of the feedback received on unsuccessful applications. They usually understood the rejection reasons and there are examples where unsuccessful applicants had worked effectively with Welsh Government advisors to re-apply successfully.

On occasion, organisations reported not fully understanding why an initial application had been rejected as they did not understand why it didn't meet the grant criteria.

7.28 The two-stage application process (an Expression of Interest followed by a Stage 2 application) is mostly appreciated by organisations. They reported finding it useful to gain approval on the overall design of their project before committing the time to completing a full application. They therefore felt the two-stage application made best use of their limited time and encouraged them to work with Welsh Government advisors to carefully consider their project proposal.

7.29 Feedback from the survey of applicants agreed that an EoI stage helped them to focus the aims of their project but did suggest for the process to become digitalised and for it to require less detail. Similarly, survey respondents felt that the level of detail required in the full application was also challenging and that the requirement to provide project schedules and receiving sufficient quotes at the outset (prior to a procurement process) was becoming increasingly difficult to achieve. The length of time between EoI, full application and confirmation often meant that 'prices…increased exponentially.' Suggestions for improvements to the application process included simplifying or reducing the duplication required in the application form; a requirement to provide a total cost for the project and indicative breakdown rather than 'minutiae of costs,' and further consideration of timescales so that more time was provided for successful applicants to deliver. Requesting a site visit, virtual walk or presentation from applicants was also suggested as useful at full application stage.

7.30 Some organisations were positive about the clarity of the guidance relating to the Programme and application process, as well as the steps involved in completing an application. This was particularly the case for organisations with experience of applying for similar funding; in this case, the whole application process seemed to proceed as they expected, and the level of information required in the application was as expected. They reported that the application requirements were clear, and the proportionality of the process compared favourably with the processes of other heritage-sector funders.

7.31   However, there was also a recognition that the application process is challenging for some organisations. This was particularly deemed the case for smaller organisations and those with less experience in applying for capital funding. The process was deemed challenging because of the complexity of the work required to develop a project and the resources it takes to both understand the application process and to apply. While these challenges were not necessarily likely to stop organisations from applying for a grant, they would at least make organisations carefully consider whether they were in a position to apply. The support of Welsh Government advisors was deemed even more essential in such cases.

> *'It's direct support for public services but unfortunately the process of applying for it doesn't always allow all library services to apply. It all depends on workloads at that period of time. I think the application itself is very cumbersome and time-consuming and takes officers away from their main roles which can be quite onerous within these times. It's a heavy workload to take on in addition to your main role, I would say, but it is essential to get that money. For instance, we haven't applied for one this year as we just haven't got the capacity.'*

> *'The reality is that [the grant] is for libraries, museums and so on and maybe the skills or that experience of doing large applications for funding wouldn't always be within those services specifically. It's not always an essential part of librarians' work and so it's very important for [Welsh Government] to keep it as something that feels a lot more accessible.'*

7.32   Organisations also highlighted the importance of having the appropriate skills amongst team members to 'sell' the project in an application. This concept of 'selling' a project is seen to involve using the correct key words, referencing the correct strategies, and making links with national priorities, for example. Organisations felt that knowing which boxes to tick was therefore an important part of the process and that this becomes easier as organisations become more experienced in applying for similar grants. Some organisations accepted this as normal within the context of grant funding, while others emphasised the need for Welsh Government advisor support with 'selling' the project or

warned against penalising organisations whose staff are less experienced in this regard.

> *'There's plenty of guidance, but…I think it's quite restrictive in that Welsh Government see the boxes that have to be ticked. You can't relate every project to every area they expect to see ticked and then I sometimes think they're a little bit naive in the way they're reading into things and looking at each area you have to cross off. Half the time, if you're a good storyteller, you'll get away with a grant application without being honest. If you can tell a tale and meet the criteria, then you're going to get the grant and I don't think that's the best use of that grant.'*

7.33 While some organisations felt the application process was as expected and compared favourably with the processes of other heritage funders, others found the process too time-consuming and demanding. The divergence in views seems primarily attributable to the varying levels of organisations' experience in applying for similar grants, as well as the capacity within organisations to apply for a grant.

7.34 Several stakeholders and organisations emphasised the importance of keeping the application process as simple as possible and making any changes which might streamline the process, such as a way of uploading necessary documentation online or introducing a digital or electronic application form. A few referred to the Welsh Government's Transforming Towns grant scheme[50] as a good example of an application process to replicate.

Monitoring, management, and governance arrangements

7.35 Stakeholders felt that Welsh Government officials and potential applicants worked closely together and had strong informal relationships. As such, potential applicants would feel happy to discuss applications or problems with their counterparts in Culture Division. Stakeholders concurred that the governance of the Programme was sound, and that documentation was detailed and kept up to date.

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[50] [Transforming Towns Support to Improve Town Centres](#)

7.36 Several Welsh Government staff commented on the burden currently placed on a small team of staff within Culture Division with the current process and administration of the Programme being described as disproportionate. Some stakeholders also suggested that a capital grants programme required specific knowledge and expertise and that this would help reduce the burden on current policy staff. Other suggestions on how to improve or adapt current monitoring and management included:

- providing mentoring, training, or support (even working alongside) applicants, particularly those from smaller, volunteer-led organisations that lack capacity

- sharing examples of good applications, case studies, or feedback on 'what makes a good application' with the sector

- increasing promotion of the Programme, particularly amongst the independent museum sector

- separating the support and coaching function provided to applicants during the EoI/application stage with the decision-making process, in order to ensure full transparency and remove any perception of conflict of interest

- utilising independent assessors external to the division, and even the directorate, to make the process more inclusive, bring in expertise and to improve links with strategic priorities within other parts of Welsh Government.

7.37 Most organisations were satisfied with the process of claiming grant funding, noting that the process was straight-forward and clear. While many were satisfied with the timing of claims, others felt that the required timing of claims had not easily aligned with their spending plans. This was particularly the case when procurement and construction timetables were altering frequently over the course of a project.

7.38 The Programme's monitoring and reporting requirements were generally seen as proportionate and appropriate, particularly compared with the requirements of other heritage-sector funders. Projects who had submitted end of project

reports did not find this process too demanding. However, the quality of end of project reports vary and not all projects submitted end of project reports when required.

7.39   Organisations felt the project management requirements associated with the grant were as expected and generally aligned with the processes they would ordinarily be putting in place for such projects. The project management requirements were highlighted as a potential challenge for some smaller organisations, particularly if there are no staff with specific project management expertise. The demands of managing any capital project – even a small-scale project – were deemed too challenging and/or time consuming for organisations on occasion, which was likely to affect their decision to apply for a grant.

8. Appropriateness and effectiveness of programme delivery

8.1 This chapter considers the views of stakeholders and eligible organisations who have applied on how the Programme is delivered. It also reports on the perceived impact and difference made by the Programme.

Project delivery

8.2 The survey of applicants asked respondents to rate how well they felt that they had delivered against their funded outputs. Of the 14 respondents from successful projects, 13 felt that they had delivered very or fairly well against their funded outputs whilst only one felt that they had not done this well at all, citing the impact of the pandemic as the reason for this. Respondents attributed their success in delivering on outputs to strong planning, good project management, having a committed team and the quality of what had been invested in.

8.3 When asked to describe the nature of their projects, responses from interviewed organisations demonstrated significant variation in terms of project ambition and scope. While some organisations described their projects as a large-scale, complex redevelopment of their whole service (to which the Programme grant contributed), others explained that the nature of their project was more focused on addressing specific concerns within existing sites (such as addressing damp issues or accessibility issues). To others, the transformation grant was sufficient in itself to allow for relatively significant renovations within their sites.

'It was needed because the archive service was in inadequate accommodation, the library service was also in inadequate accommodation, and we had this sort of vision of co-locating service and getting more than the sum of its parts…so it was meeting a lot of needs particularly around the opportunity to reach new audiences which is very difficult to effect in our previous buildings. And also, the fact that the heritage collections were not being kept in a safe way, so it was kind of meeting both the core need to protect collections with the need to attract new audiences at the same time.'

8.4   Despite this variation, almost all organisations felt their project was initially designed to support their overall strategic plan, regardless of the project's scale. In some cases, project objectives included re-envisioning how access to collections was ensured or making drastic changes to the quality of their sites. In other cases, projects involved smaller renovations to facilities which were, nonetheless, intended to support the organisation's accessibility ambitions. As such, despite the variation in the nature of projects, almost all organisations felt their projects intended to support their strategic objectives to better meet the needs of communities.

8.5   Organisations did not feel they needed to make significant changes to their project to meet the grant criteria. This was primarily because the grant criteria was seen as sufficiently broad to support diverse projects. Projects did generally take the grant criteria into consideration when deciding on which capital work to prioritise or deciding how the transformation grant from the Programme could be used as part of a wider funding package.

'We didn't really [need to adjust our project to meet the criteria]. The reason for that it because it was a larger project and I think that the grant was only about a third of the money that was being spent, so we could then take a look at the whole project and say, 'these things fit in with the Transformation grant, so we can apply for these parts of the whole project.'

8.6   Projects funded through the Programme were, on the whole, delivered as intended. Organisations reported limited changes to outputs compared to what they initially expected and were satisfied with work that had been completed. There were some minor changes to the outputs delivered in some cases. These minor changes were often due to the unavailability of certain resources, for example, or other procurement challenges which necessitated the purchase of alternative materials or equipment.

8.7   Organisations frequently faced certain delivery challenges relating to their projects. Often, these challenges were due to external factors both unexpected and outside the control of the organisations or Welsh Government. The primary challenges reported by organisations were construction delays, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the

associated availability of certain resources, materials, and contractors. In some cases, these challenges meant that organisations faced rising project costs over time, which the project management teams needed to control.

8.8   As such, a minority of organisations highlighted the lack of flexibility with budget allocation as a barrier. They felt that, once they had been allocated the grant, there was minimal flexibility in the grant conditions to allow them to adapt to changing circumstances. This meant that organisations faced challenges when construction costs were amended during the project or when alternative materials needed to be sourced. Similarly, a minority of organisations also noted that they would have appreciated more flexibility to re-allocate costs from one budget line to another if needed, including cost savings achieved in one area of the project.

> *'A bit more flexibility would have been really valuable. For example, something which hadn't been included in the original project that would have improved the accessibility (that we identified during the project) or that contractors had identified an issue with the original tender…a bit more flexibility to re-allocate underspend would have been really valuable.'*

8.9   On occasion, organisations reported finding their project difficult to deliver due to the demands it placed on their time and the stress felt by individuals unfamiliar with managing complex capital projects. While their projects were ultimately delivered according to their original plan, a minority of organisations stated that they had not found the experience particularly easy or enjoyable. They explained that managing such a project is not usually expected to be part of their day jobs and managing competing priorities is challenging.

> *'Capacity is a huge, huge issue. The last couple of years we've had so many grant funding opportunities thrown at us, it's been a bit overwhelming if I'm honest. And then it's just making the application, realising you've got the money for a grant project and then it's delivering that project. The whole capacity thing is massive.'*

Outcomes and difference made

8.10   The Programme provided different levels of financial contributions towards the outcomes achieved by projects. In some cases, the Programme funded projects more-or-less in their entirety; in these cases, attributing any outcomes to the grant is relatively straight-forward. In other cases, the Programme funded one specific element within a much wider project; in these cases, projects described how the outcomes achieved by the grant complemented and added value to wider work undertaken. While this complementarity is seen as a strength of the Programme, it makes it necessary to consider the impact of the grant within the context of wider project activity. It is also important to note that all outcome results are self-reported by the funded projects themselves and have not been subject to any independent, external evaluation.

8.11   Surveyed organisations were asked about the difference their funded project(s) had made to date. In terms of making a difference to the sustainability of their service, improved resource efficiency and increased use of digital and mobile technology were cited the most:

Figure 8.1 What difference to the sustainability of your service has your project(s) made to date? [n=14]
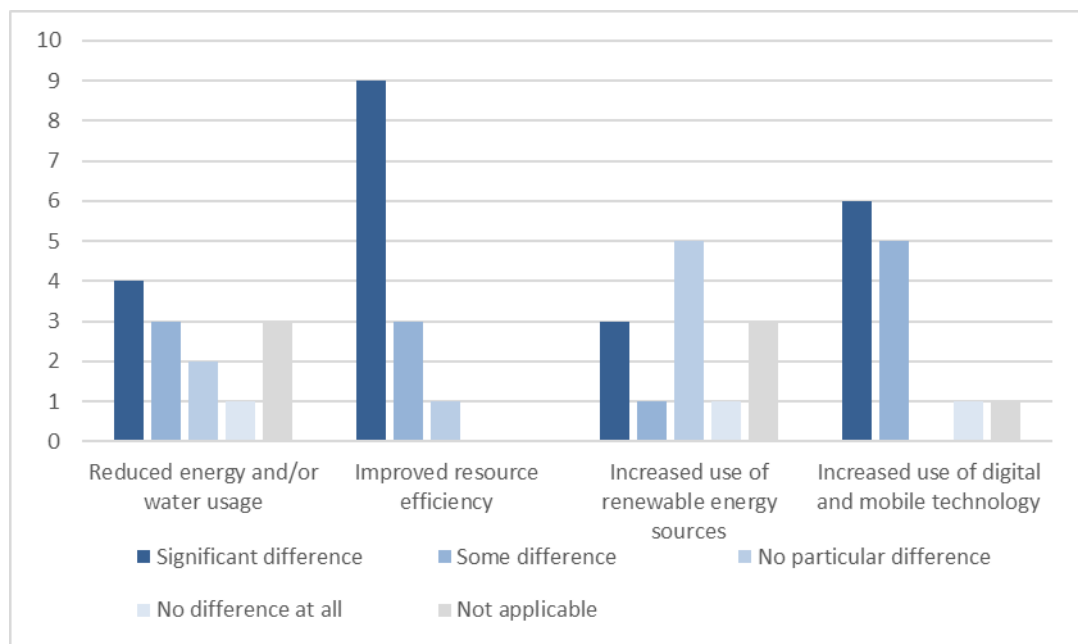
Source: OB3 survey of Transformation Capital Grant programme applicants

8.12   In terms of the difference that enhancements to services had provided to the community, improved accessibility to physical spaces and a more modern and attractive environment was achieved by all successful applicants surveyed. Improved IT provision, an increase in the number of visitors and increased accessibility to digital services also scored highly.

Figure 8.2 What enhancements to the services provided to the community has your project or projects made to date? [n=14]
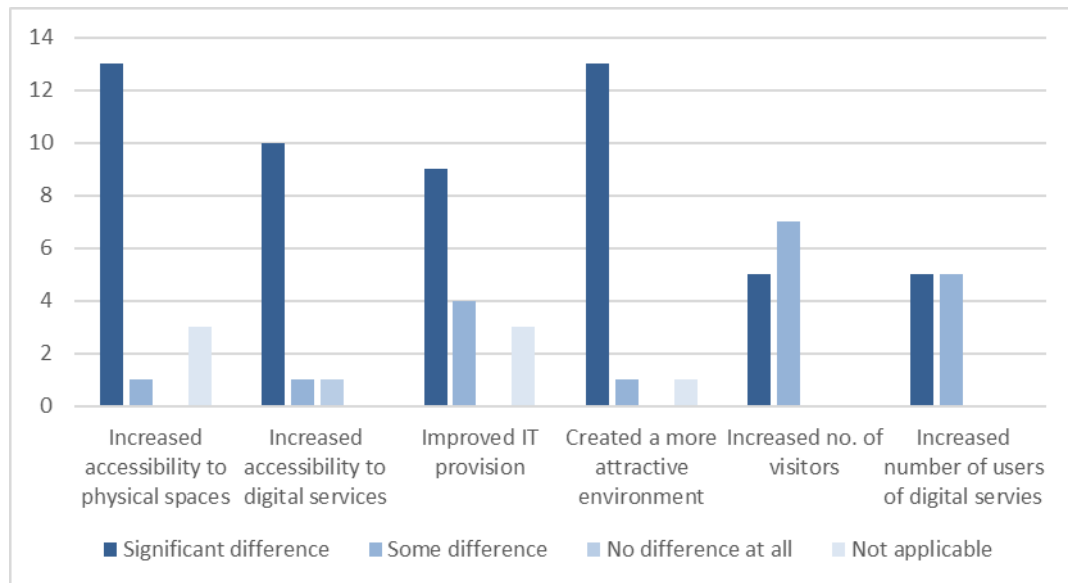
Source: OB3 survey of Transformation Capital Grant programme applicants

8.13   Surveyed successful applicants also felt that they had made a difference in other areas especially in increasing accessibility to collections (12), delivering local, regional, or national priorities (12), achieving relevant quality standards (12) and improving the environmental stability of collections (8).

8.14   Almost all interviewed organisations reported that the grant at least contributed to a transformative impact on the services being provided to people in the community, both in terms of the nature and quality of services being provided. Such impact was noted regardless of the scale of the project, primarily since projects had been designed specifically to better respond to identified community needs. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, not all organisations had made as much progress as they'd hoped in terms of delivering services, but this was seen as a temporary disturbance. Overall, the grants were often seen to support organisations to play a more central

role in their communities. Across the range of grant-funded projects, the following key elements of improved service provision were highlighted:

- The overall standard of sites was improved, providing visitors with safe, modern, and visually engaging sites with improved layouts.

- Sites were described as more welcoming and engaging (particularly when visitor reception areas had been upgraded), supporting visitors to feel relaxed while on site and encouraging them to make informal visits.

- Accessibility was improved on some sites, both in terms of ensuring visitors could navigate sites easily and access areas which may have been difficult to access previously, as well as ensuring that the accessibility needs of disabled visitors were met.

- Organisations reported being able to deliver a greater variety of services as a result of improved spaces and new equipment (e.g., improved digital services, opportunities to rent equipment).

- In some cases, the grant had facilitated the co-location of services (for example, co-locating library services with other local authority support services). Such a Hub model was reported to make it easier for visitors to know where to turn when in need of support.

- Improvements to spaces across different sites was also reported to provide visitors with improved direct access to staff, making it easier for staff to respond to queries and making them more approachable.

- Some projects had provided new spaces for working with community groups, allowing organisations to build new partnerships and involve communities in the design and use of displays.

- Similarly, some projects provided new spaces for organisations to provide better education programmes targeted at school groups.

- Renovated spaces also allowed organisations to become more ambitious in their design of exhibitions, including hosting collections they would otherwise have been unable to host.

'Although things aren't open, we're in the process of planning exhibitions in those spaces, so we're working more creatively in partnership with artists and makers. So, we've created experimental spaces which, although not delivered yet, the fact that we're actively working in collaboration with makers is a really important change for us.'

'We've just completely transformed the way we operate library services, it's like a new bookshop, a very informal setting, people are encouraged to be themselves. It's a nice friendly environment to be in.'

'It's definitely a better service because it's just more accessible. The archives were previously in a very kind of forbidding building down a side street, where you had to go through two closed doors, whereas now it's in a lovely glass building. It's much more welcoming, we've got a café on site for when people just walk in. The service on site we're able to provide for people is much more welcoming and the facilities are much better.'

8.15 Where relevant, organisations also reported improvements to collections development, care, and access. This included making changes to ensure collections were kept in appropriate storage environments (such as appropriate display cases, temperature and humidity controls, and lighting controls). For some organisations, their projects led to a drastic improvement in collections storage, allowing them to preserve collections in a safe environment where previously they had been stored in damp, inappropriate conditions. Other organisations made improvements to their interpretations and displays, including modernising the way in which information was presented and being more innovative in how they engaged with the public. Finally, a minority were able to improve visitor access to collections previously kept in storage or other inaccessible locations.

'The focus has been on really high-quality show cases, which would have been completely out of our reach. What it's meant is that we've been able to co-design them with the National Museum of Wales, so they meet high conservation standards. We went in the end for bespoke options because of the unusual size and load bearing issues of displaying [our collection]

and so on, what it's meant though is that it's created opportunities for us to borrow material from other museums but also private owners.'

'We've got spaces where we can care for our collections now, the environment's much better where our storage is and we're not getting water or anything coming through onto the actual furnishings in the building.'

'[Our collection] was stored appropriately but I'd say 5% of our collection was out visible and 95% is stored in rolling stacks. I think this will allow us to make the casual visitor more aware the collection is there and what's in there.'

8.16 Some organisations had seen an improvement in their sites' environmental sustainability as a result of their projects. In a minority of cases, environmental sustainability was a core objective of their project, particularly where large-scale construction was being undertaken. In these cases, organisations reported improved efficiency in environmental controls, reduced energy consumption through more effective use of natural lighting and careful consideration of the sustainability of building materials. While environmental sustainability wasn't necessarily a key focus for most projects, some had seen improved sustainability as a by-product of certain renovations undertaken in their buildings (for example, an ability to open new windows for natural ventilation).

'The archives were in a gorgeous Victorian building…but it wasn't suitable for the archives, and it wasn't being maintained properly and the library was also in inadequate buildings. The [new building] is BREEAM excellent standard, so it's a really green building with a green roof and the heritage collection is kept in the basement. The vast majority of the time we don't need to have any artificial heating or dehumidification, it's all passivhaus…so I certainly think that we've met the aspiration to be more sustainable.'

8.17 To some extent, organisations expected that such improvements to service provision would support them to meet service quality requirements. On occasion, organisations reported that these improvements would help them meet standard and accredited requirements within sector specific schemes,

related to equality and diversity (by improving accessibility) or Welsh language (by providing improved bilingual interpretation and access to bilingual staff). Improvements to the care and storage of collections, as well as improved interpretation, was seen as useful for gaining necessary accreditation and improved service provision was highlighted as useful for meeting VAQAS standards[51].

8.18   Most organisations were able to provide some narrative around how the grant enabled them to deliver against their own strategic priorities. In particular, organisations highlighted the impact of the project on helping them develop a level of economic sustainability, make progress in becoming an accessible site or make progress towards establishing themselves as a must-see local attraction. Some were able to expand this narrative to include wider local priorities where relevant, such as local authority service delivery plans. This was particularly the case when projects were part of a wider local authority drive towards a certain model of service delivery, such as Hubs.

'I think what we forget is that everything we're doing, we're tying it back to what traditional library services offer but in a very different way.'

'The work was done in cooperation with stakeholders so for example we installed gender-neutral toilets as a result of consultation with people in our community. We improved our toilet's accessibility, and we created a quiet space for community members as well. So, it was definitely part of our overall strategy to become a more accessible and inclusive space for the community.'

8.19   It was rarer for organisations to link the outcomes achieved through their projects to regional or national priorities during interviews, though these links were made clearly in their application forms. This suggests that although organisations were able to demonstrate how their projects align with priorities such as those contained within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act during the application stage, the design of the projects were

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[51] Museums

primarily based around the organisation and/or local authority's own ambitions, as well as common challenges facing the sector as a whole.

8.20   Organisations were fairly emphatic that the changes they have seen are long-term and will provide long-term sustainability to their service. Long-term impact was easier for larger projects to demonstrate, where significant transformations have taken place (such as co-locating services or constructing new buildings). However, even smaller projects felt that the changes mean they are better placed to deliver improved services going forward. For some, long-term outcomes take the form of improved economic sustainability (e.g., an improved shop) while others feel the project has led to improvement in their reputation with key partners which means their future standing is more secure, particularly in the face of funding cuts.

'The fact that the museum service is being invest in, that it's had this Transformation funding has kind of led to the museum service's visibility being raised significantly within the local authority and as an attractive partner to others…I think that's a really important shift, that if people want to invest in you, that Welsh Government is investing in you, and you can speak really proudly about those changes that the funding has achieved, then you become an organisation that people want to partner with.'

'In terms of the whole entrance and the shop, which was really all about making ourselves more stable, sustainable…This is going to be our first year with a full season with new shop – but even in the four months that we were open last year, it was already dramatically improved on previous years…so hopefully it will bring us more income.'

'Mae beth sydd gyda ni nawr yn llawer fwy cynaliadwy oherwydd ni'n cydweithio fwy, mae pob llyfrgell wir wrth wraidd eu cymuned nhw. Dwi'n credu allai ddweud…pe bai ni'n cael cyfnod o 'austerity' eto, dwi'n credu y peth diwethaf fyddai'r Cyngor moen gwneud yw mynd ag unrhyw llyfrgell bant, maen nhw'n rhy bwysig.'[52]

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[52] [What we have now is much more sustainable because we co-operate more, every library really is at the heart of their community. I think I can safely say, if we had another period of austerity, the last thing the Council would want to do would be to take any library away – they're too important]

8.21   Respondents to the survey did feel that their projects had made some longer-term impacts to their services. Most (11 of 14) felt that collections had been protected for future generations as a result of the Programme, and most (12) also stated that there was increased joint working and a greater contribution to wider community regeneration as a result of the investment made in their service. Over half (8) felt that the investment had helped to either sustain their service or save it from closure. Five noted that their project had achieved increased co-location with other museum, archive, or library services, but no further detail was provided.

8.22   A minority of interviewed organisations stated that they had seen some unexpected positive outcomes as a result of their project, including outcomes which would provide a level of long-term impact. Examples include being able to use the project funding and the improvements to leverage additional investment from key partners and the relevant local authority, as well as the project providing a model of service delivery which could be replicated in other relevant local authority settings. Others developed partnerships with external groups and organisations they would not have developed otherwise or received increased interest from communities.

'I think we've had some nice surprises. We've had a film company who want to film in these transformed spaces…but that something we've never hosted before, so I think the excitement around the investment has brought the museum to our attention. And a local scriptwriter wrote a TV drama script based around what was happening in our museum, and the transformation, so she came right at the beginning and has followed the change…so I think that'll bring the museum to a very different audience, a Welsh language audience which will be important for us as well.'

'One off-shoot of these grants has been that it has raised our profile within the Council. The Council have become more willing to put some of their own investment in, so they see us as vital hubs now for the community; we're probably the only Council buildings we have open to the public in many areas now so it has raised awareness of what we do and what we can do.'

8.23   Of the unsuccessful applicants interviewed, or who responded to the survey, none had applied for any further sources of funding.

9.   Lessons learned and future needs

9.1   In this chapter, the key lessons learned, and suggested improvements made by stakeholders and organisations are discussed. Potential future strategic priorities for funding are also outlined.

Key lessons and improvements to the Programme

9.2   Overall, surveyed organisations who had applied to the Programme were content with their experience as shown in Figure 9.1.

Figure 9.1 Overall, how would you rate your experience of the Transformation Capital Grant Programme? [n=13]
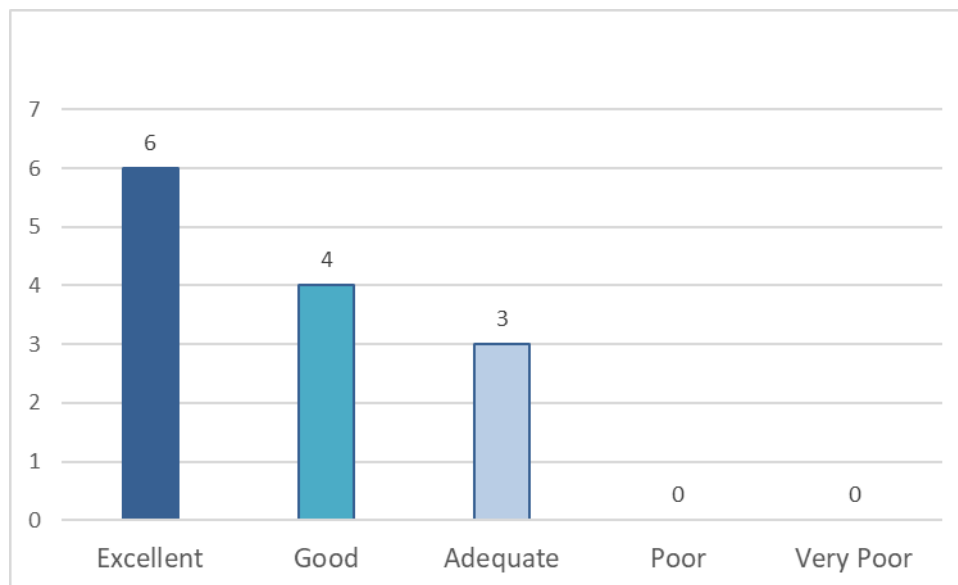
Source: OB3 Survey of Transformation Capital Grant programme applicants

9.3   Successful applicants routinely took the opportunity within the survey and during fieldwork to emphasise how valuable they had found the grant and were grateful that such a Programme is available to them.

9.4   Key lessons learned raised by Welsh Government staff, sector stakeholders, and eligible organisations can broadly be grouped into three themes. Firstly, comments were made about the opportunity to improve communication in relation to the Programme. Whilst there is general knowledge of the existence of the fund, through regular updates by Welsh Government staff at stakeholder meetings and via email reminders sent out when the funding round opens, it seems that there was less knowledge of what had been

funded, what constituted a 'good' application, and what impact the funding had on successful applicants. Stakeholders raised the need for improved publicity to inform the sector of the difference made by the funding, and for Welsh Government to raise aspirations by demonstrating case study examples.

9.5   Similarly, stakeholders felt that whilst communication with the sector meant that heads of service were aware of the Programme, there was an opportunity to raise awareness at a more senior level within local authorities – with local authority leaders, council members with a culture/leisure remit, and members of the Chief Culture and Leisure Officers in Wales (CCLOW) in particular. Due to the high turnover in these roles, regular promotion would be required.

9.6   Secondly, stakeholders and organisations suggested a number of potential adaptations (in addition to those already suggested in previous chapters) to the Programme's design including:

- a larger budget for the Programme – of £10m+ to allow for more ambitious and larger-scale projects to be developed (allowing plenty of lead-in time and a development budget) or a higher level of capital funding made available occasionally (e.g., every five years) to allow support of flagship projects

- two- or three- funding cycles to allow projects sufficient time to deliver, and to encourage more ambitious capital projects to emerge

- more flexibility across the fund to respond to inevitable changes in costs and prices and a review of the upper limit of the fund in light of these increased materials costs

- a 'sliding scale' application process – with a simpler, one-step application for smaller grants, and a more detailed process for those seeking in excess of £250K

- initial seed or development funding (e.g., to fund a feasibility study) and a planning stage built in to support projects to develop their plans

- flexibility around revenue funding e.g., to pay for an interpretation specialist to prepare text for display boards, to cover loss of income for smaller museums who might have to temporarily close during refurbishment or to pay for project management capacity during the capital grant period

- a rolling grant fund for smaller funding requirements e.g., to improve digital innovation and a longer timeframe from larger grant requests so that they can attract match funding or be part of longer-term, larger regeneration projects

- consider whether the 'Brilliant Basics' fund at Visit Wales could be utilised for some of the upgrade requirements of independent museums

- include a five-year clawback clause for digital and 10-year clawback clause for other capital investments.

9.7 Finally, stakeholders made a number of suggestions to improve the monitoring and evaluation of the Programme. There was a feeling that Welsh Government should be better at measuring the outcomes and evaluating the impact of their investment. There is anecdotal feedback of the positive impact made by the investment to date, but this had not been captured in a meaningful way. Whilst there are end of project reports prepared by some, their usefulness and quality varied, with the full impact not always captured, particularly as a longer-term approach is needed (rather than six-months from funding end as is currently the requirement) to fully capture increased usage and visitor numbers. Stakeholders also suggested that there was an opportunity to draw out the impacts and outcomes across the investment made to date so that they could be published to further highlight the difference that the Programme had achieved for the sector over the years.

9.8 Eligible organisations who had not yet applied suggested that they would welcome the ability to apply for smaller grants (under £20K) and more flexibility to deliver a project over a longer timescale.

Future funding priorities

9.9 The future funding priorities of organisations generally align well with the strategic priorities of the Programme. They reported that this is primarily the case due to the appropriately broad nature of the strategic priorities, which organisations feel encourage them to apply for diverse projects. The main future funding priorities of organisations can be grouped into three categories.

9.10 The first of these categories is capital funding for fundamental and essential capital work. Some organisations expressed an ongoing need for capital funding to support them undertake essential renovations and maintenance on their sites. This includes undertaking internal renovations, improvements to interpretation, addressing structural deterioration, upgrading sections of museums, updating visitor routes and re-designing existing spaces.

9.11 The second of these categories is capital funding for broader development purposes, especially in terms of advancing the nature of the organisation's services and realising their ambitions. This was particularly true of organisations which felt they had already undertaken significant work in recent years to address deterioration of their buildings and/or who relied on wider corporate property teams within local authorities for maintenance. Examples of these types of funding priorities included developing digital infrastructure, advancing co-location and hub projects, developing new exhibition spaces, converting sections of their sites to support economic sustainability and trialling innovative models of service delivery (such as mobile services). These priorities reflect the overall view of organisations regarding the Programme's overarching aim to support wider service improvement.

'It is [the local authorities'] responsibility to be looking after services. I think these grants should be about development, not about saving a roof on a building that the local authority should have maintained or should be putting through their capital systems in the first place.'

'We want to make the museum a larger, futuristic, quite a statement piece to attract a larger audience.'

9.12   The third of these categories comprises funding needs that are not related to capital expenditure as such and therefore primarily fall outside the scope of the Programme. These include a need for revenue funding following the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as funding to develop digital content and digital preservation, undertake public engagement and consultation, and develop online commerce. Organisations do not expect the Programme to expand its criteria beyond capital funding but noted that their own priorities might require them to source additional alternative funding in future. It was also apparent that further clarity was required amongst Welsh Government staff and eligible organisations as to when and how costs could be capitalised. Some examples were provided during fieldwork which seemed to suggest that there was some different interpretation and advice being provided in relation to eligible capital costs.

9.13   Organisations reported that they were highly likely to consider applying for a grant from the Programme when needed in the near future and probably as a first port of call. It was deemed an essential funding stream for the ongoing sustainability of the sector. However, there was also a recognition that a Transformation grant might not be the most appropriate choice in all circumstances, for example if significantly larger levels of funding were needed.

'The word is that capital budgets have been really cut right back now as a result of Covid, so I think the Transformation fund is going to become much more of a lifeline for service development going forward.'

9.14   Stakeholders also considered the strategic future funding priorities for the Programme, and highlighted how post-pandemic, people were looking at buildings and spaces differently and their usage was changing. Libraries in particular had a potential role to play in providing working spaces for people working from home, and there was also potential to use spaces within listed buildings more flexibly and making greater linkages between spaces and health and wellbeing priorities.

9.15   There was recognition that sector priorities needed to tie in with Programme for Government (PfG) commitments more closely. In this respect two

aspects of the PfG were consistently highlighted as being in close alignment with the priorities of the Programme: the decarbonisation and the digital agendas.

9.16   In terms of reducing the carbon footprint and contributing to the net zero target, it was felt that improving the efficiency of buildings would continue to be an appropriate and suitable focus for the Programme, although some stakeholders also pointed to the continued need from the sector for capital funding 'to fix boilers and leaks.' Green Libraries[53] was seen as an important consideration going forward. The Sports Wales capital fund was highlighted as an example in this area.

9.17   Improving digital inclusion and innovation was also a priority raised by the libraries and archives sectors in particular. Whilst it was argued that the need to apply for physical renovation would continue, digital was increasingly becoming the priority for these services and that they could play a strong role in supporting the progress of Welsh Government's digital strategy. Some stakeholders suggested that in future, the Programme could place more direction or emphasis on specific priorities in some funding calls to try and generate the required step change, with digital innovation an obvious example for such an approach.

9.18   Several interviewed staff and stakeholders highlighted the need for a strategic plan for the culture sector as a whole in Wales, so that sector-specific priorities (i.e. libraries, archives or museums) could be outlined clearly, and the capital funding prioritised according to the needs outlined within such a document.

9.19   Several stakeholders called for a less prescriptive approach and an increased focus on innovation in future, with a greater expectation placed on applicants to describe what they wanted to achieve in their space rather than describe the furniture they intended to buy.

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[53] This refers to a Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) Green Libraries programme, funded via Arts Council England which aims to help libraries address their environmental impact.

'this grant needs to transform…provide real customer experiences and engage people in a more dynamic way in future – not just improve some shelving.'

9.20   Whilst there were some examples of this to date e.g., a 'maker space' in libraries aimed at bringing young people in, stakeholders described more ambitious and different ideas seen elsewhere that Welsh Government should highlight to inspire replication in Wales, citing an example in North Yorkshire, a cinema was added to a library, and examples in Australia and the USA where interesting things are brought into spaces such as digital hubs, memory labs, repair cafes, virtual reality and yoga spaces.

9.21   Finally, some stakeholders raised the importance of collaboration and partnership approaches going forward and felt that the Programme should be utilised to support local government to manage their services more efficiently, through co-designed projects (e.g., bringing a leisure centre, library, and museum together under one space). One suggestion was to ring-fence some of the funding in future for cross-sector or cross-region collaborative projects. Another suggestion was to link more closely with the National Lottery Heritage Fund and other funds or trusts e.g., Wolfson so that they could collectively prioritise and fund suitable projects.

10. Conclusions and recommendations

10.1   This chapter presents our conclusions around the processes, management, governance, and delivery of the the Programme. Drawing on feedback gathered over the course of the fieldwork, and the desk-based analysis of relevant policy and other examples of funds across the UK this chapter considers the extent to which the Programme is currently delivering against its Theory of Change logic model. This chapter also sets out our recommendations on possible adaptations and improvements to the current approach for Welsh Government to consider in future.

10.2   The Theory of Change for the Programme outlines two overarching policy drivers for the Programme: the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and the Programme for Government. The guidance and criteria for the Programme are strongly aligned to those of the Future Generations Act, and the funded activities can clearly demonstrate their contribution to the seven wellbeing goals.

10.3   The contribution of the Programme to the Welsh Government's previous and current Programmes for Government (PfG) are less clear. The 2016-21 PfG identified the need to invest in the local infrastructure that bring people together and referenced the Transformation Capital Grant Programme explicitly. Whilst a Senedd report into the impact of COVID-19 on the sector emphasised the importance of capital investment over the long-term, this is not addressed within the latest PfG for 2021-26 and there are few specific strategic priorities to which the Programme can align. Other policy documents of relevance are now outdated. The Expert Reviews of libraries in 2014, and local museum provision in 2015 both made the case for a 'step change' in collaboration (both physically and digitally), for 'substantial capital investment', and for rationalisation of collections and storage. We do not feel that the current level of funding provided via the Programme enables the sector to achieve these aims. Whilst recognising the challenges of doing so in the current financial climate, **we recommend that the Welsh Government seeks to double the amount of funding available via the Programme if it is still committed to achieving these aims. We further**

recommend that Welsh Government allocates additional internal administration resources to manage and monitor the Programme if the recommendations are implemented.

10.4   Furthermore, the lack of a strong policy context for the capital fund needs to be addressed. The Programme focus on decarbonisation and digital innovation continues to be relevant and can contribute somewhat to similar PfG priorities. There is a clear desire from organisations for these to remain as priorities for funding too. The latest PfG also refers to the intention to develop a new culture strategy for the arts, culture, and heritage sectors. **Once the new culture strategy has been published, we recommend that the criteria of the Programme are adapted to reflect the identified policy priorities included in that document.**

10.5   The review of UK wide examples of other capital funds in this sector provides a useful insight into the way the sector is supported elsewhere. It is striking that the remit of other funds is wide ranging, possibly reflecting the diverse needs of the sector. In Scotland, grants for the museum sector particularly tend to be on the lower scale – museums can apply for up to £15k via the small grants fund to cover revenue and capital, whilst the Capital Resilience Fund for museums is for funding applications between £3k and £75k. The LIF and MEND funds in England are closely aligned in terms of their design to that of the Programme but with higher funding limits (£50k-£5 million). The MEND fund clearly allows for 'maintenance for maintenance's sake' type applications to be made for the museum sector. Feedback from organisations also suggested that there was a demand for this. **We recommend that the Band A criteria for the Programme is widened to explicitly reference maintenance type improvements.**

10.6   The National Heritage Lottery Fund has a simplified, one-step application process and quick turnaround for decision-making for sub £250k projects, whilst applications between £250k-£5 million undertake a more detailed two-stage process. The funding decisions are also made using an outcomes-based approach. Whilst the funding parameters are different to that of the Programme, it seems that a simplified process for Band A applications would be welcomed and could help widen access to the fund for those with less

expertise and capacity to prepare applications. **We recommend that Welsh Government implement a simple, one-stage process for Band A funded projects, and maintain the two-stage process for Band B funded projects.**

10.7   During the course of the review, a number of grant schemes within Welsh Government and further afield have been highlighted as examples of good practice. There are also examples where the requirements both on applicants, and on administrators is less onerous. These examples are mentioned throughout this report e.g., the Transforming Towns regeneration grant scheme. **We recommend that the application forms and associated processes within these other grant schemes continue to be reviewed regularly by Welsh Government's Culture division, and the good practice adopted where possible. Specifically, we recommend that the application process for the Programme is moved online or utilises electronic application forms in future.**

10.8   There is no doubt that the Programme is widely appreciated by the sector and has been designed in a way that has enabled libraries, museums and archives to access capital funds and deliver improvements to their services. The rationale for the Programme itself and its continuation is sound. Libraries in particular appear to be well-catered for and have been able to access funding from the Programme to make necessary improvements to spaces and digital services, and in some examples, utilised the funding to provide a more innovative offer in their physical spaces.

10.9   The widening of the remit of the fund to cover archives and museums has had more limited utilisation to date. The archive sector in particular are less inclined to require the fund for any physical transformation, whilst the museum sector has more pressing maintenance issues, and therefore struggles to make its needs fit the many strategic criteria requirements of the Programme. Digital transformation is of particular importance to the libraries, archives and museum sectors, although it must be recognised that the museum sector is more diverse, with differing needs across local authority and independently run services. **We recommend that the criteria of the Programme are revisited, so that they are more flexible and better**

placed to respond to the diverse and unique needs of each of the libraries, archives, and museums sectors. This could include sector-specific weighting to each project criteria or the inclusion of some sector-specific criteria.

10.10 Whilst the title of the Programme suggests that its focus is on the 'transformational,' the evidence suggests that the changes achieved by the funding to date are on the conservative side of the transformation scale. The criteria (and scale of funding) for the Programme does not require all applications to demonstrate a dramatic step-change in the service. It is also evident that the term 'transformation' is very subjective and nuanced, meaning different things to different people. Similarly, a relatively small-scale investment to cover dire maintenance needs was deemed transformative for some funded projects, whilst others sought for more ambitious change.

10.11 The review has also shown that the sector, as a result of capital under-investment over several decades (as highlighted by the Expert Review of museums) and more recent challenges, remains in need of support to maintain buildings and modernise services. The Programme has rightfully funded modernisation of spaces and digital services within its current funding level, which is what is achievable. However, for the sectors to evolve their offer and respond to the needs of citizens and communities of today and into the future, a mechanism to enable more radical transformation is required which would include innovative and new services in spaces and a tighter focus on co-location and joint working. Such large-scale, significant transformation requires a long lead-in time and sufficient time to deliver the intended outputs. This is also evident in the Culture Development Fund recently launched by the DCMS which provides between £2-5 million of funding for capital projects (and also funds some revenue activity) over three years for partnership bids. **We therefore recommend that the Welsh Government issue a call-out every three years for these large-scale, partnership projects under the Programme, should additional funding be secured.**

10.12 Organisations consistently raised the issue of rising costs of materials and contractors in recent years, and particularly in the last two years post the

COVID-19 pandemic. Feedback from organisations also suggest that the current upper limit of the fund stifles ambition and the ability to be truly transformative and innovative. **We recommend that the upper limit of the fund is therefore increased to £500K.**

10.13 Awareness of the existence and general purpose of the fund seems to be relatively high within the sector, as a result of regular correspondence and communication between the Culture Division advisers and their corresponding sector representative organisations although the limited response from the survey of eligible organisations suggests that awareness amongst independent museums is more limited. In order for the funding to be considered for more strategic level investment there also seems to be further opportunity to broaden the reach of communications to senior staff and elected members across local authorities.

10.14 Feedback from stakeholders and organisations seems to suggest that there is limited knowledge and understanding of what the Programme has funded to date, or the type of more innovative approaches that could be eligible for the funding. The fieldwork also identified a lack of confidence and experience in preparing bids and project managing capital projects within the sector. As such, informing potential applicants of what is expected in an application form, with examples of what 'good' looks like, and presenting examples of projects funded to date or best practice elsewhere in the world that could be replicated in Wales should become more of a focus. **We recommend that Welsh Government consider its communication strategy in respect of the Programme and**

- **that communication about the Programme (on the Welsh Government website and via direct email to potential applicants) includes case studies and examples of successful projects in addition to highlighting the application form and guidance available**

- **that all eligible organisations are invited to a workshop (held every two to three years) where case study and best practice examples are presented, and focussed discussions held on any**

aspect of the Programme where further support would be required

- **that Council leaders and members, and key senior managers within local authorities are regularly updated about the fund and its impact.**

10.15 Organisations clearly valued the support provided by Culture Division advisers in their preparation of applications and this is an important part of the Programme's current structure that needs to continue. It is crucial that this support function is maintained, and the offer taken up by all those who apply. This is particularly true for smaller organisations or individuals less experienced in bid writing. **We recommend that a dedicated adviser is allocated from the outset as a direct contact to all applicants at EoI stage.**

10.16 However, if the above recommendation is implemented, it becomes even more important to maintain a distinct separation between the support function and the application assessment process. The assessment process would also merit input from additional individuals, external to the division, on the decision-making panel. This would further ensure that the funded projects aligned with developments across other Welsh Government policy areas (such as arts, sport, regeneration, or tourism). Knowledge of any relevant developments across government could also be relayed at the recommended workshop sessions so as to further encourage partnership approaches or co-location opportunities. To ensure full transparency and to join-up more effectively with other Welsh Government priorities, **we recommend that the assessment panel includes members who are independent of the support function provided for the Programme's application.**

10.17 The annual funding cycle of the Programme was consistently raised as an issue during the fieldwork. Organisations struggled to spend the money in what was essentially a nine-month window. There was also evidence that such a short timescale to deliver capital projects inevitably stifled the type of ideas that could be presented to the Programme. More ambitious or complex

transformation would inevitably require a longer timescale to deliver. **We recommend that the Welsh Government continues with its revised approach of two-year funding. It should also be clearly communicated to eligible organisations that this new approach (and the higher limit of £500K, if implemented) means that more transformational and/or partnership bids are now possible and would be welcomed.**

10.18 The review found that a better understanding was required amongst applicants as to what costs could be included in a capital funding bid. Similarly, it is possible that there has been some confusion or lack of consistency in the past in the way that guidance has been provided or interpreted by Welsh Government staff. Furthermore, a clear finding from this review is that organisations would welcome more flexibility within the Programme so that projects can adapt to changes in planning and cost escalation and ensure that the funding delivers the best possible impact. In this respect, **we recommend that applications should be required to provide an overall cost to their project (with an indicative breakdown of costs) but that flexibility is provided within the Programme's total budget to reallocate funds, as necessary. We further recommend that Welsh Government communicates a consistent message as to what costs can be included as capital expenditure and stipulates in the guidance that a modest proportion of the funding can be used for small-scale revenue funding in some cases.**

10.19 With the changes outlined above, the ability of projects to obtain match funding or to explore other relevant sources of funding (including non-capital funding) alongside the Programme should be easier. It could be useful for Welsh Government to signpost to these options and support organisations to put together a package of funding for larger projects, whilst recognising that this would further increase the administration resources required. **We recommend that the Programme provides a small pot of development funding to support the sector to develop such plans. This seed or development fund could be utilised to pay for feasibility studies or professional services in the planning stage.**

10.20 In terms of the difference made by the Programme, there is evidence in end of project reports, where they exist, that the outputs are being delivered as planned. There is some evidence that intermediate outcomes are being delivered relatively well, but the evidence base could be improved. When considering the longer-term expected outcomes, as outlined in the Theory of Change logic model, there is less evidence to date that these are being achieved. There is anecdotal evidence that services are more sustainable, and in some cases saved from closure, as a result of the Programme's funding. Whilst there are a few examples of successful co-location projects, these have usually been as a result of a wider funding package. The focus on increasing joint-working or co-location of services does not seem to have been realised by the Programme to date, in the way that it was originally intended. The current structure and funding available via the Programme are likely to be the reason for this. If the recommended changes above e.g., to the funding period and size of funding pot available are fully implemented, we believe that there is a stronger likelihood that those more strategic, long-term outcomes can be achieved.

10.21 In order to capture the impact of the funding to date, **we recommend that end of project reports are requested from all completed projects who have not submitted these to date, and that a simple end of project evaluation template is developed, to be completed 12 months after project end, to capture outputs and evidence against the intermediate outcomes outlined in the Theory of Change. An impact evaluation study should be commissioned in due course to validate this evidence and to analyse the extent to which any longer-term outcomes have been achieved.**

Summary of recommendations

We recommend that:

i.   the Welsh Government seek to double the amount of funding available via the Programme if it is still committed to achieving these aims, with additional internal administration resources allocated to manage and monitor the Programme if the recommendations are implemented

ii.   the criteria of the Programme are adapted to reflect the identified policy priorities included in the new culture strategy when published

iii.   the Band A criteria for the Programme is widened to explicitly reference maintenance type improvements

iv.   the Welsh Government implement a simple, one-stage process for Band A funded projects, and maintain the two-stage process for Band B funded projects

v.   that a review of the application forms and associated processes within other grant schemes is undertaken by Welsh Government, and the good practice adopted where possible

vi.   the application process for the Programme is moved online or utilises electronic application forms in future

vii.   the criteria of the Programme are revisited, so that they are more flexible and better placed to respond to the diverse and unique needs of each of the libraries, archives, and museums sectors. This could include sector-specific weighting to each project criteria or the inclusion of some sector-specific criteria

viii.   the Welsh Government issue a call-out every three years for these large-scale, partnership projects under the Programme, should additional funding be secured

ix.   the upper limit of the fund is increased to £500K

x.   communication about the Programme (on the Welsh Government website and via direct email to potential applicants) includes case studies and examples of successful projects in addition to highlighting the application form and guidance available

xi.   all eligible organisations are invited to a workshop (held every two to three years) where case study and best practice examples are presented, and focussed discussions held on any aspect of the Programme where further support would be required

xii.   Council leaders and elected members, and key senior managers within local authorities are regularly updated about the fund and its impact

xiii.   a dedicated adviser is allocated from the outset as a direct contact to all applicants at EoI stage

xiv.   the assessment panel includes members who are independent of the support function provided for the Programme's application

xv.   the Welsh Government continues with its revised approach of two-year funding. It should also be clearly communicated to eligible organisations that this new approach (and the higher limit) means that more transformational and/or partnership bids are now possible and would be welcomed

xvi.   applications should be required to provide an overall cost to their project (with an indicative breakdown of costs) but that flexibility is provided within the Programme's total budget to reallocate funds, as necessary

xvii.   Welsh Government communicates a consistent message as to what costs can be included as capital expenditure, and stipulates in the guidance that a modest proportion of the funding can be used for small-scale revenue funding in some cases

xviii.   the Programme provides a small pot of development funding to support the sector to develop such plans. This seed or development fund could be utilised to pay for feasibility studies or professional services in the planning stage

xix.   end of project reports are requested from all completed projects who have not submitted these to date

xx.   a simple end of project evaluation template is developed, to be completed 12 months after project end, to capture outputs and evidence against the intermediate outcomes outlined in the Theory of Change

xxi.   an impact evaluation study be commissioned in due course to validate this evidence and to analyse the extent to which any longer-term outcomes have been achieved.

Annex A: Transformation Capital Grant Programme funded projects

2021/2022

Organisation	Project Title	Grant awarded
Neath Port Talbot CBC	Neath Central Library	£250,000
CARAD	Rhayader Museum & Gallery	£140,589
Carmarthenshire CC	Museum of Land Speed	£150,000
Pembrokeshire CC	Pembroke Library & Henry Tudor Centre	£250,000
Caerphilly CBC	Winding House	£62,700
Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC	Treorchy Cultural Hub	£128,400
Awen Cultural Trust	Maesteg Library / Town Hall fit out	£46,833
Cardiff CC	Rhiwbina Community Hub	£120,000
Cardiff CC	Cardiff Central children's library	£80,000

2020/2021

Organisation	Project Title	Grant awarded
Carmarthenshire CC	Llanelli library	£71,276
Awen Cultural Trust	Maesteg Library	£250,000
Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC	Rhondda Heritage Park	£80,780
Oriel Plas Glyn y Weddw	Sustainable services at Plas Glyn y Weddw	£190,000
Cynon Valley Museum Trust	Cynon Valley Museum developments	£60,000
Ceredigion CC	Ceredigion Museum - encouraging curiosity	£83,975
Carmarthenshire CC	Carmarthenshire Museum	£201,709
Monmouthshire CC	Abergavenny Community Hub	£100,000
Penmaenmawr Museum	Penmaenmawr Museum	£55,154.97
Vale Of Glamorgan CC	Penarth Library (priority 2 of 2)	£120,000
Cardiff CC	Museum of Cardiff	£120,000

2019/2020

Organisation	Project title	Grant awarded
Gwynedd CC	Llyfrgell Pwllheli	£120,000
Neath Port Talbot CBC	Skewen Library	£106,707
Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC	Ferndale Library Hub	£50,300
Aura Leisure & Libraries	Flint Library	£300,000
Cardiff CC	Rhydypennau community wellbeing hub	£120,000
Cardiff CC	Whitchurch community wellbeing hub	£105,000
Andrew Logan Museum Of Sculpture	ALMoS Clean-up	£9,737.00
Pembrokeshire CC	Scolton Manor Railway Garden	£86,070.00
Ceredigion CC	Ceredigion Archives	£120,000

2018/2019

Organisation	Project Title	Grant awarded
Conwy CBC	Old School, Bodlondeb	£300,000
Torfaen Museum Trust	Pontypool Museum	£99,000
Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC	Tonypandy Library Hub (2/2)	£120,000
Chardon Trust	Llandudno Museum	£51,000
Judging Lodging Trust Ltd	Judge's Lodging	£141,402
Pembrokeshire CC	Neyland Community Hub	£120,000
Newport CC	Ringland Neighbourhood Hub	£245,000
Carmarthenshire CC	Carmarthen Library	£120,000
Awen Cultural Trust	Pyle Library	£84,844

2017/2018

Organisation	Project title	Grant Awarded
Powys CC	Knighton Library	£96,610
Carmarthenshire CC	Ammanford Library	£72,454
Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC	Pontypridd Library	£300,000
Ceredigion CC	Ceredigion Museum	£31,608
Swansea Council (City and County)	Townhill Library	£125,840
Oriel Plas Glynn y Weddw	Storage facilities	£108,238
Isle of Anglesey CC	Holyhead Library	£152,068
Pembrokeshire CC	Scolton Manor Museum	£77,500
Pontypridd Museum	Pontypridd Museum improvements	£50,000
Isle of Anglesey CC	Oriel Ynys Mon improvements	£115,368
Denbighshire CC	Denbigh Library	£120,000
Wrexham CBC	Museum displays and storage	£87,680

Annex B: Sector organisations that contributed to the evaluation

Archive Council Wales
Association of Independent Museums
Museums Association
Museums and Galleries Federation
Society of Chief Librarians Cymru
Welsh Local Government Association

Annex C: UK-wide review of capital funding sources for the sector

UK wide capital funding

National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) strategic funding framework 2019-2024

The NLHF has distributed £8 billion to more than 44,000 projects since its establishment in 1994, with 29% allocated to museums, libraries, archives, and collections. Its strategic funding framework sets out the vision and principles that will guide their investment over a five-year period. It states that all decisions up to £5 million are taken locally (equivalent to 80% of all funding allocated), with a UK Board deciding on more strategic UK-wide interventions above that value. A per capita allocated budget of 4.8% is provided to Wales.

It sets six specific objectives within its strategic funding framework to:

- continue to bring heritage into better condition
- inspire people to value heritage more
- ensure that heritage is inclusive
- support the organisations it funds to be more robust, enterprising, and forward looking
- demonstrate how heritage helps people and places to thrive
- grow the contribution that heritage makes to the economy.[54]

Furthermore, it identifies two priority areas of focus following consultation with stakeholders and the public namely:

- landscapes and nature
- community heritage.

Organisations applying for the first time are prioritised for additional help, and there is an expectation that mainstream heritage organisations create more opportunities for collaboration with other partners. 13 local authority areas under-represented in the NLHF's funding to date have been identified and include two areas in Wales: Rhondda Cynon Taf and Neath Port Talbot.

The funding portfolio approach is simplified, with a single open funding programme for all types of heritage. The application processes and requirements have also been

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[54] National Lottery Heritage Fund (2019), Strategic Funding Framework 2019-24, p.14

shortened and simplified for smaller grants (under £250,000) with a quick decision process in place. Larger grants (£250,000 to £5 million) are expected to go through a two-stage process – an early EoI stage (with the submission of a brief project proposal) followed by a full application.

Investment adopts an outcomes-based approach. The outcomes are:

- heritage will be in a better condition
- heritage will be identified and better explained
- people will have developed skills
- people will have learnt about heritage, leading to change in ideas and actions
- people will have greater wellbeing
- a wider range of people will be involved in heritage
- the funded organisation will be more resilient
- the local area will be a better place to live, work or visit
- the local economy will be boosted.

All funded projects are expected to achieve the inclusion outcome: 'a wider range of people involved in heritage'[55].

The framework outlines the intention to run specific campaigns during the five-year period aimed at fulfilling strategic needs or funding gaps and stimulating innovation. These were expected to include a 'Digital Capabilities' campaign during 2019-21, a 'Dynamic Collections campaign' (2020-21) and 'Place' (2021-22).

A specific section of the framework on 'Museums and collecting' states the NLHF's intention to 'build on our previous investment in strategic collecting to support museums, archives and libraries across the UK through a heritage campaign focused on dynamic collecting' which could include the development of storage solutions; developing and rationalising collections, and utilising collections to benefit people and communities'[56].

England only capital funding programmes

Libraries Improvement Fund (Arts Council England)[57]

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[55] Ibid., p.32
[56] Ibid., p.54
[57] arts council

The Libraries Improvement Fund (LIF) is in place to enable library services in England to invest and upgrade buildings and technology. It aims to:

- enable libraries to develop more flexible, more commercial spaces
- increase and improve digital access
- connect libraries to their communities
- increase potential for transformation
- increase library use and
- increase sustainability.

It has a total fund of £5 million for 2021/22, and capital expenditure grants of between £50,000 and £5 million can be awarded. Applications must be made by a local authority on behalf of its library service but can include one or more branches. Other organisations can be partners in the applications.

The criteria for the fund is set by the Department of Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS) and Arts Council England (ACE), and the grants are administered, awarded, and monitored by ACE. Whilst there is no minimum partnership funding requirement, the competitive nature of the funding means that this is encouraged where possible. Funded activities are required to be ready to start by the end of April 2022 and can last up until 31 March 2025.

Eligible funded activities include:

- building projects to refurbish, improve or extend existing library buildings
- buying assets (furniture, equipment, or vehicles)
- improving access
- work to increase the environmental sustainability of libraries
- professional fees directly related to the above activities.

The LIF has a two-stage application process – an EoI and full application. For the EoI, a proposal in less than 2,500 characters (around 400 words) needs to be submitted that outlines what the project intends to do; how it contributes to the aims and objectives of LIF; the preparation work already undertaken and details of any partnership funding in place. The process seems to have recently moved to a digital application portal, 'Grantium'.

The full application comprises three sections:

- meeting the brief
- governance and management
- financial viability.

The full application must also include a cash flow, costed risk register and procurement method statement. Building projects must also include a cost plan, design specifications and an access audit.

A Programme Advisory Panel considers the applications and takes into account four factors to decide how well they fit into a balanced portfolio of grants:

- Geography – the location of the project and the type of local area it will benefit
- Risk – the extent of the risks to the overall balance of the project
- Strategic fit (with ACE's 'Let's Create' strategy)
- Type of project.

Museum Estate and Development Fund (Arts Council England)[58]

The Museum Estate and Development Fund (MEND) is an open-access capital fund for non-national accredited museums to undertake vital infrastructure and urgent maintenance. It aims to ensure that the investment creates:

- financially resilient and environmentally responsible museums
- increased environmental performance of buildings and equipment, supporting a reduction in carbon emissions
- improved ability to offer access and accommodate diverse user needs
- a strengthened contribution to local community and regeneration by preserving landmark buildings and ensuring accessible collections to the public.

It has a total fund of £18 million for 2021/22 and awards grants between £50,000 and £5 million. Non-national accredited museums or local authorities responsible for the maintenance of non-national accredited museum buildings are eligible to apply.

The criteria is set by DCMS, ACE, Historic England (HE) and the NLHF whilst ACE administers the grants. Eligible funded activities include:

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[58] arts council funding

- work that protects the fabric of the building (e.g., roofs, masonry, rainwater disposal system repair, walls, external doors and windows, other features)

- upgrades to building services (e.g., heating, ventilation, lifts, energy supplies, fire safety, water drainage and plumbing)

- work that protects exhibits and collections

- work that improves the environmental performance of museum infrastructure (e.g., LED lights, sustainable technologies, measures to reduce the risk of flooding)

- work that improves equality and access.

The application process is similar to the LIF – with a two-stage approach – an EoI, followed by a full application outlining how the proposal meets the brief; the governance and management of the activity and the financial viability of what is being proposed.

All applications are required to include a cash flow, cost plan, costed condition survey, design specifications, equality and diversity statement, financial statements for the previous financial year and latest management accounts, partnership funding evidence or fundraising plan, a procurement method statement, and a risk register. For applications between £500,000 to £5 million, a business plan, project management structure and timetable are also required.

A Programme Advisory Panel considers all applications against four factors:

- geographical spread – with a desire to support museums across England and to consider areas of low cultural engagement in particular

- risk – the extent of risks against the overall balance of projects

- type of museum – in terms of size, collection type and governance model

- project scale – with a desire to fund a mix of projects in terms of grant size and delivery timescale.

DCMS/Wolfson Fund

DCMS and the Wolfson Foundation have worked together for over 20 years to jointly fund grants to support museums to:

- improve displays and interpretation of collection to enhance visitor experience

- improve access/interpretation for visitors with disabilities and

- improve environmental controls, collection storage and conservation facilities to enhance collection care.

The fund currently offers grants of between £20,000 and £300,000 for eligible capital projects and is open to museums/museums services and universities with designated collections[59]; accredited museums/museums services and those sponsored by DCMS directly. Only one bid per museum service is considered during every round of bids. In total, 370 museums and galleries across 130 museums and museum groups are eligible for the scheme.

Funding cannot exceed 75% of total eligible costs and cannot cover professional fees, consultancy, internal staff costs or maintenance.

£4 million has been allocated for the current round of bids for 2022-24. Bids were submitted between May and July, and an assessment panel consisting of DCMS, and Wolfson Foundation representatives and expert external assessors are expected to convene in the Autumn to assess bids against the core criteria (set out in 5.25). In assessing the bids, the Panel will also consider the effect of the investment on the financial sustainability of the museum (including increased projected visitor numbers); the role played by the institution in the local community, the geographical dispersal of sites supported, and any previous support received. Successful awards will be announced by the end of 2022. Projects can claim their funding in up to four drawdown windows between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024. Project evaluations must be submitted within six months of the final drawdown.

Cultural Development Fund[60]

In 2022, the Cultural Development Fund was set up to provide capital investment in 'transformative place-based creative and cultural initiatives[61].' Its aim is to unlock growth and productivity and promote economic and social recovery in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. It looks to support places that can:

- unlock local economic growth and productivity

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[59] Since 1997, England have had a Designation Scheme which identifies and celebrates outstanding collections held in museums, archives, and libraries. The aim is to raise the profile of the collections and encourage all to safeguard them. Scotland has a Recongition Scheme. There is no equivalent scheme in Wales.
[60] arts council
[61] Ibid.

- become more attractive places to live, work, visit and invest

- strengthen local leadership, partnership, and capability[62].

A total of £30 million is being made available for 2022-23, with grants awarded between £2-5 million. Applicants apply for capital activity with a limited proportion also allowed for revenue activity up to a maximum of £700,000 of the total budget. Successful grant applicants will be notified of their application's success or otherwise by March 2023 and will be required to find at least 15% match funding. The grant will need to be spent by end of March 2026.

Partnership applications are expected, led by a local authority, a Local Enterprise Partnership or other appropriate body in England.

The fund has a two stage-process. The Expressions of Interest are reviewed by an Expert Advisory Panel which invite potential applicants to submit a full application.

Scotland

Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS) run several funding streams on behalf of the Scottish Government to support museums specifically in dealing with the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and to build resilience. In January 2022, the Scottish Government announced that £1 million additional funding was being made available to support capital-based resilience projects. Their funding programme includes:

Small Grants Fund[63]

This fund supports small-scale project activities aimed at building operational resilience, re-engaging with audiences, addressing critical repairs or maintenance, or improving environmental sustainability.

Applications for up to £15,000 (or £10,000 for non-accredited museums[64]) can be made. The fund is flexible and able to cover a range of revenue and capital costs including:

- resources and equipment for engagement projects

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[62] arts council
[63] museums and galleries scotland
[64] Eligibility has been extended to non-accredited museums for the 2022 round of Small Grants only, due to the exceptional circumstances resulting from the ongoing impact of COVID-19.

- updates and improvements to displays

- new exhibitions

- improved digital access

- urgent repairs to buildings and facilities

- urgent collection conservation

- improvements to collection storage and management

- upgrades to heating or lighting to more energy efficient systems

- installing solar panels, air source heat pumps or other methods of improving energy performance and reduce running costs

- installation of double glazing, insulation, or other measures.

No more than two applications can be submitted during 2021/22 and the funding must cover activity for up to one year from the date of award. A simple application process requires applicants to answer questions around describing the specific issued they are seeking to address; how the need was identified or why it is urgent; and evidence of the need for the work.

Museum Capital Resilience Fund[65]

This £1 million capital fund is aimed at supporting capital projects that are to be carried out during the 2022/23 financial year and can support a range of measures aimed at reducing costs such as:

- increasing energy efficiency and reducing running costs

- improvements to the visitor offer

- investment in income generation (e., g. events space, café, or retail)

- critical repairs and preventative maintenance.

Grants between £3,000-£75,000 are available (although the maximum award for non-accredited museums is capped at £20,000). Eligible costs include building work and the purchase and installation of assets that will be in use for at least three years. Project management and professional fees can also be covered.

The application form is addressed against four key criteria:

- need – for the work proposed and the financial support to deliver it

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[65] museums galleries scotland

- impact – the demonstrable difference it will make

- deliverability – how well-planned and costed the project in question is deemed to be

- environmental impact – priority will be given to applications that can directly reduce carbon emissions and create positive environmental impact.

Northern Ireland

No examples of specific capital grant funding from government could be found in Northern Ireland.

Grant schemes delivered by trusts and foundations

Art Fund[66]

A new funding partnership with the Museum Development Network (MDN) to support museums across the UK who have not been able to access emergency grants, or to support smaller museums fulfilling specific local needs is launching soon. It is not clear at this stage whether this will fund any capital works.

Garfield Weston Foundation[67]

The foundation donates over £80 million annually and supports a range of charitable activity in many sectors including museums and heritage. The foundation prefers to support charities delivering services and activities directly to those in need. The foundation will contribute towards revenue, project specific and/or capital costs, but does not tend to support more than 10% of the total budget. As such, there is an expectation that organisations secure at least half of the required funding before they apply.

Clore Duffield Foundation[68]

The foundation's grant making support is directed towards performing and visual arts, culture, and heritage – particularly where it is engaging children and young people with art and culture. They support registered charities across the UK. The foundation is not currently accepting applications for funding.

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[66] art fund supporting museums funding grants formuseums
[67] Garfield Weston
[68] Clore Duffield

Wolfson Foundation[69]

The foundation's main grants programme provides support for places. It funds capital initiatives (new buildings or refurbishment) and equipment for organisations across a range of sectors including education, science and medicine, health, heritage, humanities, and the arts.

The foundation supports libraries and archives 'caring for nationally significant collections and which have a clear emphasis on public access and engagement.' The grants tend to be awarded for collection storage facilities and education/interpretation spaces.

The foundation also awards grants for the refurbishment or creation of new galleries, and occasionally, education and learning spaces for museums undertaking projects to improve the display and interpretation of 'nationally significant collections for the public.'

To be eligible, the museums, libraries or archives must be operated by a registered charity or local authority. The museums or archives must be fully accredited. All must hold a permanent collection of national significance[70].

The project must produce at least one of the following outcomes:

- Excellent interpretation
- Better public engagement with and understanding of collections
- Increased numbers of visitors
- Improved future sustainability of the organisation
- Conservation of architectural heritage.

The minimum grant amount is £15,000. The usual grant range for libraries and archives is £15,000-£100,000. The usual grant range for museums is £50,000-£500,000. Match funding is required if the project cost is greater than £50,000. Grants will not cover overheads, maintenance costs and VAT.

There is a two-stage online application process, with two funding rounds each year. During the first stage a brief description of the project is required including the total

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[69] Wolfson
[70] Wales does not have an equivalent scheme which recognises collections of national significance held by non-National Museums.

cost, current funding shortfall and the proposed timetable. Successful applicants will then be invited to complete a stage 2 application. This invitation will remain open for three funding rounds. At this point, projects above £50,000 need to demonstrate that at least 25% of capital costs have been secured. A panel of expert reviewers consider applications who make recommendations to the Board of Trustees.

Annex D: Discussion Guide for interviews with Welsh Government staff and key sector stakeholders

Background

1. Tell me about:
   - your role
   - knowledge of and/or involvement with the Transformation Capital Grant programme

Aims, objectives and rationale

2. What are the aims and objectives of the TCGP?
   a. What issues is the TCGP trying to address?
3. Which Welsh Government strategic priorities for the museums, archives, and libraries sectors would you expect the TCGP to contribute? Probe re contribution to:
   a. Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015)
   b. Programme of Government priorities - 2016-21 and 2021-26
   c. The equalities agenda
   d. Climate change priorities
   e. How appropriate are these priorities for your sector?

4. What type of activities does the TCGP look to fund?
   a. The term transformation is included in the grant programme's title. What does that mean to you?
   b. To what extent do the activities funded by the TCGP lead to transformational change?

5. To what extent does the grant programme target funds at those organisations most in need of investment?
   a. Are there certain groups that are currently missing out on opportunities for capital funding through the TCGP? If so, why is this?
   b. What changes to programme scope might be required to target these groups/organisations more effectively?

Appropriateness of programme design and administration

6. How appropriate is the design of the fund? Probe in terms of:
   a. its strategic priorities (guidance / grant criteria)?
   b. applicant eligibility criteria?
   c. the level and duration of funding available?
   d. the appropriateness of Band A and Band B funding limits?
   e. the Expression of Interest (EoI) and application process?
   f. the annual funding cycle?

g. What changes, if any, should be made to the design of the fund?

7. What works well / not so well around the application process?
    a. How effective is the promotion of the grant funding and the communication with potential applicants? (i.e., how well known is the TCGP?)
    b. How effective is the application appraisal and decision-making process?
    c. What improvement to the application process have you seen, if any, during the five-year period 2017-22?
8. What is the typical profile of successful applicants?
    a. What do you perceive to be their motivation for applying?
9. What are your thoughts on why some organisations do not apply?
    a. What are the specific barriers they might face?
    b. Probe re: capacity, capability, and confidence of staff to produce applications
    c. Probe re: ability in the sector to project manage and deliver within one year
10. To what extent does the fund encourage and enable partnership bids? (i.e., cross-sector or cross-organisation bids)?
    a. What are the enablers and barriers?
    b. Should this be encouraged? Why do you say that? If so, how should this be done?

Programme delivery

11. How effective is the programme management of the TCGP by Welsh Government?
    a. What works well?
    b. Is there anything that could be improved?

12. What are your views on the quality and appropriateness of the reporting by funded projects?
    a. To what extent are the monitoring and evaluation processes in place able to capture project outputs and outcomes (including longer-term outcomes?)
13. What are your views on the nature of projects funded via the TCGP to date?
    a. To what extent do funded projects support the programme to achieve its aims and objectives?
    b. To what extent are funded projects able to deliver within the timescale provided?
    c. To what extent are they able to deliver within budget?

14. What are your views on the outputs of funded projects funded via the TCGP to date? Probe for evidence of:
    a. new facilities, equipment or digital services being established
    b. 'Excellent' on the BREEAM assessment framework being achieved
    c. 10% minimum standard for recycled content being achieved

15. To what extent is the programme **developing more sustainable models of service delivery**? Probe for evidence of:
    a. Improved resource efficiency
    b. Reduction in energy/water usage
    c. Increased use of renewable energy sources?

16. To what extent is the programme **enhancing the services being provided to people and their communities**? Probe for evidence of:
    a. Increased accessibility (physical and digital)
    b. Improved IT provision/Wi-Fi
    c. More modern/attractive service environment
    d. Increase in visitor/user numbers

17. To what extent is the programme **making improvements to collection development, care, and access**? Probe for evidence of:
    a. Improved environmental stability of collections
    b. Collections becoming more accessible

18. To what extent is the programme **enabling services to deliver against strategic priorities?** Probe for evidence of delivery against:
    a. Local priorities (including strategic priorities for funding and investment at the organisation/department/local authority)
    b. Regional priorities
    c. National priorities (e.g., Programme for Government, MAL sector specific strategic priorities)

19. To what extent is the programme **enabling service quality to be maintained or developed?** Probe for evidence of delivery against:
    a. Archive service accreditation
    b. Museum Accreditation scheme
    c. Welsh Public Library Standards
    d. Welsh Language Act
    e. Equality Act 2010
    f. Other quality assurance schemes or standards

20. What external factors have had a bearing on the ability of the TCGP to achieve its outputs and outcomes? Probe for impact of:
    a. funding/investment priorities at LA level / other funders' priorities

b. procurement, availability and cost of materials and contractors
c. COVID-19 pandemic
d. availability of other capital grant sources (probe re: which ones)

21. What barriers and challenges, if any, do funded projects face in trying to achieve their outputs and outcomes?
    a. How could these be mitigated against?

22. To what extent has the TCGP enabled any unexpected outcomes or consequences?
    a. What are these?

23. To what extent have funded projects enabled long-term outcomes for the sector to be achieved? Probe for evidence of:
    a. Services being sustained
    b. Collections being protected for the future
    c. Increase in joint working across organisations, local authorities, and regions
    d. Increased co-location of MAL services
    e. MAL services contributing to wider regeneration priorities

Lessons learned / Future needs

24. What are the key lessons you would highlight from your involvement with the TCGP?

25. What are the current funding priorities/needs for your sector?
    a. What specific capital funding priorities/needs does it currently have?
        i. Probe for any physical infrastructure needs e.g., establish new facilities, purchase new equipment
        ii. Probe for any digital infrastructure needs e.g., establish digital services

26. What changes or improvements might be required to the programme so that it can respond more effectively in future to the priorities for your sector?

Annex E: Discussion Guide for interviews with successful and non-successful applicants

Background

1. Tell me about
   a. your role
   b. involvement with the Transformation Capital Grant programme (probe re: involvement with specific applications, funding year, successful/unsuccessful outcome for the applications)

Aims, objectives and rationale *[all]*

2. How would you describe the aims and objectives of the TCGP?
   a. What issues is the TCGP trying to address?

3. Why is the TCGP needed in your opinion?
   a. To what extent does it respond to your capital requirements?
   b. What other capital support would be useful for you as an organisation?

Appropriateness of programme design and administration *[all]*

4. What are your views of the grant programme's design? Probe in terms of:
   a. the appropriateness of the strategic priorities/grant criteria
   b. the suitability of the level of funding available?
   c. the appropriateness of Band A and Band B funding limits?
   d. the annual funding cycle?
   e. What changes, if any, should be made?

5. What works well / not so well around the application process? Probe in terms of:
   a. the clarity of the guidance
   b. the appropriateness of the EoI and application stages?
   c. the usefulness of any support provided by your sector adviser at Welsh Government?
   d. what improvement have you seen, if any, during the five-year period 2017-22?
   e. What changes, if any, should be made?
6. What motivated you to apply for the fund?
   a. Did you feel that you had the necessary capacity, capability, and confidence within your staff to produce an application?
   b. How likely would you be to apply again? Why is that?

7. [*For unsuccessful applicants only*] What are your views on the feedback received on your unsuccessful application?

a. How could this be improved?

8. [*For successful applicants only*] What are your views on the project management requirements for the fund?
    a. What effect did the one-year limit to deliver the project have?
    b. What barriers or challenges, if any, did you face?

9. To what extent does the fund encourage and enable partnership bids in your opinion? (i.e., cross-sector or cross-organisation bids)?
    a. To what extent would partnership bids be of interest/be useful?
    b. What are the enablers and barriers?

10. [*For successful applicants only*] How effective are the monitoring and management arrangements in place for the TCGP? Probe re:
    a. communication between WG and funded projects
    b. quarterly reporting
    c. end of project reporting
    d. claims process and payment of funds?
    e. How could these be improved?

Programme delivery *[successful applicants only]*

11. What was the nature of your project(s)?
    a. What did you aim to achieve?
    b. How did this contribute to your overall strategic plan?

12. Did you need to adjust your project(s) to fit the funding criteria at all?
    a. If so, in what way?
    b. What other sources of income (if any) did you secure/try to secure?

13. What outputs did your project(s) achieve? [e.g., new facilities, equipment, or digital services]
    a. How do these outputs compare to your original plans?
    b. What accounts for any change or difference to project outputs?
    c. What impacts have these changes made to your service?

14. To what extent has your funded project(s) achieved **a more sustainable model of service delivery**? Probe for evidence of:
    a. Improved resource efficiency
    b. Reduction in energy/water usage
    c. Increased use of renewable energy sources

15. To what extent has your project(s) **enhanced the services being provided to people in your community?** Probe for evidence of:
    a. Increased accessibility (physical and digital)

b. Improved IT provision/Wi-Fi
c. More modern/attractive service environment
d. Increase in visitor/user numbers

16. To what extent has your project(s) made **improvements to collection development, care, and access**? Probe for evidence of:
    a. Improved environmental stability of collections
    b. Collections becoming more accessible

17. To what extent has your project(s) **enabled your services to deliver against strategic priorities?** Probe for evidence of delivery against:
    a. Local priorities (including strategic priorities for funding and investment at the organisation/department/local authority)
    b. Regional priorities
    c. National priorities (e.g., Programme for Government, MAL strategic priorities)

18. To what extent has your project(s) **enabled service quality to be maintained or developed? (as appropriate)** Probe for evidence of delivery against:
    a. Archive service accreditation
    b. Museum Accreditation scheme
    c. Welsh Public Library Standards
    d. Welsh Language Act
    e. Equality Act 2010
    f. Other quality assurance schemes or standards

19. What external factors have had a bearing on the ability of your project to achieve its outputs and outcomes? Probe for impact of:
    a. funding/investment priorities at LA level
    b. procurement, availability and cost of materials and contractors
    c. COVID-19 pandemic
    d. Availability of other capital grant sources (probe regarding which ones)
20. What barriers and challenges, if any, have you faced in trying to achieve your outputs and outcomes?
    a. How could these be mitigated against?

21. To what extent has the TCGP funding enabled any unexpected outcomes or consequences for your project?
    a. What are these?
22. To what extent had the TCGP funding enabled your project to secure long-term outcomes? Probe for evidence of:
    a. Services being sustained
    b. Collections being protected for the future
    c. Increase in joint working across organisations, LAs and regions

d. Increased co-location of MAL services

e. MAL services contributing to wider regeneration priorities

Lessons learned / Future needs *[all]*

23. What are the current funding priorities or needs (if any) for your organisation/service?

    a. What specific capital funding priorities/needs do you currently have?

        i. Probe for any physical infrastructure needs e.g., establish new facilities, purchase new equipment

        ii. Probe for any digital infrastructure needs e.g., establish digital services

    b. How likely are you to source funding for this/these priorities?

    c. Which funding streams would you consider?

24. What are the key lessons you would highlight from your involvement with the TCGP?

25. What changes or improvements might be required to respond more effectively in future to the priorities for your sector?

Annex F: Discussion Guide for interviews with eligible organisations who have not applied

Background

1. Tell me about
   a. your role
   b. knowledge of the Transformation Capital Grant programme
2. Have you ever considered applying for the Transformation Capital Grant programme?
   a. Why have you not applied for the Transformation Capital Grant programme to date?
   b. How likely are you to apply in the future? Why is that?

Aims, objectives and rationale

3. What are the aims and objectives of the TCGP?
   a. What issues do you think the TCGP is trying to address?

4. To what extent does the grant programme target funds at those organisations most in need of investment?
   a. Are there certain groups that are currently missing out on opportunities for capital funding through the TCGP? If so, why is this?
   b. What changes to programme scope might be required to target these groups/organisations more effectively?

Appropriateness of grant design

5. [*If relevant*] What are your views of the grant programme's design?
   Probe in terms of:
   a. the appropriateness of the strategic priorities/grant criteria
   b. the suitability of the level of funding available?
   c. the appropriateness of Band A and Band B funding limits?

6. Under what conditions would you consider applying for the fund? [If needed probe e.g., longer timescale, support to develop a bid etc]
   a. To what extent do you feel that you have the necessary capacity, capability, and confidence within your staffing structure to produce an application should you wish to do so?
   b. To what extent do you feel that you would have the necessary staffing and time to project manage the delivery of any funded project?
   c. What support would make you more likely to/able to apply in future?

7. What current barriers or challenges do you face (if any) that may hinder you from applying for the fund? Probe around:

a. funding/investment priorities at LA level
b. COVID-19 pandemic
c. availability of other capital grant sources (probe regarding which ones)
d. other barriers/challenges

8. How likely would you be to consider a partnership bid? (i.e., cross-sector or cross-organisation bids)?
   a. What would be the enablers and barriers to this?
   b. What could be done to encourage this?

Lessons learned / Future needs

9. What are the current funding priorities or needs (if any) for your organisation/service?
   a. What specific capital funding priorities/needs do you currently have?
      i. Probe for any physical infrastructure needs e.g., establish new facilities, purchase new equipment
      ii. Probe for any digital infrastructure needs e.g., establish digital services
   b. How likely are you to source funding for this/these priorities?
   c. Which funding streams would you consider?

10. To what extent (if at all) does your organisation/service currently require funding to:
    a. achieved **a more sustainable model of service delivery**? (e.g., to improve resource efficiency, reduce energy/water usage, increased use of renewable energy sources
    b. **enhance the services being provided to people in your community?** (e.g., increase accessibility (physical and digital); improve IT provision/Wi-Fi, create a more modern/attractive service environment; increase in visitor/user numbers)
    c. **improve collection development, care, and access**? (e.g., improve environmental stability of collections, make collections more accessible)
    d. **enable your services to deliver against local, regional, or national strategic priorities?**
    e. **enabled service quality to be maintained or developed?**

11. What changes or improvements might be required to the TCGP to enable it to respond more effectively in future to the challenges and priorities that you currently face?

Annex G: Survey with successful and non-successful applicants

Transformation Capital Grant Programme (TCGP)

Applicants and Funded Projects Online Survey

This bilingual web survey is intended to be completed by both unsuccessful and successful EoI applicants who have applied for TCGP funding. The survey is routed so that respondents view only those questions which are relevant to them. The routing is visible in this version of the survey. The survey will be hosted as an online survey, with a link provided to the Welsh Government for distribution.

Introduction

OB3 Research has been commissioned by the Welsh Government to undertake an evaluation of the Transformation Capital Grant Programme (TCGP) for museums, archives, and libraries.

As part of this evaluation, we would like to gather feedback from applicants and funded projects and kindly ask that you complete this brief questionnaire to tell us about your funding application and, if appropriate, your delivery experience.

Your response will be kept anonymous and confidential.

More information is available about the evaluation, including a Privacy Notice setting out how we will use the feedback gleaned, [here](#).

A hoffech lenwi'r holiadur yma yn:

Would you like to complete this questionnaire in:

❑ English
❑ Y Gymraeg

A1. Are you responding as a (tick all that apply):

- ❑ Local authority public library service
- ❑ Trust / not for profit company delivering a library service on behalf of a local authority
- ❑ Community run library (e.g., run by a registered charity or CIC)
- ❑ Local authority run museum
- ❑ Independently run museum
- ❑ Local authority archive service
- ❑ Trust / not for profit company delivering an archive service on behalf of a local authority
- ❑ Other

Please specify below:

_____

A2. What best describes your experience of applying for Transformation Capital Grant funding (tick all that apply):

- ❑ Successfully applied for Transformation Capital Grant funding
- ❑ Was successful at EoI stage but was not awarded Transformation Capital Grant funding at full application stage
- ❑ Applied for the Transformation Capital Grant at EoI stage but did not proceed further
- ❑ Other

Please specify below:

_____

Hearing about the Transformation Capital Grant Programme

B1. How did you first come to hear about the TCGP?

[Select all that apply]

- ❑ Welsh Government press release or announcement
- ❑ Welsh Government MAL staff team
- ❑ At an information event or network
- ❑ From sector organisations (e.g., SCL, ARCW or Federation of Museums & Art Galleries of Wales)
- ❑ From other organisations or groups
- ❑ From colleagues
- ❑ Other
- ❑ Don't know

B2. **How easy, or otherwise, was it to access information about the TCGP during the application process?**

- ❑ Very easy
- ❑ Fairly easy
- ❑ Fairly difficult
- ❑ Very difficult
- ❑ Don't know

B3. **How, if at all, could information about the TCGP have been better promoted and communicated?**

_____

B4. **How easy, or otherwise, was it for your project to fit the fund's priorities and criteria?**

- ❑ Very easy
- ❑ Fairly easy
- ❑ Fairly difficult
- ❑ Very difficult
- ❑ Don't know

B5. **What other priorities or criteria, should be considered as part of the Transformation Capital Grant programme criteria?**

_____

The TCGP application process

C1. **[If A2=1] Were you required to submit an Expression of Interest (EoI) before you could continue to the full application stage?**

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No
- ❑ Don't know/Not sure/Can't remember

C2. **[If A2=2 or C1=1] Did you contact a Welsh Government Museums, Archives and Libraries (MAL) adviser to support you with your EoI application?**
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No
- ❑ Don't know/Not sure/Can't remember

C3 [If C2=1] How useful or otherwise was this support?

C4 [If C2-2] Why did you not use the support of a Welsh Government MAL adviser for your EoI?
- ❑ Did not need support
- ❑ Did not know the support was available
- ❑ Other [please specify]

C5. [If A2=2 or C1=1] What, if anything, would you identify as the strengths of the EoI process?

_____
_____

C6. **What, if anything, was challenging about the EoI process?**

_____
_____

C7. **[If A2=3] What did you think of the feedback provided by the Welsh Government on your unsuccessful EoI?**

_____
_____

C8. **[If A2=NOT 3] How easy, or otherwise, did you find the process of preparing a TCGP full application?**
- ❑ Very easy
- ❑ Fairly easy
- ❑ Fairly difficult
- ❑ Very difficult
- ❑ Don't know

C9. **[If A2=NOT 3] What, if anything would you identify as the strengths of the TCGP full application process?**

_____
_____

C10. **[If A2=NOT 3] What, if anything, was challenging about the TCGP full application process?**

_____

_____

C11. **How helpful was the Welsh Government Museums, Archives and Libraries (MAL) team during the application stage?**

- ❑ Very helpful
- ❑ Fairly helpful
- ❑ Not particularly helpful
- ❑ Not at all helpful
- ❑ Don't know

C12. **What difference did any advice provided by the Welsh Government MAL team make to your application?**

- ❑ Significant difference
- ❑ Some difference
- ❑ No particular difference
- ❑ No difference at all
- ❑ Did not receive any advice
- ❑ Don't know

C13. **[If C9=1,2] In what way did the advice provided by the Welsh Government MAL team make a difference to your application?**

_____

_____

C14. **In what way, if at all, could the TCGP application process have been improved or made easier for your project?**

_____

_____

Project delivery (Successful Projects)

D1. **[If A2=1] How straightforward are the Welsh Government TCGP reporting requirements?**

- ❑ Very straightforward
- ❑ Fairly straightforward
- ❑ Not particularly straightforward
- ❑ Not at all straightforward
- ❑ Don't know

D2. **[If A2=1] What changes, if any, would you wish to see made to the TCGP reporting requirements for your project(s)?**

_____

_____

D3. **[If A2=1] How well has your project(s) managed to deliver against its funded outputs (i.e., new facilities, equipment or digital services established)?**

- ❑ Very well
- ❑ Fairly well
- ❑ Not particularly well
- ❑ Not well at all
- ❑ Don't know

D4. **[If A2=1] What accounts for this?**

_____

_____

D5. [If A2=1] What difference to the sustainability of your service, has your project(s) made (to date) in terms of?
(Please tick all that apply across any funded projects)

	Significant difference	Some difference	No particular difference	No difference at all	Don't know	Not applicable
Reduced energy and/or water usage	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Improved resource efficiency	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Increased use of renewable energy sources	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Increased use of digital and mobile technology	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Other	(please specify)					

D6. **[If A2=1] What enhancements to the services provided to the community has your project(s) made (to date) in terms of? (Please tick all that apply across any funded projects)**

	Significant difference	Some difference	No particular difference	No difference at all	Don't know	Not applicable
Increased accessibility to physical spaces	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

	Significant difference	Some difference	No particular difference	No difference at all	Don't know	Not applicable
Increased accessibility to digital services	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Improved IT provision and/or Wi-Fi	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Created more modern/attractive service environment	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Increased number of visitors	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Increased number of users of digital services	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Other [please specify]						

D7. **[If A2=1] What difference has your project(s) made (to date) in terms of? (Please tick all that apply across any funded projects)**

	Significant difference	*Some difference*	*No particular difference*	*No difference at all*	*Don't know*	*Not applicable*
Improved environmental stability of collections	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Increased accessibility to collections	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Services delivering against local/regional/national priorities	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Services achieving relevant quality standards	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Other [please specify]	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

D8. **[If A2=1] What difference, has your project(s) achieved (to date) in terms of? (Please tick all that apply across any funded projects)**

	Significant difference	*Some difference*	*No particular difference*	*No difference at all*	*Don't know*	Not applicable
Services have been sustained / saved from closure	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Collections have been protected for future generations	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Increased joint working with other organisations	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Increased co-location with other MAL services	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Services contributing to
wider community
regeneration

Other [please specify]

❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑

D9. **[A2=1] Please add any further detail or comments on the difference made by your project(s):**

_____

_____

Unsuccessful applications

E1. **[If A2=2+3] With unsuccessful applications, have you applied to other sources for funding to support your proposed project(s)?**

❑ Yes
❑ No
❑ Unsure

E2. **[If E1=1] Have you secured other funds to support your proposed project(s)?**

❑ Yes
❑ No
❑ Awaiting outcome
❑ Unsure

E3. **[If E2=1] Please provide details for these other sources of funding applied for:**

_____

_____

Final section

F1. **Overall, how would you rate your experience of the TCGP?**

❑ 5 (Excellent)
❑ 4
❑ 3
❑ 2
❑ 1 (Very poor)

F2. **What changes, if any, would you wish to see made to the Transformation Capital Grant Programme?**

_____

_____

Annex H: Survey with eligible organisations that did not apply

Transformation Capital Grant Programme (TCGP)

Applicants and Funded Projects Online Survey

This bilingual web survey is intended to be completed by organisations who are eligible but have not applied for funding from the Welsh Government's Transformation Capital Grant programme for museums, archives, and libraries. The survey is routed so that respondents view only those questions which are relevant to them. The routing is visible in this version of the survey. The survey will be hosted as an online survey, with a link provided to the Welsh Government for distribution.

Introduction

OB3 Research has been commissioned by the Welsh Government to undertake an evaluation of the Transformation Capital Grant Programme (TCGP).

As part of this evaluation, we would like to gather feedback from organisations who are eligible to apply for the Welsh Government's Transformation Capital Grant Programme for museums, archives, and libraries, but have not yet done so.
We kindly ask that you complete this brief questionnaire to tell us your views and opinions of the grant programme and what changes you might like to see to a capital grant programme for the sector that would better fit your needs.
Your response will be kept anonymous and confidential.

More information is available about the evaluation, including a Privacy Notice setting out how we will use the feedback gleaned, [here](#).

A hoffech lenwi'r holiadur yma yn:

Would you like to complete this questionnaire in:

- ❑ English
- ❑ Y Gymraeg

Background

A1. **Are you responding as a (tick all that apply):**

- ❑ Local authority public library service
- ❑ Trust / not for profit company delivering a library service on behalf of a local authority
- ❑ Community run library (e.g., run by a registered charity or CIC)
- ❑ Local authority run museum
- ❑ Independently run museum
- ❑ Local authority archive service
- ❑ Trust / not for profit company delivering an archive service on behalf of a local authority
- ❑ Other

Please specify below:

_____

_____

A2.

How have you previously heard about the Transformation Capital Grant programme?
[Select all that apply]
- ❑ Welsh Government press release or announcement
- ❑ Welsh Government Museums, Archives, Libraries staff team
- ❑ At an information event or network
- ❑ From sector organisations (e.g., SCL, ARCW or Federation of Museums & Art Galleries of Wales)
- ❑ From other organisations or groups
- ❑ From colleagues
  Have not previously heard about it
- ❑ Other
- ❑ Don't know

Applying Transformation Capital Grant programme

B1. Has your organisation ever applied for the Transformation Capital Grant programme?
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

B2. [If B1=1] Please click on this link [add hyperlink] to fill in a survey about your experience of applying to the Transformation Capital Grant programme

B3. Has your organisation ever considered applying for the Transformation Capital Grant programme?
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

B4. **[If B3=2] Why have you not considered applying to the TCGP to date?**

_____

_____

B5. **How likely are you to apply in the near future?**

- ❏ Very likely
- ❏ Fairly likely
- ❏ Unlikely
- ❏ Very unlikely
- ❏ Don't know

B6. **[If B5=1,2,3,4] Why do you say that?**

_____

_____

B7. To what extent do the following barriers currently hinder you from applying for the fund?

	To a large extent	To some extent	Not particularly	Not at all	Don't know
Lack of staff time/capacity to prepare a funding application	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Lack of expertise to prepare funding bids	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Lack of confidence to prepare funding bids	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Lack of support/agreement within the organisation to apply for funding	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Lack of staff time/capacity to project manage a capital funded project	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Lack of knowledge and expertise to deliver a capital funded project	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Lack of confidence to project manage a capital funded project	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Having to deliver the capital funded project within one year	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Other funding priorities within the organisation/service taking precedence	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

B8. How, if at all, could information about the TCGP be better promoted and communicated?

_____
_____

B9. What other barriers or challenges make it difficult for you to apply for the TCGP funding?

_____
_____

B10. What changes (if any) would you like to see to the current application process?

_____
_____

B11. What support (if any) would be useful and helpful in preparing a funding application?

_____
_____

Funding Criteria

C1. How do your current capital investment needs fit with the TCGP's funding priorities in your opinion?

❑   Very easily
❑   Fairly easily
❑   Fairly difficult
❑   Very difficult
❑   Don't know
           Don't have any current capital investment needs

C2. To what extent would any of the following changes to the design of the grant programme make you more likely to apply?

	To a large extent	To some extent	Not particularly	Not at all	Don't know
Support from Welsh Government at initial/Expression of Interest stage	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Grant programme allows applications for smaller capital projects (i.e., under £20k)	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Grant programme allows applications for larger capital projects (i.e., over £300k)	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Capital project can be delivered over a longer timescale (i.e., more than one year)	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
More flexibility to respond to changes in cost and availability of materials/contractors	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

C3. What additional or other changes would you like to see to the design of the Transformation Capital Grant programme:

_____

_____

C5. To what extent (if at all) does your organisation/service currently require funding to:

	To a large extent	To some extent	Not particularly	Not at all	Don't know
Reduce energy and/or water usage	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Improve resource efficiency	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Increase use of renewable energy sources	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Increase digital and mobile technology use	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

C6. To what extent (if at all) does your organisation/service currently require funding to:

	To a large extent	To some extent	Not particularly	Not at all	Don't know
Increase accessibility to physical spaces	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Increase accessibility to digital services	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Improve IT provision and/or Wi-Fi	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Create a more modern/attractive service environment	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Increase number of visitors	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Increase number of users of digital services	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

C7. To what extent (if at all) does your organisation/service currently require funding to:

	To a large extent	To some extent	Not particularly	Not at all	Don't know
Increase accessibility to collections	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Deliver a service against local/regional/national priorities	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Achieve relevant quality standards	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

C8. To what extent (if at all) does your organisation/service currently require funding to:

	To a large extent	To some extent	Not particularly	Not at all	Don't know
Sustain service/save from closure	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Protect collections for future generations	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Increase joint working with other organisations	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Increase co-location with other MAL services	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Contribute to wider community regeneration	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

C9. What other capital funding priorities do you have that are not currently eligible to be funded under the TCGP?

_____
_____

We would like to conduct short interviews with a few survey respondents to discuss the Transformation Capital Grant programme and how it could be adapted for the future to respond to the needs of the sector. If you are happy to be contacted for a short conversation with one of our researchers, please provide your contact details below:
Name:
Organisation:
Contact number or email:

Thank you for completing this survey.

Please click on the [Submit] button below to send your responses to us.