

A MANIFESTO FOR MUSEUMS

Building Outstanding Museums
for the 21st Century

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Our national and regional museums and galleries are the envy of the world. They exist for the benefit of the whole nation and for the wider international community.

We preserve the past, define the present and educate for the future. Our collections present the material evidence of the creativity of humankind and the riches of the natural world; they inspire, enthrall and enlighten.

We are a mirror to our own times and illuminate developments in our culture and society. We offer a place of education, community, discovery and reflection, a shelter from the pressures of our daily lives, and inspiration for our inner beings.

We have a responsibility to preserve, display, research and enhance our collections. We present the United Kingdom to the world and the world to the diverse peoples of the United Kingdom. We are and internationally admired for our expertise, quality and diversity.

At the core of our public service lies our ability to inspire curiosity and stimulate learning. By providing concrete experiences of the world's culture and achievement, we act as unsurpassed generators of ideas. We are essential centres of learning for students of all ages, scholars and creators, as well as for our millions of visitors, both physical and virtual, from every community and cultural background.

Our value is more than our service as providers of education and learning opportunities. As stewards of our great collections, we make enormous contributions in many other areas. We stimulate creativity and enrich the cultural, social and economic life, not only of our nation, but of the whole world.

**Now we must invest for the future so we have the
21st century museums we deserve**

THE CONTRIBUTION OF MUSEUMS

The scale of the UK's museums and galleries:

Throughout England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales museums play a crucial role in helping drive and support each Nation's cultural and economic vitality.

The potential for regional museums across England to inspire audiences is at last beginning to be realised through Renaissance in the Regions. This groundbreaking national programme is steering new government investment into regional museums for the benefit of communities throughout the country. Led by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), Renaissance brings together selected museums into 'Regional Hubs' as part of a national framework that includes Regional Agencies, national museums, Designated Collections and other key partners. It is transforming the way museums work with each other, and the way audiences use them.

- The 2,500 museums in the UK receive more than 100 million visits each year; more than to all the country's live sporting events combined.
- Investment in museums pays: the three regional Hubs, which were funded in the first phase of the Renaissance in the Regions programme saw visits increase by 7% this year.
- 37% of UK adult residents, over 17 million people, visit museums and galleries at least once a year. This is one of the highest proportions in Europe.
- 50% of school age children visit museums and galleries at least once a year.
- Museum visitors come from diverse backgrounds, with proportionate levels of participation by most ethnic groups in comparison to their population sizes.
- Research shows high satisfaction levels with museums, rising from 73% in 2000 to 80% in 2002 – one of the few increases in public satisfaction across all public services in that period.
- The UK's museums are custodians of over 170 million objects and natural specimens.

Museums as centres of learning:

The educational role of museums lies at the core of our service to the public. People of all ages and backgrounds come to learn from the collections, displays and programmes created by museums through their research and scholarship.

Recent research by MORI shows that parents view museums as the most important places for educating their children after schools and libraries and one of the most trustworthy sources of information, more highly valued overall than books, radio, newspapers and the internet.

- 80% of parents believe that museums are a very important resource for educating their children.
- 85% of parents believe visits to museums should be part of the National Curriculum
- National museums are responsible for over a million educational sessions per year and expect to host and inspire 1.72 million this year.
- A quarter of all museum visits are made by children.

A recent survey of visitors to Regional hub museums, conducted as part of Renaissance in the Regions, revealed the following:

- Museums have been effective at inspiring curiosity among their visitors (86% said so) and in imparting new knowledge and understanding (83%)
- Two thirds of a sample of over 15,000 visitors said that they felt inspired by their visit, whilst three in five said that their visit had 'moved' them.
- More than nine in ten visitors agreed that regional Hub museums are places where their children can learn things they do not in the classroom and that museums and galleries play a vital role in helping to preserve our heritage.
- Four in five visitors also agreed that regional museums help them to understand more about their local area and its people.

In the largest survey of its kind ever undertaken in the UK, research by the University of Leicester Research Centre for Museums and Galleries examined what 936 teachers and 22,000 school children thought about the education programmes they had attended in the Renaissance in the Regions Phase One Hubs in September and October 2003:

- The first term of Renaissance investment (Autumn term 2003) has seen a 28% increase in school children visiting museums in Phase One Hubs
- 95% the teachers thought regional museums were important or very important for their teaching
- 45% of the teachers visiting those Phase One Hubs were doing so for the first time
- 73% of the teachers believe their pupils are learning new subject specific facts thanks to their museum visit and 94% of teachers see museum visits or activities as directly linking to the National Curriculum.
- 90% of pupils at KS2 and below said they had learnt some new things and 87% of the older KS3 and above pupils said they had discovered some interesting things from the visit they had just completed.
- Museums in the Phase One Hubs have been particularly effective in working with schools located in areas of high levels of deprivation. 28% of school visits were from schools located in wards, which have been classified as being amongst the 10% most deprived wards in England.

The economic impact of museums:

- Using Treasury formulae, the economic impact of the UK's national museums is in the region of £2 billion.
- National museums had an overall turnover of £715 million in 2003/4. This is comparable to the box office takings of the whole theatre sector in the UK.
- Regional museum turnover is estimated at £875 million in 2003/4.
- The Regional Development Agency, One North East, feature museums in their regional economic development strategy because of our contribution to the region's economic performance; for example, Tyne and Wear Museums have attracted about £40m capital investment in the last eight years, and £1.5m in funding from the NE business community.
- Spending generated by visitors to national museums is estimated to be at least £565 million.
- The UK museum sector as a whole employs over 40,000 people.
- In 2001–02, DCMS-sponsored national museums generated £220 million towards their running costs from sponsorship, grants, special exhibitions, donations and trading.
- It is estimated that regional museums generate in excess of £250 million.
- In the South West region it has been estimated that museums and galleries support £51 million of Gross Value Added (GVA) economic activity. [Brand and McVittie 2004]. If replicated across the UK it would amount to about £800 million GVA.

Museums as key partners in travel and tourism:

Museums are major attractions for both domestic and international tourism

- 4 out of the top 5 tourist attractions in the UK are museums.
- Foreign visitors cite museums and galleries as being amongst the prime reasons for a visit to the UK.
- Overseas tourists make a quarter of visits to museums.
- Overseas visitors to the national museums in 2003–4 are estimated to spend at least £320 million in connection with their visit to a particular museum or gallery.
- 48% of frequent (at least once a year) visitors to museums say that they go to museums when they are on holiday or short break in the UK – that's over 8 million adults a year seeing and using museums as part of the domestic tourist industry.

Museums and regeneration:

Through such developments as the Imperial War Museum of the North, the radically revitalised Manchester Art Gallery, ThinkTank in Birmingham or the National Railway Museum in Shildon, County Durham, museums make important contributions to urban, economic and social regeneration.

In Bristol, for example, ambitious plans for a revitalised Museum of Bristol are a key component of the city's aspirations for cultural regeneration, and proving to be a powerful focus for attracting inward investment to create new facilities, services and jobs.

In the West Midlands nearly 80 new museum jobs will be created by 2006, including outreach workers in communities, curators managing and interpreting collections, and education officers unlocking the potential for schools to use them.

In Sheffield the £15 million Millennium Galleries are seen as the cornerstone of a larger £120 million regeneration of the Heart of the City project. City centre office rental values have increased with quality retail operations looking to invest in the city centre.

Manchester Art Gallery has helped transform the city and its future. 11% of Manchester Art Gallery's visitors are from overseas, compared to 2% five years ago; four times as many people visit the Galleries as did five years ago, and 44% of them are under the age of 25.

To mark the first anniversary of Tate Modern in 2001, the McKinsey consultancy evaluated the impact of the gallery in the light of the figures for the first year. In only one year Tate Modern had become the third most visited tourist attraction in Britain and the anchor attraction on the South Bank, drawing attention and people to a previously undiscovered and undeveloped area of London.

- According to McKinsey, Tate Modern has generated £100m worth of economic activity and 3,000 new jobs in its first year.

Museums as civic and community spaces:

From art museums to science centres, museums are gathering places for people to meet and spend time with families and friends.

In a recent survey of over 15,000 visitors to Regional Hub museums, three quarters of visitors (76%) agreed that the museum/gallery is an appealing (safe, welcoming and congenial) place to browse and meet friends. 28% strongly agreed. And this is true for people from all walks of life – 25% of visitors to Hub Museums are from socio-economic groups C2, D, and E.

Museums have a deeply rooted community connection, are great sources of local pride and foster a unique sense of belonging. For example:

- In Sunderland, the Museum & Winter Gardens is a £10.5 million development in the city centre, which involved the refurbishment and extension of the museum and the erection of new Winter Gardens. In the first six months of reopening in 2002, visitor numbers rocketed to 460,000 – a five fold increase in popularity, attracting traditional and new users to a much loved landmark community space.
- The most recent MORI GB Omnibus Survey [February 2004] reported that 82% of respondents felt it was important that their local town or city has a museum or art gallery.

The role of the museum as a public and civic institution has changed significantly over the last decade, acting as a neutral meeting ground for urban and rural communities across the UK. A new generation of cultural spaces that is more open, transparent and accessible, both to the visitor and to the surrounding communities has emerged, including the National Waterfront Museum in Swansea, National Galleries of Scotland's Playfair project in Edinburgh and the Great Court at the British Museum.

Museums as catalysts for creativity:

Museums act as catalysts for individual creativity and inspiration. For example, from fashion students to established designers, the V&A occupies a unique position as a source of stimulation and research. The Imperial War Museum's Salford College, by contrast, provides vocational and practical experience to volunteers, enabling them to re-enter the jobs market.

Regional museums are also proactive in encouraging creativity and regeneration. Bristol Museum and Art Gallery has used its South Asian textile collection to work with women from the local South Asian community, with events such as embroidery and henna sessions, and the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter presented an innovative exhibition 'Love, Labour and Loss' about British livestock farming in art to encourage regeneration after foot and mouth and to promote South West regional cultural heritage.

The Museums of the Potteries in Stoke-on-Trent are working closely with the cutting edge Hothouse Ceramic Design Centre in developing innovative new technology applications.

The Science Museum's new Ingenious and Making the Modern World online websites are bringing tens of thousands of objects, images and narratives to over six million web users all over the UK and the world.

Museums as centres of research and innovation:

Museums demonstrate astonishing creativity and a capacity for innovation. As key resources for industry, they make crucial contributions to the worlds of technology and science.

The National Gallery's collaboration with Hewlett Packard, and Tate's work on transport technology (since utilised in many other sectors) are only two such examples.

The Natural History Museum makes contributions on a global scale to medical and environmental issues. Its Biomedical Sciences Group is a world-leader in research into such diseases as river blindness, malaria, schistosomiasis and leishmaniasis.

Museums perform a unique function as an objective and independent voice, making an invaluable contribution to national and international debates on science, technology and art. For instance, the Science Museum's Antenna Gallery and Dana Centre at the Wellcome-Wolfson Building, enables people to reach their own conclusions about issues such as MMR and genetic engineering and, through the Turner Prize, Tate raises awareness and fosters high-octane discussion around questions of art and innovation.

Regional museums have developed innovative new ways of reaching communities and audiences who do not normally go to museums. For example, plans are in place through Tyne and Wear Museums Community Outreach Programme to work with Connexions, the Probation Service, local authority youth teams and others to engage 4000 young adults from disadvantaged communities by 2006.

Between 1998 and 2002 HLF made grants to the value of over £4m to museums and galleries via the Museums and Galleries Access Fund in order to help them develop innovative solutions to the challenges facing them – particularly in audience development. An evaluation revealed the success of this approach but also its limitations – primarily that under-investment in long-term capacity in regional museums made it difficult to sustain innovation. (Monger, 2003)

Museums as agents for social change and promoting intercultural understanding:

Through a wide range of programmes and practice, museums act as leading agents in the nation's move towards social and ethnic inclusion. Museums play a significant role in supporting, consolidating and acting as a sounding board to the UK's diverse cultures.

Initiatives such as the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television's Youth TV Project and Tate's Karrot fashion project, have a real and lasting impact on people's lives. Regional Museums have done extensive work in this area as the GLLAM research on museums and social inclusion showed.

Museums and Galleries in the South East worked on SEMLAC's DfES funded Black Box project, which involved prison inmates and ex-offenders using museums as the spring board for creative workshops that acknowledge basic skills needs, including creating personal museums.

In the North East, NEMLAC has developed and launched a scheme to allow Looked After Children and their families into museums across the region for free. The MaxCard is a partnership with 9 local authority Social Services Departments, and is introducing a new audience to the museums of the region through the 15000 Max Cards that were circulated in March 2003.

At the Manchester Museum and Manchester Art Gallery, a project called Telling Our Lives has brought new hope and confidence to first generation immigrant and asylum seeker groups. Working with collections to help participants share sometimes-difficult experiences, as one participant put it: 'This has changed my life. I am braver now'.

Through an MLA/MA programme called Diversify, young people from ethnic minorities were sponsored on to museum studies courses and placed in Hub museums for work experience. Evaluation shows success in personal development and challenging the culture of the participating museums. According to one participant 'It really opened my eyes to what museums can do and do do – how much they connect to people's lives'.

Redbridge Museum integrates cultural diversity into its year-round programme and 60% of its visitors are from ethnic minorities, compared to 47% in the local population.

National and regional museums working in partnership:

Partnerships and collaborations between national and regional museums are making a significant contribution to the regional agenda. Whilst national museums have long worked with regional partners, the Regional Hubs that sit at the heart of the Renaissance framework offer wonderful opportunities to build new routes for national treasures and expertise to reach regional and local audiences.

Sheffield Galleries and Museums are working in partnership with the National Portrait Gallery, Tate, and the V&A on a range of exhibitions, education programmes, and skills exchange projects.

Wider access is provided through a broad range of activities, including over 100 traveling exhibitions, which national museums have toured around the country over the past three years and the 30 strategic partnerships national museums are currently fostering with their regional counterparts. Both of these initiatives rely on the collections and expertise of regional museums as much as they rely on the collections and expertise of national museums.

Museums working around the world:

Museums around the world have a common purpose. It is their collections and services, not the countries in which they are located, that bind them together. UK museums are among the best in the world and we have much to contribute to, and learn from, the international agenda. Museums' international work:

- reaffirms community identity by placing collections in their international context.
- promotes positive cultural understanding by linking with communities across the world informed by the rich cultural mix of the population within the UK.
- develops the professional skills of staff who learn innovative ways of working by sharing expertise with colleagues in other countries.
- contributes to the UK economy by bringing in funding from European and other international sources and supporting the export of our professionals' skills and services to other countries.
- contributes substantially to the UK's international reputation.

Recent, significant examples have been the British Museum's work in Iraq, Tate and the V&A's contributions to programmes in Iran, and the British Library's work in Egypt and Korea; the UK branch of the International Council of Museums works with the Council of Europe's STAGE programme involving a number of UK museums in partnerships with counterparts in the Southern Caucasus. European funded projects supporting cross-border partnerships include, for example, the Roman Baths Museum and the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery in Stoke-on-Trent.

THE CASE FOR INVESTMENT

This is a critical time for our museums and galleries.

This manifesto incorporates the findings of a series of major reports commissioned by the national museum sector and the results of a number of baseline studies and research reports commissioned by the Museum, Library and Archive Council (MLA).

Together, they represent a wealth of evidence, brought together for the first time, which confirms the substantial and wide-ranging contributions that our museums and galleries make to society. We believe they make a compelling and irrefutable case for increased funding.

In addition, the results that are now beginning to be achieved by Renaissance in the Regions demonstrate the benefit that can be reaped by society through having access to high quality museum services that are relevant, inspiring and accessible. As yet, only three regions out of nine are getting the levels of Renaissance investment needed to truly transform services.

The Need

The museums sector as a whole is seeking an additional investment of £115m per annum above the rate of inflation which breaks down as follows:

£50 million is needed by the Nationals
£35 million for Renaissance
£15 million for regional/national partnerships
£15 million for acquisitions

National museums

National museums are seeking an additional £50m per annum to sustain their impact, discharge their responsibilities for their collections and maintain existing levels of contribution to government policies.

This includes additional funding to continue extending access to the collections through a combination of digitisation projects, learning centres and enhanced interpretation programmes.

Funding is also required for modernisation and the building of collections. This includes the development of new displays and collections, the updating of permanent exhibitions, collections care and conservation facilities to ensure the institutions retain their relevance and status as pre-eminent visitor attractions.

In addition, money is required to address the backlog of property repair and maintenance work. This is currently estimated at £150m sector-wide and includes safety and public health requirements.

Without this investment in their core, the ability of the national museums and galleries to carry out their statutory obligations and sustain existing, let alone deliver on increased levels of contribution to government agendas, is put at risk.

Regional museums

MLA requires additional funding of £35m per annum so that:

- Regional Museum Hubs will be fully operational across all nine regions, with the staff, talent, facilities, and services for audiences and collections to inspire current and future generations.
- Museums of all kinds will reach key audiences as never before thanks to new development services and partnership projects that support communities and stimulate social and economic regeneration.
- Schools will have access to a fully comprehensive service tailored to the needs of the curriculum and the communities they serve.

- Regional Agencies ensure that the contribution of hubs, other museums, libraries and archives in the region is recognised by Regional Development Agencies, Regional Assemblies, local government and beyond.
- Designated Collections, Nationals, Hubs and Regional Agencies will offer integrated advisory services and specialist networks that ensure world-class expertise and knowledge is accessible to all museums and their users.

National/Regional partnerships

A further £15m is needed by both the national museums and the regional museums working together – building on the national/regional programmes, and partnerships, that are beginning to take root across the sector. Beyond the funding of Phase Two of Renaissance, and the core work of the national museums, the following areas require additional resourcing:

Joint educational and regional programmes aimed at increasing access to the collections and associated expertise, and building relationships across the sector.

Involving elements of digitisation and beginning to address the need for long-term funding to roll out and sustain the nation-wide museums education programme piloted through the 2003–04 DCMS strategic commissioning projects.

Collaborative and subject-based initiatives aimed at enabling greater, and eventually full, utilisation of the collections as resources, and making the associated expertise more accessible.

Current examples demonstrating access benefits include the UK Maritime Collections Strategy and National Inventory involving the funding of 6 such initiatives, one for each of the following subject areas:

- Natural History collections,
- Social History collections,
- Archeology collections,
- Science and technology collections,
- Fine Art collections, and
- Decorative and Applied Arts collections,

A coordinated and strategic programme aimed at building capacity, and ensuring leadership development across the whole sector.

It will include:

- A programme of secondments
- The development of a leadership support and exchange network for aspiring leaders
- The establishment of a dedicated online staff college providing training modules not available elsewhere

An enhanced programme of touring exhibitions and loans of objects aimed at increasing access to the collections across the UK, providing learning opportunities to new audiences and developing capacity within the sector.

Acquisitions

An annual fund of £15m is required in order to enable museums and galleries to acquire new objects. This will only go some way to beginning to address the problem but is vital if our institutions are to maintain their pre-eminence and relevance. We need to be able to collect in the present and not simply preserve the past. Such collections are an essential part of our legacy to the future. The building of collections will need funding and tax incentives to encourage private sector support as strongly recommended by Sir Nicholas Goodison in his recent report.

We believe that at this crucial time, if we are given the investment we are seeking, the skills and commitment of our organisations will deliver the museums the United Kingdom deserves for the 21st century.

The Directors of the National Museums

The Chairman of MLA (Museums, Archives and Libraries Council)

The Chairman of AIM (The Association of Independent Museums)

The Convenors of GLLAM (The Group for Large Local Authority Museums)

The President of the Museums Association

The Chief Executives of the Regional Agencies

