



Briefing Note

Introduction

1. On 10 July 2002 the Minister for Culture and Sport launched the publication of *A Collective Insight: Scotland's National Audit* and announced a consultation exercise on the results of the Audit. This has now been followed by the formal consultation letter which seeks views to assist the development of an Action Plan for Scotland's museums and galleries.
2. Following representation from SMC on the launch of the National Audit, the Parliament's Education Culture and Sport Committee has appointed Jackie Baillie, MSP and Mike Russell, MSP to report to the Committee on museum issues. They are currently gathering evidence from museums with a view to reporting back to the Committee by mid October.
3. The consultation therefore represents a unique opportunity to participate in the first ever public debate on the future of the museum sector in Scotland.
4. The consultation paper calls for views on a range of topics including:
 - roles and structures
 - funding
 - contribution to wider agendas
 - professional issues.
5. The National Audit contains a wealth of relevant information about the 435 sites, both individually and collectively. In addition it may be helpful to note the following background information.

Roles and structures

- 1 The remit of the National Museums and National Galleries of Scotland is set out in the National Heritage (Scotland) Act 1985. Act. The 2 organisations are recognised Non Departmental Public Bodies and receive the majority of their funding from the Scottish Executive. Board members are appointed by the Scottish Executive. The Directors are the designated Accounting Officers. NMS and NGS are not members of the Scottish Museums Council.

- 2 The Scottish Museums Council provides strategic leadership combined with an integrated support service, underpinned by grant aid to members. SMC is a company limited by guarantee and with the exception of NMS and NGS, membership includes all museums and galleries in Scotland including local authorities, independent museums and galleries, regimental museums and university museums. The majority of Board members are elected by the members, representing various different constituencies, and the Board has the power to co-opt additional Directors for different skills and interests. SMC is not a recognised NDPB but fulfils many of the public functions of an NDPB and receives the majority of its funding from the Scottish Executive. The Director is the designated Accounting Officer.
- 3 There are a number of Scottish and UK organisations whose roles may be relevant to the discussions. The most obvious is Resource: the Council of Museums, Archives and Libraries which has an ambiguous Scottish remit. Other organisations include SCRAN (NMS and SMC are the 2 founder members together with RCAHMS) and Historic Scotland, an Executive Agency (i.e. formally part of the Scottish Executive).

Funding

- 1 Historically the Scottish Executive have funded NMS, NGS and SMC. Over the last 3 years, the Executive have also part funded the Scottish Mining Museum, the Scottish Maritime Museum, the Scottish Fisheries Museum and Glasgow Council (for 2002-3). A summary of direct revenue funding is attached together with a comparison of Scottish Executive expenditure on arts and on museums and galleries.
- 2 The latest SAC/COSLA survey provides figures for 2000/1 local authority expenditure. The per capita expenditure ranges from £25.35 (Glasgow) to £0.18 (Argyll). Of the total £36,389,016 Glasgow is responsible for £15,709,893.
- 3 The 'Strategic Change Fund' is a fund of £3,000,000 provided by the Scottish Executive to promote strategic change within Scottish museums for the period 2001-4. Of the £3,000,000 a total of £1,400,000 was allocated by the Scottish Executive towards the 3 industrial museums (see above). The balance of the fund is administered by the Scottish Museums Council. Full details of the scheme can be found on www.scottishmuseums.org.uk.
- 4 Heritage Lottery Fund awards to museums and galleries in Scotland total £82,289,717 to date, of which 53% has been awarded to NMS and NGS, and a further 17% to Glasgow City Museums. DCMS is currently consulting on the future direction and purpose of Lottery funding through the *Review of Lottery Funding* www.culture.gov.uk/lottery/index.html. The *HLF UK Needs Assessment* published in June 2002 is consistent with the findings of the National Audit, and identifies priority needs for action.

Contribution to wider agendas

- 1 Learning: The National Audit shows a clear need to build the museum sector's capacity to develop and deliver learning programmes, which meet the wide-ranging needs of communities. Disparity and inconsistency of provision exists across all museum types, with non-national museums under-resourced to provide high quality learning opportunities. This is most clearly evidenced by staffing levels, with only 117 full-time

equivalent posts focused on education across the museum sector. Section 7 of the National Audit report presents findings on learning provision through museums. In addition, SMC gives a detailed account of museums' current and potential contribution in its submission to the recent National Debate on Education, available www.Scottishmuseums.org.uk

- 2 Social Justice and Equality: The SMC publication *Museums and Social Justice* identifies museums' potential contribution to social justice, sets out guidelines for action and case study examples. Sections 8 and 9 of the National Audit present findings on current levels of access to and community involvement in Scotland's museums. Despite developments in museums' approaches to social inclusion, learning and access, approximately 25% of the population in Scotland never visits a museum or gallery, and a number of studies have indicated that people in the C2DE social groupings are least likely to attend.
- 3 Volunteers: Section 5 of the National Audit reports that 53% of the 10,855 people working in the museum sector in Scotland are volunteers. 160 of SMC's member museums are independent, governed by Boards of voluntary trustees, and without direct sources of revenue support from national and local government.
- 4 Tourism: The *VisitScotland 2000 Attraction Monitor* shows that visitor attendance at museums and galleries has declined by 3% in the last three years. Section 4 of the National Audit sets out visitor numbers and spending for Scottish museums in 2000. It shows that while there were over 13 million visits to museums in 2000-2001, 88% of sites had fewer than 50,000 visitors and average visitor expenditure is under £4 per head. VisitScotland has produced a *Tourism Framework for Action 2002-2005*, www.scotland.gov.uk/library3/tourism/tfar-00.asp which identifies the role museums can play in promoting Scotland as a tourism destination. The Enterprise networks also play a significant role in developing and supporting museums' contribution to local economies through project funding and training support, for example www.hie.co.uk/welcome.asp.LocID-hiestpricul.htm.

Professional issues.

- 1 Collections: The National Audit has shown the distributed nature of museum collections in Scotland. 78% of museums have items which are in whole or in part of national significance. Table 14 of the National Audit details the 20 organisations with the largest collections of national, international and UK significance. Table 47 compares visitor numbers and staffing figures for those 20 organisations. These collections require management if they are to continue to serve the public through staff to curate, conserve and document them to ensure they and their associated knowledge are useable and readily available. The National Audit provides information on staffing capacity and distribution in these areas in Tables 40, 41 and 51. There is further information in the standards for research and conservation in Tables 101 and 107. See also *Renaissance in the Regions: a new vision for England's museums* available on Resource's website www.resource.gov.uk/regional pp 75-86, specifically Table 10. See also, the Resource/HLF Needs Assessment available also on Resource's website, specifically *Matrix of need in the museum sector Table 1 Collections*.

- 2 Premises: Museums need premises with the capacity to provide at least adequate public access and protection for collections, see Section 9 Tables 86 – 97 and Section 10, Tables 105 and 105. See also *Resource/HLF Needs Assessment Matrix of need in the museum sector Table 2, Physical infrastructure needs*.
- 3 ICT: Utilising the full potential of ICT would modernise practices that improve collection and knowledge management as well as the quality of the visitor experience. Documentation backlogs and inefficient recording systems are identified in the National Audit Section 6, Tables 48 – 50, 54 and 55, and the research to provide the necessary knowledge in Section 10, Table 101. See also: See also *Renaissance in the Regions: a new vision for England's museums* pp 61 – 63.
- 4 Section 10 of the National Audit provides a standards framework, developed in the absence of an existing measurable standards scheme. Currently, Performance Indicators (for Local Authority museums) are based on inclusion in the Registration Scheme, a basic entry standard without specific criteria or levels of performance. Registration Phase 3 is unlikely to adopt specific criteria or levels, but will embed more structured frameworks, e.g. *Inspiring learning, a framework for access and learning in museums*, and *Benchmarks for collection care*. See Resource's web site www.resource.gov.uk /Standards and Registration, /Learning and Access, /Stewardship. Registration does not demonstrate excellence, but Resource's Designation Scheme acknowledges the need, see /Designation/The Mark of Success on the Resource website and the various UK collections mapping exercises, such as www.semlac.org.uk/measure.html and www.swmuseums.co.uk /southwest mapping statistics.

Timeline

January 1999: SMC publish a National Strategy for Scotland's Museum
 August 2000: Scottish Executive launch National Cultural Strategy
 April 2001: SMC launch the *National Audit of Scotland's Museums and Galleries*
 July 2002: SMC publish *National Audit of Scotland Museums and Galleries*
 September– 6 December 2002: Scottish Executive opens consultation on development of an *Action Plan for Scotland's Museums*
 Spring 2003: Scottish Executive publishes *Action Plan for Scotland's Museums*