

# Press Release

Embargoed until 00:01am Monday 1<sup>st</sup> November

## **Museums and Galleries Working Group delivers Ambitious Submission to Cultural Commission**

**The Scottish Museums and Galleries Working Group respond to the Cultural Commission's Phase 1 Consultation with passion for their sector and an exciting vision for its growth.**

The working group for Scottish Museums and Galleries has submitted its first response to the Cultural Commission. They have proposed a bold vision for the sector, outlining a dynamic structure that will see national and non-national museums working together in an innovative partnership. This vision is underpinned by a desire to see museums and galleries play an increasingly influential role in Scotland's cultural life and for the sector to become an international model of best practice, outlining practical steps that can be taken to realise these goals.

The proposed venture will be facilitated by a Scottish Museums Partnership and supported by a museums strategic agency. The agency would build on the expertise of the Scottish Museums Council (SMC). This bold new structure would be capable of delivering a measurably enhanced museums service across Scotland in as little as five years' time. The Partnership would provide the means by which Scotland could be placed at the forefront of museum organisation and deliver internationally, by working as a sustainable network that shares collections, resources and expertise. The Partnership as a whole would build on and reflect the expertise of the organisations in the Museums and Galleries Working Group – National Museums of Scotland (NMS), National Galleries of Scotland (NGS), Association of Independent Museums (AIM), Group for Scottish Local Authority Museums (SLAM), University Museums in Scotland (UMIS), Glasgow Museums and SMC.

At the heart of this vision lies the belief in the principle of a 'national cultural entitlement' and an emphasis on the importance of access for all to Scotland's rich cultural heritage. This includes a call for greater recognition of and support for the important role that museums play within the education system and in the development of our communities and young people. The submission highlights the importance of Information and Communications Technology in order to provide universal digital access to Scotland's wealth of cultural resource and ensure Scotland remains on the cutting edge of museums and galleries provision. The integral role that museums and galleries play in Scotland's tourist industry is also highlighted, with a series of recommendations for developing a pro-active working relationship between the two sectors placed as a priority.

The Museums and Galleries Working Group made the following comments:

‘This joint submission is a great first step and highlights the benefits to be derived from partnership working. Our collective vision is ambitious and exciting, but also highly achievable. There is much to be done in working with the Cultural Commission as we enter Stage 2 in the review process and SMC looks forward to working on this next stage together with partner organisations on the Museums and Galleries Working Group.’

Joanne Orr, SMC Director

‘The world will change even more in the next 25 years than it did in the past 25. Scotland will need, more than ever before, to develop daring, energetic museums committed to helping create a more humane, just and better-educated society. Through the fascinating and beautiful objects in museums people can draw on their past to help make sense of the present and find the inspiration and spiritual renewal which will enable them to face the future with confidence.’

Mark O'Neill, Head of Museums and Galleries, Glasgow City Council

‘NMS has played an active part in developing this exciting new vision for museums in Scotland. We believe that a Scottish Museums Partnership and its supporting framework will enable everyone in Scotland to use and enjoy our wonderful museum collections, as part of their cultural entitlement.’

Gordon Rintoul, Director National Museums of Scotland

‘This joint response is a further step along the way to ensuring the delivery of museum services that Scotland can be proud of. The interpretation and care of our heritage for present and future generations requires a coordinated, national approach that the Cultural Commission can facilitate. It is essential that this opportunity of change for the better is not missed.’

Mike Taylor, Convenor, Scottish Local Authority Museums

‘This suggested framework is a really positive step forward. The people of Scotland deserve to have the best possible opportunities to enjoy the fantastic variety of stuff we hold in trust. University museums, which are exceptionally rich in art and science collections, look forward to contributing their expertise and distinctive skills to a strategically focused national partnership.’

Evelyn Silber, University Museums in Scotland

‘Museums already play a vital part in Scotland's cultural life but we can do more. This vision, delivered through a structured partnership, will deliver great benefits across a broad range of cultural activities.’

Fergus Waters, Scottish Councillor for the Association of Independent Museums (AIM)

- ENDS -

**Notes for Editors:**

- The museums and galleries working group is one of 14 cultural sector groups to be developed by the Cultural Commission. The group is made up of lead representatives from SMC, National Museums of Scotland, National Galleries of Scotland and the organisations that represent the key strands of Scotland's non-national museums - University Museums in Scotland, Scottish Local Authority Museums, the Association of Independent Museums and Glasgow museums.
- **Scottish Museums Council (SMC)** is the main channel for the Scottish Executive support to, and the member organisation for, non-national museums and galleries in Scotland. SMC provides strategic leadership and a range of services including grant aid, strategic and operational advice, information and training. SMC has 208 members, which manage 345 museums all over Scotland, including 166 Independent, 142 local authority, seven regimental and 30 university museums.
- For further information on the Cultural Commission and the Cultural Review please visit the website [www.culturalcommission.org](http://www.culturalcommission.org)

**For further information please contact:**

**Catriona Murray, Communications Manager, Scottish Museums Council**

**Tel 0131 476 8465 M: 07985 772 083**

**Fax 0131 229 2728 or 0131 476 8475**

**Email [catrionam@scottishmuseums.org.uk](mailto:catrionam@scottishmuseums.org.uk)**

**Press contacts for other partner organisations**

Jane Ferguson, Head of Marketing and Communications, National Museums of Scotland

Tel 0131 247 4386

Email [j.ferguson@nms.ac.uk](mailto:j.ferguson@nms.ac.uk)

Patrica Convery, Head of Press, National Galleries of Scotland

Tel 0131 624 6325

Email [pconvery@nationalgalleries.org](mailto:pconvery@nationalgalleries.org)

Mark O'Neill, Head of Museums and Galleries, Glasgow City Council

Tel 0141 287 0446

Email [mark.o'Neill@cls.glasgow.gov.uk](mailto:mark.o'Neill@cls.glasgow.gov.uk)

Dr Evelyn Silber (UMIS), Director, Hunterian Museum & Art Gallery, University of Glasgow

Tel 0141 330 4221

Email [esilber@museum.gla.ac.uk](mailto:esilber@museum.gla.ac.uk)

Michael Taylor (SLAM), Head of Arts and Heritage, Perth and Kinross Council

Tel 01738 476369

Email [mataylor@pkc.gov.uk](mailto:mataylor@pkc.gov.uk)

