

**SCOTTISH
MUSEUMS
COUNCIL**



A National Strategy for Scotland's Museums

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Executive Summary

1 The vision

A national framework within which museums can be developed for the public benefit, contributing to the future of Scotland while preserving its past.

2 The benefits

- A framework for museum development throughout Scotland.
- A more integrated approach to policy development at national and local level.
- A context for sustainable development within the museum sector.
- A commitment to geographic and cultural diversity.
- An opportunity to unlock the true potential of collections throughout Scotland.

3 The recommendations

Recommendations to government

- Develop a coherent policy framework for museums throughout Scotland. (2.1)
- Reverse the downward spiral of funding. (2.2)
- Adopt a more strategic approach to funding. (2.3 - 2.6)
- Provide a clear national commitment to removing barriers and ensuring equality of access across the spectrum of ability, geography and economic profile. (4.1)
- Promote the National Loans Scheme. (4.3)
- Provide an Information and Communications Technology (ICT) infrastructure in museums as an essential part of a National Grid for Learning. (4.4)
- Promote and resource training for the sector. (4.4, 6.4)
- Consider arguments for maintaining free access to publicly funded museums. (4.6)
- Create a cross-sector committee to co-ordinate museums and the education sector. (5.2)

- Continue to invest in museums as part of the tourism infrastructure. (6.1)
- Develop a constructive dialogue with strategic and funding agencies. (7.2)
- Align funding and strategic planning through the creation of a single arm's length intermediary with responsibility for the sector as a whole. (7.4)
- Ensure that HLF have regard to strategic advice from Scotland. (7.5)

Recommendations for the sector

- Undertake a National Audit of collections and associated services. (3.1)
- Target resources to projects with a strategic remit covering groups of museums. (3.2)
- Focus support and advice on regional groupings and specialist networks. (3.3, 3.4)
- Develop standards for museum education and interpretation. (5.3)
- Develop a national marketing programme. (6.2)
- Develop research into the sector. (6.3)
- Develop a framework for greater accountability. (8)
- Develop a constructive dialogue with the Scottish parliament and executive. (8)
- Involve users in setting objectives and measuring success. (8)
- Develop more rigorous standards and performance indicators. (8)
- Develop a scheme of self regulation through peer review. (8)
- Develop better audit systems. (8)

The Vision

A national framework within which museums can be developed for the public benefit, contributing to the future of Scotland while preserving its past.

An acknowledgement of Scotland's cultural distinctiveness has been one of the main features of the devolution debate and the establishment of the Scottish parliament. Over the years, that cultural distinctiveness has been nurtured and sustained by Scotland's rich museum culture. Scotland now has an opportunity to develop an imaginative national strategy for museums and galleries to address the aspirations, the opportunities and the challenges which face modern Scotland.

Museums matter. They matter to individuals and to their communities:

- museums are part of our cultural heritage
- they meet the individual interests of users
- they help to develop a sense of community and social cohesion
- they provide important learning opportunities at every level from school to university and beyond
- they help to sustain local economies as part of the tourism infrastructure.

This National Strategy was developed and is endorsed by the Scottish Museums Council (SMC), the National Museums of Scotland (NMS) and the National Galleries of Scotland (NGS), who together represent all of Scotland's museums. The strategy was developed via an extended consultation process which united the museums community and included extensive external consultation, co-ordinated by a distinguished Steering Group. The remarkable consensus which was achieved is itself an indication of the new spirit of realism and optimism with which all those involved with museums are prepared to meet the challenges of devolution.

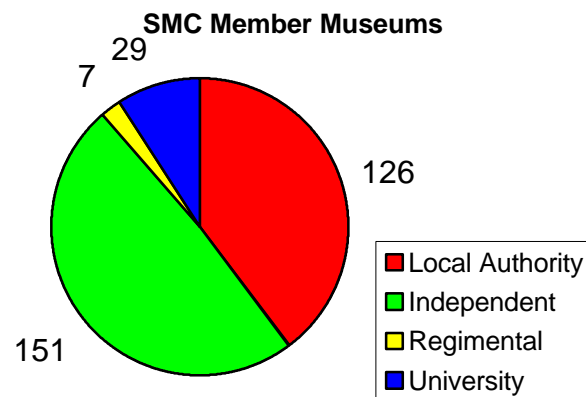
The National Strategy does not attempt to re-state existing policies, guidelines or standards but to show how museums could deliver greater benefits with a new approach to planning and funding. Some of the recommendations are within the control of the sector, other provide the new Scottish parliament and Executive and local authorities collectively with some innovative and creative choices.

The benefits

- **A framework for museum development throughout Scotland.**
- **A more integrated approach to policy development at national and local level.**
- **A context for sustainable development within the museum sector.**
- **A commitment to geographic and cultural diversity.**
- **An opportunity to unlock the true potential of collections throughout Scotland.**

Scottish Museums Profile

- 313 non-national sites:



- national sites:

NMS: Royal Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh

Scottish United Services Museum, Edinburgh Castle (reopens 2000)

Museum of Flight, East Fortune

Shambellie House Museum of Costume, New Abbey

Museum of Piping, Glasgow

Scottish Agricultural Museum, Ingliston (closes 2001)

Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh (opens November 1998)

Museum of Scottish Rural Life, Kitchside (opens 2001, replaces Ingliston)

NGS: National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh

Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh

Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh

Duff House, Aberdeenshire

RSA, Edinburgh (tenants)

Dean Centre, Edinburgh (opens March 1999)

1 A National Identity

- 1.1 Scotland's distinctive cultural identity is one of its greatest assets. Museums sustain and can continue to develop that identity. The magnificent new Museum of Scotland and the outstanding network of museums large and small across Scotland are all a vital part of the cultural infrastructure.
- 1.2 The plurality, diversity and geographical distribution of museums can be a valuable asset in assisting the new Scottish parliament to establish its vision of the identity of the new Scotland, as well as assisting in the building of rounded local communities. This is recognised not only in Scotland (e.g. the creation of the new Highland post jointly funded by Highlands & Islands Enterprise and SMC) but as an important component of European policy. The European Commission proposals for a single framework programme explicitly recognise the contribution of culture in strengthening social cohesion especially amongst marginalised communities. UK government commitment, including public subsidy, is justified on these grounds alone and government policy should reflect this.
- 1.3 Making the cultural heritage physically accessible is clearly a priority which can be secured by core funding and innovative schemes such as the National Loans Scheme. Intellectual access to the cultural heritage, using museum resources as an aid to the teaching of Scottish history in schools, universities and adult education, is also an essential aspect of maintaining national and local identities.
- 1.4 A new Scotland should be rebuilding the cultural neighbourhood, redefining relationships within the UK and establishing stronger international links. Relationships with Europe and particularly Scandinavia, where NMS and NGS have already forged strong alliances, are an immediate priority. As part of a wider international community, museums can play an important part in bringing an understanding of different cultures to Scotland and in taking an understanding of Scottish culture and identity beyond the physical boundaries of a newly invigorated Scotland.

2 Scotland's Treasures: the Collections

- 2.1 There is a national responsibility for Scotland's heritage which is not restricted to annual funding decisions but includes responsibility for developing a **coherent policy framework** for museums throughout Scotland. This policy framework should recognise the value of Scotland's museum collections and the essential part museums can play in developing the cultural, social and economic dynamic of Scotland.

- 2.2 Museums are amongst Scotland's greatest cultural, educational, social and economic assets but they have been undervalued and underfunded by central government over the last decade. At the same time, local authorities, faced with severe budget restrictions overall, reduced revenue funding for museums by almost 30% between 1996-8 with potentially disastrous long term effects upon museum services and the future of the collections. It is critical that the new government and local authorities now acknowledge the dangers facing our museum inheritance and act **to reverse the downward spiral**, reinstating and where appropriate increasing support to safeguard the investment - human and financial - of previous generations, enabling museums to realise their potential in the future.
- 2.3 Section 7 examines options for new structures which might align funding and strategic planning more closely. Whichever option is chosen, there is a need for a more strategic approach to museum provision which should aim to resolve the clear anomalies in the pattern of museum provision throughout Scotland and particularly anomalies in the pattern of funding.
- 2.4 There are nationally funded agricultural and air museums, but there is no national support for maritime museums. Most university museums have academic funding problems while some of the most important national collections are the responsibility of the Scottish Mining, Maritime and Fisheries museums, which are relatively small and underfunded independent trusts. Local authority support for museums varies enormously: Glasgow alone is responsible for almost one half of total local authority museum expenditure and commitment per capita varies from over £20 to under £1.
- 2.5 Given these anomalies and changing patterns of use and expectation, it is inevitable and in many ways desirable that there should be a restructuring within the museums sector. It is recognised that **this will mean a reduction in the number of existing museums**. The question is whether the restructuring will be achieved as a result of market forces - the failure of independent museums, the continuing attrition of local authority services - or whether this should be a managed process with some strategic coherence, which is the preferred route of SMC, NMS and NGS.
- 2.6 **The long term objectives of any managed restructuring should be**
- **to secure the future of nationally important collections which are not currently the responsibility of the National Museums or National Galleries**
 - **to ensure a stable revenue funding base for a network of museums, including non-national museums as well as the National Museums and National Galleries.**

- 2.7 All museum development should incorporate the principle of sustainability. Despite the declared policies of relevant agencies, much new museum development over the last decade has been opportunistic. Neither the likely impact on existing publicly funded services nor the long term revenue implications have been properly evaluated prior to development. A presumption against investment of public funds in new museums or developments which duplicate existing collections or services should be a principle of a national strategy, embedded in the policies of central government and the relevant funding agencies.
- 2.8 There is a national interest in the legal status of collections which are in receipt of public funding. There is a need for improved definition and reassertion of the concept of inalienable community assets and at both national and UK level, government should ensure that there is legal protection for such assets. On the rare occasions when items from public collections are sold on the domestic market, consideration should be given to extending a first option to purchase to other publicly funded museums as is currently the case with proposed exports.

3 Management of the Collections

- 3.1 A first priority should be a **National Audit** of existing collections and associated services to allow informed choices (which should ultimately include the rationalisation of collecting policies, buildings and location of collections). Though it is not necessary or cost effective to introduce the Designation scheme into Scotland, an Audit would be closely aligned to the Museums & Galleries Commission proposed Recognition scheme. External validation rather than self assessment will be essential for such an exercise which will be a long term project, extending over perhaps 3-5 years. Existing models include the SMC/NMS ethnographic survey, now available in the public domain both in print and via the Scottish Cultural Resources Access Network (SCRAN). The related issue of adequacy of services and meeting the needs and expectations of users should include research into potential usage patterns and access requirements and the continuing development and encouragement of standards and monitoring.
- 3.2 For local authorities, a commitment to continuous improvement is already an important feature of Best Value but a commitment to continuous improvement should be the hallmark of a national strategy for all museums, whether local authority, independent or national. An emphasis on standards and enforcement of those standards combined with improved management should promote innovative solutions, including shared storage and accommodation, joint marketing and other services, and contracting out of appropriate functions. A greater proportion of resources e.g. through SMC and Heritage Lottery Fund grant awards should be targeted to projects with a **strategic remit** covering groups of museums.

- 3.3 Advice and support for local museums should be focused on **regional groupings**. This principle is now well recognised in other service areas e.g. the National Health Service, as demonstrated by the White Paper “Designed to Care”. Regional groupings should be designed to cross local authority boundaries, creating opportunities for formal and informal benchmarking. There are clear resource and management implications for strategic and support agencies such as **SMC** but there are already precedents e.g. in annual programmes for Orkney and Shetland and the joint SMC/HIE post as well as the development of the National Strategy through a series of regional workshops.
- 3.4 There should also be support for **specialist networks**, including staff of NMS and NGS whose expertise should be viewed as a national resource and funded accordingly. NMS and NGS already provide some support (particularly the NMS Museums Documentation Officer) but there is scope for formalising both the level of support and the resources required to provide this. The first networks might include
- security: already envisaged as part of the proposed National Loans Scheme
 - a network of curatorial and of registration advisers, essential for maintaining the registration scheme
 - support to deliver enhanced access to educational expertise, not restricted to museum professionals
 - ICT and multimedia advice, based on a small number of leading edge providers including NMS and the Hunterian Museum, whose expertise in collections management and educational applications should be reinvested in the wider museum community.
- 3.5 Museums are stewards not only of their physical but also their intellectual capital, and managing intellectual property will become an increasingly important aspect of overall museum management.
- The development of a national information strategy for museums, underpinned by use of ICT, has already begun in conjunction with SCRAN and the Scottish Library & Information Council and continued development is a priority for any strategic agency. In this context, ICT is seen not as an end in itself but as an increasingly important means of enabling remote access and as a medium for innovative methods of learning as well as a tool for collections management.
 - As part of a national information strategy for museums, consideration should be given to funding SCRAN as a national meta data repository (as the National Library of Scotland is currently funded as a bibliographic depository).
 - Government should press for the European Copyright Directive to extend the copyright exemption to museums.

4 Access

- 4.1 The principle of **public access**, both physical and intellectual, is integral to the modern concept of a museum. There should be a clear national commitment to removing barriers and to ensuring equality of access across the spectrum of ability, geography and economic profile. However, access depends on continuing conservation and investment for the future public benefit maintaining support for core institutions and collections and ensuring the appropriate infrastructure for the management and development of museums physical and intellectual assets. To encourage access without consideration for the longer term implications is the equivalent of encouraging drivers onto a road network without any provision for repair and maintenance.
- 4.2 **Physical access** is only possible with adequate arrangements for storage, exhibition, and provision for disabled access. Ensuring physical access to collections both on display and in reserve collections should be a priority. Government should ensure that funding continues to be available for capital improvements particularly in considering local authority capital requirements and in reviewing Policy Directions to Lottery distributors.
- 4.3 Public expectations of museums include the provision of high quality exhibitions within extended opening hours for which secure funding is essential. The proposed **National Loans Scheme** developed by SMC, NMS and NGS would provide extensive access on a national and reciprocal basis to Scotland's collections while at the same time providing long term benefits in the form of improvements to museum premises and skilling of staff. **Promotion of the National Loans Scheme** should be central to any national strategy which aims to improve access to and care for Scotland's museum collections. This should be linked to a rationalisation of collecting policies and clearly expressed loan policies.
- 4.4 **Remote access** is particularly important in Scotland where geography means it is impossible to ensure physical access for many potential visitors. The SCRAN project provides multimedia access to collections and is vital in ensuring remote access on a national, indeed international basis. Scotland is recognised as being an international leader in the field of multimedia and IT, and having resolved many of the structural, distribution and intellectual property issues, additional public funding would deliver significant benefits. SCRAN and the work of museums such as NMS and the Hunterian should be supported by a national commitment to
- providing an appropriate ICT infrastructure in museums in a scheme similar to that proposed for schools and for the NHS in Scotland. A national infrastructure is essential if museums are to play an active part in the National Grid for Learning and should be delivered as a

nationally funded capital programme, possibly linking to the existing Metropolitan Area Networks.

- promoting and resourcing training for information skills as core competencies, which should be considered as part of national training objectives in re-skilling museum staff.
- providing additional funding to a small number of leading edge providers who will work with specialist networks.

4.5 **Intellectual access** is as important as physical access and much valuable work is being pioneered in Scotland by museums and organisations such as the Intellectual Access Trust (INTACT). Research and publication should be recognised as underpinning access. Overall, the dissemination of information, including evaluation of successes and failures, is vital and should continue to form an important part of the work of strategic agencies. Changing demographic profiles and patterns of use will increasingly affect access and interpretation issues and this reinforces the need for better information about patterns of museum use and expectation and development of appropriate standards.

4.6 The clearest **economic barriers** to access are admission charges, although the cost and availability of public transport are also highly significant. SMC has opposed the introduction of admission charges which significantly disadvantage or single out some of the most vulnerable sections of the community. This has been recognised by recent Government funding commitments which will enable NMS to restore free admission from the year 2001. There should be no amendment to the law which prohibits local authorities from charging for admission without careful consideration of the impact across the range of government's clear strategic objectives. If there were to be a transfer of ownership or management responsibilities from local authorities to a Joint Board or independent trust, the principle of free access should be specifically considered as part of this process and not introduced by default.

4.7 **Outreach programmes** will become still more important as museums look to extend access, drawing on examples of good practice such as Glasgow's Open Museum or Fife's touring bus or the NMS loan scheme operated so successfully before the opening of the new Museum of Scotland. This is important for rural areas where there are limited numbers of museums and will be even more so if there is a reduction in the number of museums overall. There is a need to develop standards and a simple registration scheme for exhibition spaces which are not museums to encourage greater physical outreach while at the same time protecting the collections.

5 Education

- 5.1 Museums are a core learning resource. Whilst it is vital to form the habit of learning during school years, modern demographics and working patterns mean that today's schoolchildren can reasonably expect 50+ years of post-school activity during which they will increasingly both need and expect to have the opportunity to acquire new skills and information. Museums already operate as centres for local courses relating to culture, heritage, art and industry in historical and contemporary contexts. They are used by industry students e.g. in tourism, marketing and catering as well as for more academic learning. The importance of life-long learning cannot be underestimated and, with well over 7 million visitors to museums in Scotland in 1997, there is a huge potential audience of people who already choose to engage in a learning experience by visiting a museum. The Report *A Common Wealth: Museums and Learning in the United Kingdom*, presented to government in 1997, gives a full picture of the state and potential for learning in museums.
- 5.2 As education and learning are matters of overwhelming national importance which cross departmental and sectoral boundaries, the lead must come from a government committed to maximising learning opportunities. At national level, there should be a **cross-sector committee** responsible for co-ordination of relationships between museums and the education sector, including public bodies with responsibility for curriculum and assessment, teacher training and educational standards. This would include organisations such as the Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum, Scottish Qualifications Authority and Scottish Higher Education Funding Council as well as SMC, NMS, NGS and Historic Scotland. This Group should take the lead in encouraging and supporting the use of museums as inclusive learning resources, giving priority to introducing teachers at all levels of the benefits of museum education. In addition, consideration should be given to developing inclusive educational targets which encourage "museum literacy" in the same way that current early years education instills a knowledge of how to use books and libraries.
- 5.3 Quality research and evaluation of learning should be considered as a high priority. Qualitative research is as useful as quantitative (typically visitor figures) in measuring the impact of museums as learning environments. Evaluation systems need to be developed for museums and SMC should be resourced to form partnerships e.g. with Higher Education to undertake this research and development and to develop standards for museums education and interpretation.
- 5.4 Government and local authority support for museums should recognise the importance of museums within the context of a National Grid for Learning, as places of public access which can provide learning opportunities at every level and as providers of high quality educational content. SCRAN is acknowledged internationally as a leader in the field of

electronic distribution, but SCRAN and other audiences rely upon museums as a continuing source of high quality educational content as well as for access to the real objects.

- 5.5 At local level, less than 6% of Scotland's museums have a specialist museum educator on their core staff although museums are key to widening public access to life-long learning opportunities. There is a continuing need for the creation of a network of museum educators across Scotland to work with individuals or groups of museums. This a particular issue for rural areas where there are relatively few professional staff, difficulties in physical access and a greater dependence upon outreach programmes and remote access.

6 Economic Impact

- 6.1 Tourism is one of the most important sectors of the Scottish economy and museums are critical to the sector, as visitor numbers demonstrate. In the Scottish climate, the all-weather facilities provided by museums are of particular importance. Their contribution has perhaps not been sufficiently understood or acknowledged in previous government policies or initiatives but **continuing investment in museums as part of the tourism infrastructure** is vital to attract visitors who make a real contribution to the national and local economies.
- 6.2 Museums should be collaborating on a national as well as a local scale to introduce more effective marketing. An early initiative should be the development of a national marketing programme which would develop links with existing tourism and training programmes. As the Scottish Tourist Board's Project Ossian demonstrates, the development of an adequate ICT infrastructure, associated skills and high quality content are essential to an effective joint marketing programme and this reinforces the need for ICT for museums to be addressed as a national priority.
- 6.3 Even allowing for an increase in visitor numbers, Scotland is a relatively small and seasonal market and there is a limit to the number of new museums, heritage centres and other tourist attractions which the market will support. With other national agencies such as Scottish Enterprise, SMC has for some time argued that investment would be better directed into improving the quality of existing facilities and joint marketing than into new ventures which are unlikely to attract significant numbers without marked impact on existing facilities. It is misleading to herald museums as engines of long-term economic regeneration without more systematic evaluation of the impact of new facilities. A co-ordinated research programme jointly between SMC, the Scottish Tourist Board, Scottish Enterprise and Highlands & Islands Enterprise to evaluate impact should be a priority.

- 6.4 Resources should also continue to be directed into training for the sector, building on the work already done by organisations such as SMC, Scottish Tourist Board, Association of Scottish Visitor Attractions, HIE, SIE and the Enterprise networks. The Museum Training Institute, the newly recognised National Training Organisation for museums and heritage is funded through SMC but the Museum Training Institute is wholly under-resourced to fulfil its function. Development of a more systematic approach and additional resources for sector training (including training for volunteers and managers) should be a priority over the next decade.

7 Devolved structures for a devolved Scotland

- 7.1 There is a very strong argument for a **new government** bringing together the material and built heritage within a Heritage Ministry which might include responsibility for Historic Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage (or elements of Scottish Natural Heritage such as responsibility for historic landscape), the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments in Scotland and the Scottish Record Office as well as SMC, NMS and NGS. Casting the net still wider, SMC together with the national cultural agencies has argued the need for a national cultural strategy and for the creation of a Ministry of Culture and Heritage which embraces every aspect of culture including the material and built heritage. A parliamentary committee might well have a different remit, bringing a valuable different perspective to discussions.
- 7.2 Whatever the final executive structure, there should be opportunity for the museums community to establish **a greater dialogue** with Ministers and with parliamentary committees to allow a more inclusive and better informed approach to museum provision across Scotland.
- 7.3 As the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities observes, the challenge will be to manage the balance between a shared national agenda and local diversity. This national strategy argues that there is a national interest and a national responsibility for a policy framework but also that geographic and cultural diversity are vitally important. While HIE, SIE and the LECs can provide both capital and project funding, **the local authorities** are currently the most important museum providers both directly and in terms of support for the independent sector. All local authorities are members of SMC and the continuing political support of local authorities both individually and through CoSLA is a priority for further development and implementation of this national strategy. If the balance shifts in favour of national provision, the relationship between the local authorities and national providers must be reassessed. The local authorities would become more important stakeholders for NMS and NGS, particularly if local authorities were to take a more formal lead in community planning.

7.4 One of the greatest challenges will be to align funding and strategic planning for the sector overall and to manage the necessary redefining of relationships to achieve this. Possible options, which are indicative rather than prescriptive, include:

Option 1 A national museum service

The relevant government department provides strategic leadership with no arm's length intermediaries interposed between government and those in receipt of public funds. Democratic accountability is through the Minister to parliament.

This is most consistent with the option of a national museum service which is a possible option to be considered as a managed restructuring of the sector. An advantage of a national museums service, funded primarily through central government, would be strategic coherence, a clear commitment to the future of the collections and a comprehensive network of nationally supported museums and galleries with specialist services possibly delivered on a regional basis. This would represent a seismic shift in the landscape of museum provision in Scotland and interim funding would be needed to stabilise existing provision while the long term implications were assessed.

Option 2 An arm's length intermediary

An arm's length intermediary has a remit for museums as a whole, including both national and non-national museums. All funding from central government would be directed through this intermediary, which would have a strategic remit irrespective of the source of funding. This would be a fundamental change for the sector and would radically affect all museums: NMS and NGS would no longer have a direct relationship with central government and SMC if it continued to exist would no longer be responsible for strategic direction for the non-national sector. The governance of the new body should recognise the interest of all stakeholders, including the local authorities whatever their developing role, and practitioners and users. With a new form of governance, a new body would have an authority and credibility with central and local government, with the independent sector and with users and offers the best opportunity to develop the coherent policy framework and targeted resources so badly needed by museums.

This option would be consistent with any restructuring of the sector which looked to secure the future of non-national museums as well as the National Museums and Galleries. Funding via this arm's length intermediary should include not only funding for the National Museums and National Galleries but increased funding from government. This might include new partnership funding arrangements and should also include a challenge fund targeted at the non-national museums. A "spend to save" challenge fund should be used to encourage restructuring of both independent and local authority museums, delivering programmes which allowed interim stabilisation linked to careful rationalisation. It would be

essential to ensure that the intermediary continued to provide or enable the specialist advice and support currently provide by SMC to its members. There would be such positive benefits that there is widespread support within the museum sector for this option.

Option 3 A strategic agency

A structure in which strategic advice to government and to museums is provided by a single agency which is not responsible for funding, in particular not responsible for funding NMS and NGS. This is the model historically operated in England. In Scotland, SMC already fulfils this strategic role for the non-national museums and extending SMC's remit would achieve a sensible continuity of policies and expertise. However, if SMC's remit were to be extended, the present membership structure should be amended to allow NMS and NGS to formally participate in SMC membership and governance. An alternative is a new organisation.

As with Option 2, this is consistent with any restructuring of the sector which looked to secure the future of non-national museums and a single strategic body should be well placed to provide strategic leadership. However, if the arm's length intermediary has little or no financial input into the sector, experience has shown that there are difficulties in providing strategic leadership where profound sectoral change is necessary. At the very least, the arm's length intermediary should be the vehicle for a "spend to save" challenge fund used to encourage restructuring of both independent and local authority museums.

Option 4 A partnership approach

The status quo is retained but the relevant organisations - NMS, NGS and SMC - build on improving relationships and develop stronger functional networking and joint delivery of programmes in a more structured way. The National Strategy already identifies areas which can be developed using this approach and this option will be the more realistic if there is an opportunity for all parties to have a greater dialogue with the Minister and parliamentary committees.

The option has attractions in allowing NMS and NGS to retain their current status and SMC to preserve its present membership structure and accountability to those whose interests it represents but may not deliver strategic coherence. If this option is adopted, SMC as the intermediary should be the vehicle for challenge funding to encourage restructuring of both independent and local authority museums.

- 7.5 **Heritage Lottery Fund.** The Department of Culture, Media and Sport White Paper recognises the problems inherent in separating the distribution of Lottery funds to museums from strategic planning for the sector, and the greater the convergence of government objectives and

Lottery distribution, the less logic there is in maintaining the current separation between Scottish policy and Heritage Lottery Fund operations. However, for the present it is assumed, in line with Department of Culture, Media and Sport proposals, that the Heritage Lottery Fund will remain as a UK distributor.

It is not clear what will be the role of the Heritage Lottery Fund 'Country Committee' but, whatever the mechanism for distribution, it is recommended that the Heritage Lottery Fund should be directed to have regard to strategic advice from the Scottish agencies, initially from SMC as well as Historic Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage. If any decision making is delegated to regional organisations, serious consideration should be given to the formal or informal creation of a joint distribution arrangement (using the model of the Awards for All scheme) which comprises the relevant Scottish agencies. This inter-agency model would reinforce the moves towards co-operation and joint working which are already emerging within the sector and would mirror the approach which SMC and others have advocated might be adopted at government level.

- 7.6 It is difficult to state with certainty what should be the role of the Museums & Galleries Commission and other existing cross-border organisations such as the Museums Training Institute (the recognised National Training Organisation for the sector). In its present form, MGC has a UK remit but the proposals to merge MGC with the Libraries and Information Commission (which has no UK remit) suggest a recognition that a continuing UK remit for MGC is inappropriate. There are practical areas e.g. standard setting and the reserved areas of Acceptance in Lieu and Government Indemnity Scheme where MGC will have a continuing role, but the mechanism for this will need to be resolved as part of a wider constitutional review.

8 Accountability

In presenting the case for increased funding, the museum sector recognises the need for greater public accountability to demonstrate how museums deliver outstanding value for money. Greater accountability can be achieved within a framework which includes

- The development of a constructive dialogue between the Scottish parliament and all relevant funding agencies, including any Lottery distributors. This is desirable whatever structural changes are adopted for the sector.
- Ensuring that if the Heritage Lottery Fund remains a Lottery distributor for Scotland, it takes into account strategic advice from the relevant national agencies in framing policies and delegating distribution.
- Involving users in setting objectives and assessing services, both at national and local level, using examples of good practice such as Fife's Citizens Juries and the NMS Junior Board.

- Better information about museums and the wider cultural sector. It is now widely recognised that there is insufficient information about the sector as a whole, including 'only limited knowledge of how public money has delivered government objectives'. The national cultural agencies in Scotland have undertaken some preliminary research into cultural statistics but there are currently no resources for any systematic evaluation of past funding decisions or for future monitoring. Systematic evaluation should be a condition of increased funding.
- Development of minimum standards in respect of local authorities statutory duty (which should be retained and in the longer term strengthened) to ensure adequate cultural facilities for their areas. A model already exists in the requirement to maintain library standards developed by CoSLA with the Scottish Libraries Information Council but neither CoSLA nor SMC are currently resourced to undertake extensive development, although SMC has taken the lead in co-ordinating development of Best Value principles for museums.
- The development of rigorous but appropriate standards and performance measures for the sector, including the use of established schemes such as the Registration Scheme and the Visitor Attraction Grading Scheme, and use of benchmarking against best practice, including international practice.
- Regulation within the scope of agreed standards. One option would be an independent inspectorate (similar to Her Majesty's Inspector for Schools) but this is unlikely to be cost-effective and a preferred recommendation would be the development of self regulation through peer review, co-ordinated through SMC or its successor. This would offer the opportunity to develop international links where appropriate, for instance in specialist areas such as maritime collections. International peer review would be particularly appropriate for NMS and NGS. Funders and organisations such as the Accounts Commission should then take appropriate account of the outcome of assessments.
- Better developed audit systems. A comprehensive audit trail is unrealistic, but an obvious and valuable sampling exercise would be a review of Treasure Trove and items purchased through the National Fund for Acquisitions.

9 Conclusion

- 9.1 This will be the first National Strategy for museums available to the new Scottish parliament and executive. Some of the recommendations can be acted upon immediately. Other more fundamental issues such as the choice of appropriate structures and the commitment of significant additional funding are choices for the new executive.
- 9.2 The intention is to review the National Strategy in the year 2004. The success of the National Strategy will be evident if within the first term of the new parliament Scotland can demonstrate:
- new structures which recognise the importance of museums as part of the Scottish cultural sector
 - a reversal of the downward spiral of funding demonstrating a long-term commitment to museums throughout Scotland
 - progress towards a sustainable network of museums, fewer in number but with stable core funding
 - a national commitment to quality, standards and innovation, enabling museum users to unlock the true potential of collections throughout Scotland.

Appendix

50 Most Visited Museums and Galleries in Scotland

(Source: STB Visitor Attraction Survey 1997)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Visitors in 1997</u>
1 Kelvingrove	1053745
2 Royal Museum of Scotland	591152
3 United Services Museum	455738
4 Glasgow Transport Museum	438429
5 GOMA Glasgow	410332
6 National Gallery	404841
7 Burrell Collection	331285
8 Royal Scots Dragoon Guards	300000
9 Argyll & S Highlanders	295830
10 Aberdeen Art Gallery	264428
11 Museum of Childhood	259420
12 National Gallery of Modern Art	217459
13 Ferguson Gallery, Perth	142062
14 Aberdeen Maritime Museum	138621
15 St Mungo's Museum	129816
16 McManus Galleries	126950
17 People's Story	100288
18 Inverary Jail	96634
19 Barrack St Museum, Dundee	77047
20 Edinburgh City Art Centre	74729
21 Summerlee Heritage Park	71601
22 Inverness Museum & Art Gallery	68938
23 Hunterian Museum	67032
24 Smith Art Gallery & Museum	62249
25 Scotland Street School	60000
26 Perth Museum & Art Gallery	57752
27 St Andrews Museum	57170
28 Paisley Museum & Art Gallery	56768
29 British Golf Museum	56736
30 Kirkcaldy Museum & Art Gallery	56395
31 Museum of Flight	53119
32 James Dun's House	51378
33 Queen's Own Highlanders Museum	50900
34 Aberdeen Arts Centre Gallery	50000
35 Huntly House	48964
36 Scottish Agricultural Museum	47903
37 People's Palace	47717
38 David Livingstone Centre	45000
39 Marischal Museum	45000
40 McLellan Galleries	39774
41 Writers' Museum	37433
42 An Lanntair Gallery	36089
43 Shetland Museum	35354

44 McLean Museum & Art Gallery	35251
45 Doune Motor Museum	32468
46 Collective Gallery	31400
47 Balmichael Vis Centre, Arran	30000
48 Glasgow School of Art	30000
49 Museum of Lead Mining	30000
50 Last House Museum	30000
TOTALS	7331197

- **Total Museum Visits:**

Scotland	UK
9,781,895	73,819,499

- **Museums that charge for admission**

Scotland	UK
101 (34%)	798 (45%)

(Source: DOMUS 1997)

Expenditure (Revenue) on Museums in Scotland

	1995-6	1996-7		1997-8
1998-9				
NMS	11.126	10.714	11.034	11.492
NGS	6.508	6.535	6.597	7.013
SMC	0.782	0.811	0.807	0.840
Government	18.416	18.060	18.438	19.435
Local Authorities	39.956	N/A	29.960	29.960
Independents	6.000	6.000	6.000	6.000
	64.370		54.400	55.305

NMS, NGS, SMC are for SOEID grant only.

Independent expenditure estimate only and excludes local authority grants.

Local authority includes grants to independents.

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