

Minutes of the Joint Forum on Museums, Archives and Libraries across the UK.

4th December 2003

Present

Chris Batt (Resource) - Chair
Sue Wilkinson (Resource)
Fran Hegyi (Resource)
Gerry Slater (PRONI)
Christine Galey (SMC)

Jane Robinson (SMC)
Linda Tomos (CyMAL)
Jane Edmonds (CyMAL)
Alan Watkin (LISC Wales and Resource Board member)

Elaine Fulton (SLIC) - Observer

1 Apologies

- 1.1 Apologies were received from: Phillips Wilson (DCAL); Irene O'Brien (SCA); Sean Bullick (NMDC)

2 Welcome and Introductions

- 2.1 Chris Batt welcomed people to the first meeting of the Joint Forum and reiterated that the Joint Forum was a meeting of four equal partners to promote the creation of common ground, sharing and solving on comment problems and sharing of forward plans.
- 2.2 Resource was thanked for its work in encouraging the creation of the Forum but it was emphasised that this Forum was a channel of communication between all four or any combination of counties.
- 2.3 A draft press notice announcing the creation of the Joint Forum and the Agreement reached by all four countries was presented by Resource for information and comment. Amendments and contributions were to be forwarded to Resource before the scheduled release on 5th December. It was noted that the Welsh Assembly Government and the Scottish Executive were planning to release their own press notices.
- 2.4 The status of the Agreement and Supplementary Note was clarified. The Supplementary Note had been signed by all relevant Ministers or officials within each government department. It is not the intention that the Agreement is signed by any partner organisation; rather it is a document for information and which describes working relationships between the four countries and to which any number of organisation may refer.

3 Geographical remit of present and future Resource schemes

- 3.1 A paper detailing the geographical coverage of historic and ongoing work within the Resource workplan was presented. It was agreed that the only areas of work which are reserved on a UK-wide basis by Resource are those relating to Acceptance in Lieu, Government Indemnity and Conditional Exemption.
- 3.2 Discussion was invited as to the extent to which all other programmes of work were delivered on a UK basis by Resource. It was agreed that there were a number of workplan areas where joint working would be in the interests of all parties.

It was agreed that some parts of the list need to be revisited at the future meetings to agree a common approach to delivery. These included: Common Information Environment; Implementation of Resource's International Strategy; Strategic Plan for Standards.

- 3.3 It was agreed that the roll out of Inspiring Learning for All was the responsibility of each devolved administration. Resource staff would be willing to provide guidance and information in support of the roll out should this be useful but Resource would not be responsible for implementing ILFA in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.
- 3.4 There was widespread interest in the development of the Collections Management and Development framework. It was noted that this is still at a very early stage but that Resource agreed to circulate further information on this as soon as possible. CyMAL requested initial discussion with Resource on this in the near future.
- 3.5 The sustainability of the People's Network was considered a matter for urgent discussion for the next Joint Forum.
- 3.6 All documentation relating to Resource's Disability Action Plan is currently available on the Resource website. Resource agreed to circulate details of the distribution of the Disability Guides and associated costs. A conference to launch the complete Disability Portfolio of Guides is planned for next year in partnership with the Museums Association and the Museums and Galleries Disability Association (MAGDA). SMC noted that Resource's advisory publications were useful, and had been supplemented in Scotland by materials produced by SMC. SMC suggested that the Forum could provide an opportunity for joint commissioning of advisory work/research in the future to ensure applicability across the UK.
- 3.7 Resource's developing Workforce Development Strategy was discussed. Scotland and Wales have been represented on the steering group by Jane Ryder and Alan Watkin, and it is anticipated that the recommendations will be applicable across the UK. It was noted that the workforce issues facing our sector are the same across the UK, but to be relevant it might be necessary to take further views from a wider constituency in the devolved nations. It was agreed that the definition of the extent of the workforce under discussion needs to be clear –e.g. whether the strategy will be concerned only with the public sector or with private sector workers too. It was agreed that Resource would invite representatives from each devolved administration to join the Workforce Development steering group.
- 3.8 There was a query as to the extent of consultation outside England. It was agreed that continued representation from the Devolved Administrations would be sought for the Steering Group. It was also agreed that more work needed to be done in consulting stakeholders in the devolved administrations and that discussion of the details of this should be followed up with interested organisations.
- 3.9 The emergence of the two Sector Skills Councils (Creative and Cultural Industries and Lifelong Learning) was discussed. Resource is supporting both consortia bids. CyMAL has been asked for comment on a proposal to support the Lifelong Learning bid. SMC have commissioned work on developing the Scottish aspects of the CCI bid in partnership with SAC, VOCAL, NMS etc. SMC will circulate a copy when it is available.
- 3.10 The publication of the Goodison report was expected shortly and Resource agreed to circulate copies of the report once available and also copies of the information leaflet Resource had produced.

- 3.11 The first Digest of Statistics produced by Resource – using existing sources of statistics – is due out shortly and will be circulated to the members of the Joint Forum shortly. SMC highlighted the existence of the Scottish Executive Cultural Statistics group, chaired by senior civil servant, Bob Irvine, which had been reviewing the collection and publication of cultural statistic in Scotland. The proposal is that CIPFA produce a new digest of cultural statistics in Scotland.

- 3.12 It was acknowledged that each country produces its own work on impact evaluation studies and related statistics but that from time to time it may be useful to draw them together on a UK basis. CyMAL agreed to circulate work they were aware of on the impact of the cultural industries.

- 3.13 The Archives Task Force, due to report to DCMS in March 2004, has representation from the Devolved Administrations on the Task Force. The Joint Forum asked to see a confidential early draft in order to prepare for any policy implications arising from the report. It was noted that the implementation of any recommendations would be for each administration to determine.

- 3.14 The new Museums Registration scheme was discussed. Consultation on the new scheme has been UK wide. Once published next year, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales would consider implementation issues in each country. Scotland suggested that they would produce recommendations for the Scottish Executive based on a pilot exercise to explore the cost -benefits of the scheme. CyMAL indicated that they would wish to continue to administer the scheme as many grants to museums are conditional on registration. Resource is engaged in a rigorous review of the scheme based on comments received to date, with the aim of simplifying the process.

- 3.15 The wider libraries agenda at Resource is being addressed via the WILIP initiative; copies of the WILIP report are available on the resource website. The next phase 'Routes to Knowledge' is now in development and it was agreed that it should be brought to the next Forum for discussion.

- 3.16 It was agreed that improved communication mechanisms needed to be developed to support effective working between all four countries. It was noted that Resource currently has greater capacity and staffing levels than in other administrations so might take a lead on developing these mechanisms.

- 3.17 It was suggested that an email discussion list be set up whereby members of the Joint Forum could share information and keep up to date with initiatives and policy developments in each of the four countries. Resource undertook to investigate this further and to explore the possibility of creating a 'Devolved Administrations' area of the Resource website.

4 Current Priorities

England

- 4.1 A diagram of the Planning Framework shared between Resource and the Regional Agencies was tabled for information. This details the 9 programme areas on which Resource and the Regional Agencies will jointly deliver shared priorities and outcomes. The first draft of the Resource Operational plan will be available on 12th December. Comments on the framework were invited from the Forum.

- 4.2 'Investing in Knowledge' a five year vision document for England's museums, archives and libraries was also tabled for information. This is at the heart of Resource's activity in support of the Spending Review in SR2004. Key messages of the campaign include highlighting the contribution that museums, archives and libraries make across government and to a variety of PSA targets.

Northern Ireland

- 4.3 PRONI has recently undertaken a consultation on Archives Policy. Museums and Libraries have been included in the consultation exercise.
- 4.4 Rural proofing is a significant initiative in Northern Ireland and PRONI were asked to report back their experiences of adopting the policy.

Scotland

- 4.5 The Scottish Executive is about to announce a review of cultural organisations with a 12 week consultation period. Culture is currently a high priority within this Executive as demonstrated by Jack McConnell's speech on St Andrew's day which promoted the concept of cultural entitlement. The Executive will co-ordinate a national consultation roadshow, and in addition SMC will be convening a number of consultation sessions with its members.

Wales

- 4.6 The focus in Wales has been the establishment on CyMAL: Museums Archives and Libraries Wales which will become operational on 1st April 2004. CyMAL, which will be part of the Welsh Assembly Government and with a remit for museums, archives and libraries, will have a staff of circa 25 and be based in Aberystwyth. Posts are currently being advertised. An Advisory Council will be established by March next year.

5 Management of Joint Forum

- 5.1 Secretariat
Resource offered to provide the secretariat for the Joint Forum for the next 12 months, ending December 2004.
- 5.2 Date of Next Meeting and Chair
Northern Ireland offered to investigate whether it would be possible to host and Chair the next meeting. The Forum suggested a next meeting date of May 2004. The usefulness of visiting other countries in gaining a feel for the environment in which others are operating was re-emphasised.
- 5.3 Representation
Widening the representation of the Forum was discussed. It was suggested that the Republic of Ireland be invited to join and that in time, others may also join the Forum. It was agreed that this would be discussed at the next meeting.
- 5.4 Agenda
It was suggested that there be a standing agenda item on forward planning. This would enable early warning of forthcoming work programmes and policy decision which may be of interest to other countries and would also enable joint commissioning of projects where appropriate.

