**Museums Association Response to Museums Review**

The Museums Association welcomes the publication of the Independent Review of Museums in England.

We are pleased to see government recognition of many of the issues that the Museums Association raised during the consultation period. In particular, DCMS has accepted the need for a strategic funding approach to ensure that funding bodies work together more closely. We are also pleased to see recognition of the opportunities that we identified for the sector relating to the social impact of museums, particularly in supporting placemaking, wellbeing and spaces for debate.

However, we are disappointed that despite recognising the severe funding difficulties experienced by many museums, the government has failed to identify any new resources or capacity to improve the sustainability of the sector.

The Government’s own figures show that local authority funding for museums in England in 2016 was 31% lower in real terms than in 2010. This dramatic reduction in core funding has resulted in museum closures, reduced opening hours, the loss of expertise and low morale. While we support the limited efforts recommended by government to enable museums to adapt to funding reductions, including the proposed best practice museums guidance to local authorities, and the proposal to give local authority museums greater financial and digital freedoms, museums will need more than warm words from government if they are to solve their resourcing problems.

The Museums Review and our own work with Museums Association members demonstrates that the sector is capable of achieving great things across a wide variety of areas of public policy, including education, social engagement, health and wellbeing, tourism and regeneration, and research and innovation. But these achievements are at risk if the issue of resources and sustainability is not tackled head-on.

The Museums Association set out a range of proposals to tackle sector sustainability in our [consultation submission](http://www.museumsassociation.org/download?id=1197448). We have also convened a Museums Taskforce of leading museum professionals which has recently set out [proposals for next steps on museum funding](http://www.museumsassociation.org/download?id=1214840). We believe that there is still a discussion to be had about implementing these proposals, and hope that this work will drive the government’s new Museums Action Plan forwards so that all museums in England are able to deliver the greatest possible public benefit.

We also look forward to working closely with DCMS, ACE, HLF and other partners to deliver many of the other recommendations. In particular:

* We support the creation of a ‘Partnership Framework’ that ensures a more strategic approach to collaboration between national and regional museums.
* We support further efforts by government to develop partnership working between museums and third sector organisations. We already offer financial support for collections-based partnerships via our Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund scheme and hope to offer further opportunities in the future.
* We support efforts to protect museums and collections that are deemed ‘at risk’ due to the closure of institutions. We are already working with ACE and HLF to draw up a protocol to help protect museums and collections at risk and will conduct research into the future use of collections in the new year.
* We support efforts to grow and diversify museum audiences and will continue to contribute to ongoing research in this area, such as the Diversifying Museum Visitors Project.
* We support further efforts to diversify and develop the museums workforce. The MA’s Transformers scheme, and Associateship and Fellowship of the Museums Association’s awards already contribute towards these goals, and our Valuing Diversity research sets out a way forward for the sector in this respect.