# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Response to the Expert Review of Local Museum Provision in Wales 2015 report**  |
| **DATE**  | **30 March 2016** |
| **BY**  | **Ken Skates, Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism** |

In October 2014, I appointed an Expert Panel to review local museum provision across Wales. The Panel published their report *Expert Review of Local Museum Provision in Wales 2015* on 25th August 2015. On 4 February 2016, I attended a meeting organised by the Welsh Local Government Association to discuss the ten recommendations within the report.

Local museums across Wales are custodians of some of our nation’s most iconic and fragile heritage and protect it for the benefit of our current generation and those of the future. This should be a key element of our Fusion programme and I am aware some museums are doing excellent work in this field. However, the Review has identified that local museums lack resources and capacity

I welcome the Review recommendations and recognise it will be necessary to implement them over time. I acknowledge that delivery requires partnership working and to take the sector and the recommendations forward, we will develop the next Strategy for Museums in Wales. This will be published during 2016 and a process of consultation will begin in due course.

All Assembly Members were sent a copy of the report in September <http://gov.wales/topics/cultureandsport/museums-archives-libraries/museums/review/?lang=en>

My response to the recommendations of the report is set out below:

Recommendation 1: Creation of three Regional Bodies

Regional bodies would be more resilient and better able to deliver Fusion alongside other strategic programmes. They would support a more diverse and motivated workforce and benefit from economies of scale, with greater potential to attract grants, generate income and provide high quality services. They would provide support across a region to enable delivery at a local level. I will ask officials to work with the WLGA to assess the opportunities this recommendation offers and to scope its feasibility.

Recommendation 2: Creation of a national Museums’ Council

The Welsh Government provides a specialist policy division which, in collaboration with the sector, created the first national strategy for museums in the UK. Delivery is overseen by a steering group with representatives from a range of sector bodies. There are opportunities to develop this steering group.

Recommendation 3: Development of a Museums’ Charter

The UK Accreditation Scheme sets out minimum standards. A Museums Charter will identify what our communities and visitors can expect from excellent public museums. Clear milestones for delivery will be built into the next Museums Strategy for Wales.

Recommendation 4: Local Authorities consider all options when reviewing museum services

The Future Generations Act places a responsibility on Local Authorities to protect our heritage. All local authorities should set out their intentions for museum services and how museums and their collections will help them deliver well-being goals.

Recommendation 5: Establish Collection Wales

This recommendation builds on the good work already carried out by museums to develop the Distributed National Collection. We will work with the sector to take this forward.

Recommendation 6: Workforce development

The Museums Archives and Libraries Division provide a sector training programme which will include relevant training and support to meet new challenges.

Recommendation 7: Transformation fund

This recommendation is intended to support the transition of services to regional bodies. Creation of a fund will be a matter for the next government to determine.

Recommendation 8: Museum entry charges

I recognise there is a lack of clarity about why some museums charge and some do not. I have asked for work to start on commissioning a review of museum entry charges with a view to establishing clarity for the sector and for visitors. This will not change the Welsh Government policy of free entry to our National Museums.

Recommendation 9: National Non-Domestic Rates relief

The opportunity to vary business rates for museums would be a matter for a future Welsh Government to consider.

 Recommendation 10: Welsh Government support and development of museums

I have asked officials to explore the opportunities presented by the Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 for delivering this recommendation.