

Department for Culture, Media & Sport

The Heritage Alliance

31 October 2016

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Dear Sir

Museums Review - Open Consultation

I write in response to the Open Consultation, published on 5 September 2016.

About the Heritage Alliance

The Heritage Alliance is England's largest coalition of independent heritage interests. We unite 104 organisations which together have over 7 million members, volunteers, trustees and staff. The vast majority of England's historic environment is owned, managed and cared for by Heritage Alliance members.

The Heritage Alliance takes a strong interest in funding measures affecting the historic environment through its Funding Advocacy Group. This group, including representatives from The National Trust, English Heritage, the Churches Conservation Trust, the Canals and Rivers Trust and the Association of Independent Museums, acts as an information exchange and draws the specialised expertise and knowledge of our members into our policy positions.

Comments on the Consultation

The Heritage Alliance wishes to draw attention to the scale and variety of the independent museum sector, which includes two thirds of all UK museums. They cover a huge variety of sizes, types and business models from volunteer-run to multi-million, multi-site trusts. We hope the Review will recognise the significance of this diversity in delivering excellence in the UK cultural sector.

The Alliance would particularly like to draw attention to how the government might improve the environment in which independent museums operate. We would strongly support recommendations which reduce regulation and create a legal and tax environment in which museums and other members of the heritage sector can prosper. The Alliance has already responded to the Stage 1 HM Treasury Call for Evidence regarding proposals to simplify the gift aid donor benefit rules (see attached letter of 9 October 2015).

Our members are non-government, voluntary and private organisations that promote, conserve, study and involve the public in our [heritage](#).

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We also support the HM Treasury announcement of a tax relief on touring and temporary exhibitions. We would welcome the extension of the current proposals to include all new exhibitions rather than just those with a timeframe of one year or less. The reason for this is that few independent museums outside London have the capacity for temporary exhibitions and would therefore miss out on this potential benefit. We would also support the protection of the 80% mandatory relief on business rates for the properties of charitable museums as business rates are devolved to local authorities.

More encouragement could be given to museums and other heritage properties look for private sources of funds. We would urge the Government to reinforce its commitment in the Ten Point Plan for Philanthropy, as mentioned in the Culture White Paper. Our HLF-funded Catalyst scheme, 'Giving to Heritage', offers fundraising training to staff, volunteers and trustees of independent heritage organisations on a range of subjects including Crowdfunding, Applying to Major Donors and Corporate Partnerships. A recent independent survey shows that the GTH programme has already achieved success in boosting the confidence and resilience of the sector and in fact considerable sums of money have been raised. We need to keep up the momentum, especially after HLF funding for the programme runs out in August 2017.

We welcome the Government's encouragement to the sector to apply for social investment funds and to set up community shares schemes. Training on these two subjects is also part of the GTH programme. There is a feeling, however, that the process of applying for social investment funds is complicated and that most heritage are unsure whether it is right for them. There are too few heritage case study examples, and indeed when the Funding Advocacy Group recently met with representatives from Big Society Capital, only the example of Live Theatre, Newcastle, was offered. We are not aware of any museums have applied for social investment funds or applied to set up community shares schemes,

I hope these comments will be helpful.

Yours faithfully

Lizzie Glithero-West
Chief Executive
The Heritage Alliance