



Summary of an Inquiry Report of the:
Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee

**MUSEUM OF CARDIFF-
SUMMARY**
July 2023



Cardiff Council

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FOREWORD

The pressures facing local authorities are unprecedented; post pandemic service demand coupled with economic uncertainties and the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on local authorities mean Cardiff Council is having to maximise its budget spending ever more closely. The Council spends circa £500,000 per annum on the Museum of Cardiff. At times like these, it is important to question the effectiveness of this spend, to understand if it is delivering value for residents and taxpayers, and to explore whether the budget allocation can be optimised, so that the needs of the museum are balanced with the need to fund statutory frontline services.

I am grateful to all those who gave their time to this Inquiry, including the expert stakeholders, Museum staff, Development Trustees and volunteers; we benefitted from your expertise and experience, helping us to understand what is needed to secure the future of the Museum.

I am also grateful to those interested in the future of the Museum who gave evidence to the Inquiry; your views on the importance of Cardiff having a museum that tells the stories of all its communities reaffirmed the important role good museums play in the economy, culture, education and leisure offer of a city as well as in promoting social cohesion.

Reflecting on the Museum of Cardiff's journey to date is essential to understanding the best way forward; we need to address the barriers that have hampered the Museum's development. Our recommendations aim to assist this by strengthening strategic and financial planning to give direction, emphasising the need for a new location to provide temporary exhibition and income generation spaces, with good footfall, and ensuring the Museum is staffed appropriately.

It is also important the Museum is accessible and inclusive for all communities in Cardiff and so some of our recommendations focus on boosting inclusivity and representativeness and assisting participation via outreach work.

The Museum of Cardiff has huge support, both from museum experts, local stakeholders and the communities that have been engaged; we can harness this to build on its success and ensure its future.

Finally, many thanks to Councillor Henshaw, Councillor Shimmin and Councillor Thompson for their commitment to completing this Inquiry in record time to enable our findings and recommendations to feed into the Working Party.



Councillor Peter Wong
Chair, Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee
July 2023

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. To gather stakeholders' views and learn from their knowledge and experience of council-run and/ or charitable trust museums regarding:
 - a. Funding models
 - b. Income generation
 - c. Governance models
 - d. Community engagement
 - e. Volunteering
 - f. Inclusivity and representativeness
 - g. Partnership working
 - h. Staffing structures.
2. To explore with stakeholders the main requirements to ensure a sustainable location and future for the Museum of Cardiff, including identifying likely issues associated with relocation and re-provision.
3. To understand the Council's spend on the Museum of Cardiff, the income of the Museum of Cardiff and whether there are any conditions attached to previous funding provision.
4. To use the information gathered during the Inquiry to make evidence-based recommendations to Cabinet regarding how best to achieve a sustainable future for the Museum of Cardiff.

APPROACH TAKEN

- M1. Members undertook this Inquiry during May 2023 – July 2023.
- M2. Members received evidence from the following internal stakeholders who attended a question & answer session:
- Cllr Jennifer Burke – Cabinet Member – Culture, Parks and Events
 - Neil Hanratty – Director of Economic Development
 - Donna Jones – Assistant Director, County Estates
 - Kathryn Richards – Head of Culture, Venues, Tourism and Events
 - Alison Tallontire – Acting Manager, Museum of Cardiff
- M3. Members visited the Museum of Cardiff and met with staff and volunteers, listening to their experiences of working in the Museum of Cardiff and views on the future of the Museum.
- M4. Members also received evidence from the following external stakeholders who attended meetings with the task group:
- Ian Courtney, Gabriella Howell, Janey Howell, Gerallt Jones, Mark Munnery, Richard Tynen – Development Trustees
 - Chris Delaney - Federation of Museums and Art Galleries of Wales
 - Dawn Gullis, Ashlea Harris, Zarah Kaleem, George Langton, Lisa Pickard, Sarah Thomas - Cardiff People First
 - Nicola Guy - Welsh Government, Culture Division – Deputy Director
 - Professor Jane Henderson – expert witness
 - Joshua Robertson - Museum Association
 - Dr Dave Wyatt - Caer Heritage
- M5. Members wrote to several key stakeholders offering them the opportunity to give their views to the Inquiry. Written responses were received from:
- Andrew RT Davies MS
 - Heledd Fychan MS
 - Rhys ab Owen MS

- Julie Morgan MS
- Cardiff Civic Society
- Glamorgan Archives
- Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.

M6. In addition to the above, Members considered users views via visitor survey responses and school users' feedback, as well as the consultation responses received to the Council's Budgetary Proposals Consultation.

M7. To inform the Inquiry, Members were provided with briefing reports ahead of each meeting, including the *Open Up Guidebook*, produced by the Association of Independent Museums. These have been synthesised into the report.

M8. The evidence has been used to identify suitable findings from the Inquiry.

HEADLINE FINDINGS

- HF1. The current position is not tenable due to the costs of operating from the Old Library, the lack of space for income generation activities, and the increasing pressures on the Council's budgets.
- HF2. There is now a real opportunity to plan for a sustainable future for the Museum of Cardiff, retaining its focus on telling the stories of the people of Cardiff whilst boosting footfall, outreach, inclusivity and representativeness.
- HF3. Any new location must provide security of tenure, income generation opportunities, meet the museum Accreditation Scheme criteria, be supported by existing funders, and enable future funding bids to be made.
- HF4. The Museum of Cardiff is highly regarded, with many stakeholders keen to engage to help shape its future. Involving stakeholders, including those with museum expertise and local communities, in discussions on the way forward would be beneficial.
- HF5. The Council has an opportunity to reposition its relationship with the Museum of Cardiff by raising its profile, realising its potential and linking the Museum into the wider work of the Council, including cultural activities, educational activities, volunteering opportunities, partnership working and wider economic activity such as tourism and events.

KEY FINDINGS

- KF1. Museums that effectively represent their place and communities are of value and have an important place in the ecology of the cultural offer. Welsh Government is developing a Cultural Strategy that includes museums; Cardiff Council needs to ensure its Cultural Strategy also includes museums.

Current Position

KF2. The Inquiry heard from stakeholders – professionals, visitors and schools – that the Museum of Cardiff is held in high regard for the good work it does; this is reflected in the national awards it has won.

KF3. Cardiff Council's annual budget for the Museum of Cardiff is circa £513K per annum, which includes a contribution towards the running costs of the Old Library. In addition, the Council has a separate repairs and maintenance budget for the Old Library; the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama will take on responsibility for these costs as it has leased the building.

KF4. The Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama has confirmed the Museum of Cardiff will have a lease for up to 5 year; during this time, it will continue to contribute its share towards the running costs of the Old Library

KF5. The Museum of Cardiff has been successful in securing grants, via staff and the Development Trust. However, the Museum lacks the capacity to “earn” income via a café/ shop, as was initially conceived in the Phase II plans for the Museum. Added to this, the lack of certainty over the Museum's future has made fundraising even more difficult than it is anyway.

Footfall

KF6. The Museum of Cardiff has declining footfall as measured by Spotlight data, and this pre-dates the covid pandemic. However, the Museum does a lot of valuable outreach and development work that is not captured in these figures, including temporary exhibitions held off-site.

KF7. All of the following have exacerbated the decline in footfall at the Museum:

- a. loss of temporary exhibition space
- b. exhibitions needing updating
- c. lack of a café
- d. lack of space to host events
- e. staffing reductions
- f. lack of marketing and promotion
- g. lack of signage.

KF8. Whilst footfall is key to success, footfall alone should not be used to measure the value of the Museum; there should be a Social Return on Investment approach, taking into account the partnerships, trust, outreach and development work undertaken and how these have benefited the people and communities of Cardiff.

Governance

KF9. There is a Development Trust that was established to fundraise for the Museum of Cardiff; it does not have any role in the management or operations of the Museum. The Museum of Cardiff does not have a board or advisory group; there are no other trustees assisting the Museum.

KF10. The Charity Commission, Museum Association, Association of Independent Museums, and the museum Accreditation Scheme provide helpful good practice regarding how bodies are constituted and how they should operate to be most effective and ethical.

Community Engagement

KF11. The Museum of Cardiff is seen as the 'go-to' place in Wales for examples of local community engagement, such as work with young people, older people, people with dementia, and refugees.

KF12. There is scope for the Museum of Cardiff to engage more with a wider range of local communities, and use innovative ways to enable this e.g., weekly painting and pottery workshops using items from their collection to inspire the workshop.

KF13. The Museum of Cardiff benefits from its ethical volunteering scheme; Members met some of these volunteers and were struck by their commitment and knowledge and their ability to enrich the visitor experience. Members believe there is scope to build on this.

Inclusivity and Representativeness

KF14. The Museum of Cardiff is one of the least colonial museum in the UK as exhibits all have the explicit permission and narrative of owners.

KF15. There is scope for the Museum to go further by collecting contemporary items, including oral histories, to reflect the huge, vibrant, diverse and exciting history and culture of Cardiff and encourage engagement from a wider range of communities in Cardiff, with objects on display that are relevant to residents across Cardiff. The *Open Up Guidebook* referenced in this Inquiry contains guidance on whose voices are represented and whose stories are shared.

KF16. The exhibitions in the Museum are over ten years old; it is good practice to refresh exhibitions every ten years. There is an opportunity to review exhibitions, their interpretation and display to promote equality and inclusivity, taking a co-curation and host curation approach, as set out in the *Association of Independent Museum's Success Guide – Museum Displays and Interpretation 2022*.

KF17. The Race Equality Task Force findings and the Open Up Guidebook referenced in this Inquiry highlight the need to ensure staff, volunteers and trustees reflect the protected characteristics of local communities.

Working towards the Future

KF18. The work towards securing the future of the Museum of Cardiff would benefit from wider stakeholder engagement, including those with museum experience and those with experience of working with the Museum of Cardiff, such as: Museums Association, Federation of Welsh Museums and Art Galleries, Association of Independent Museums, Amgueddfa Cymru, Professor Jane Henderson, Museum Detox, Caer Heritage, Cardiff People First, and other relevant Cardiff community-based organisations.

Key Factors for a Sustainable Future

Vision & Strategy

KF19. The Museum of Cardiff would benefit from a clear vision and strategy that reflect the Administration's Stronger, Fairer, Greener values as well as the Race Equality Task Force findings.

KF20. The Museum of Cardiff would benefit from having some leading goals to guide partnerships, staffing and funding priorities. The Inquiry heard the Museum could focus on being a campaigning museum, a 'People's Palace', a sustainable futures museum, a schools' resource, a must-see visitor attraction, or a combination of these and more.

KF21. It is critical that stakeholders are part of the discussions and conversations about the future focus of the Museum and that the Museum continues to tell the stories of all peoples of Cardiff.

Audience

KF22. The Museum of Cardiff can be both for local audiences and for visitors, as long as there is sufficient resource to meet these differing needs and expectations. It is important to understand the audience for the Museum of Cardiff, as this will help to build and diversify the audience base, assist with resource allocation and assist with funding applications.

KF23. It is important to market and promote the Museum of Cardiff effectively, to sell the success story that it is, and attract new audiences.

Funding

KF24. The Museum of Cardiff would benefit from having a 3-year funding plan, as recommended by the *Welsh Government's Review of Amgueddfa Cymru* by Dr. Thurley. Members recognise that Cardiff Council has a yearly funding cycle but believe that it would be possible to have indicative funding for Year 2 and Year 3.

KF25. It is critical that good relationships are maintained with existing funders of the Museum of Cardiff; the Inquiry heard Development Trustees are staying connected to funders so that they are in a good place to move forward once a new location is found.

KF26. Some witnesses stated that Cardiff being the capital of Wales does give special status to the Museum of Cardiff or that this idea should be further explored.

Fundraising

KF27. This Inquiry has identified a range of opportunities for fundraising, detailed at points 97-99, including:

- a. Trust and Foundations
 - i. Specific to museums and heritage
 - ii. Specific to particular groups
- b. Individual Giving
 - i. Major Donors
 - ii. Supporter groups
 1. Membership/Friends
 2. Patrons
- c. Gifts in Wills/ Legacy Giving
- d. Donation Boxes & Cashless Donations
- e. Public Funders
- f. Postcode Lottery – organised into separate regional trusts.
- g. Landfill Communities Fund (via Entrust)
- h. AIM
- i. The Architectural Heritage Fund which focuses on acquisition, reuse or redevelopment of buildings which are of historic or architectural important
- j. The NESTA Arts Impact Fund.
- k. Crowdfunding
- l. Public Giving Campaign
- m. Online Giving
 - i. Via tickets – if get Gift Aid
 - ii. Via online giving platform – Charities Aid Foundation, Just Giving, Donor Box

- iii. Encourage regular giving
- iv. Crowd funding
- n. Gift Aid

KF28. The Inquiry heard that some small and medium size Cardiff businesses would welcome an opportunity to contribute funding to the Museum and be featured, especially if the Museum is to be in a prominent city centre location.

KF29. Currently, the Museum of Cardiff lacks sufficient cashless donations points. There is an opportunity to increase cashless donations points at key locations across the Museum of Cardiff.

Income Generation

KF30. Income Generation is key to the future sustainability of the Museum of Cardiff, to protect it from the fluctuations and pressures in the Council's budgets.

KF31. This Inquiry has identified a range of opportunities for income generation, detailed at points 100-108, including:

- a. Events – music, gastronomy, theatre, movie nights, annual calendar of events
- b. Café/ Catering - social visits, private and corporate hire, weddings,
- c. Retail – gift shop, pop-up seasonal shop
- d. Filming
- e. Commercial mindset – and targets for staff
- f. Venue hire – corporate away days
- g. Group Visits
- h. Tours
- i. Photo Shoots
- j. Copyright and licensing
- k. Overnight visits
- l. Gala/ black-tie fundraisers
- m. Day Lockers
- n. Donations – improving these
- o. Specific Gallery trails
- p. Online income generation
 - i. Retail sales
 - ii. Charge admission for special events/ Premium online offerings
 - iii. Introduce virtual membership level/ benefits

- iv. Develop virtual courses/ summer camps
- v. Online 'gala' fundraiser
- vi. Develop 'pay-what-you- want' model
- vii. Artefact adoption
- viii. Visitor donations
- ix. Commercial sponsorship
- x. Web advertising
- xi. Staff Interactions

KF32. There is an opportunity to strengthen marketing and promotion of day lockers, increasing their usage and generating more income.

KF33. Charging for general admissions would not work for the Museum of Cardiff, given that most museums in Cardiff are free entry as visitors would most likely choose to go elsewhere rather than pay.

Location

KF34. Much thought needs to be given to identifying a location that secures the future of the Museum of Cardiff. The Inquiry found that a new location must meet the following criteria:

- a. Have security of tenure
- b. Meet Museum Accreditation Scheme criteria, such as the security of site, areas for learning opportunities, accessibility, and a site where there is good footfall
- c. Be determined by the goals and objectives of the museum
- d. Match the exhibition size, scope and footfall of the current Museum of Cardiff location, to minimise the risk of clawback from funders and to provide opportunities to increase the income-stream of the Museum.

KF35. It is essential the new location for the Museum contains appropriate spaces to deliver museum activities and generate income:

- a. Foyers/ entrance
- b. Permanent Displays spaces
- c. Temporary Exhibition Space – enables the museum to change, stay on trend and reflect Visit Wales themes, and celebrate/ commemorate anniversaries. This increases footfall and diverse audiences.
- d. Office accommodation – better if this is with the museum with most staff on-site.
- e. Visitor Facilities – for school visits and other community groups – wet space, activity rooms, handling rooms etc.

- f. Collection Space – to process new material into the collection
- g. Retail/ Café – this depends on the museum’s location and length of stay – can drive income and increase museum footfall.
- h. Spaces for hire.

KF36. It is vital that a new location enables income generation to reduce the reliance on the current Council subsidy and so boost the sustainability of the Museum.

KF37. Many historic buildings are tremendously difficult to make accessible and to adapt, with historic interiors limiting and restricting the options available when designing the layout of a museum.

Clawback of existing funding

KF38. The views of funders are important when determining location, both in terms of future funding and in terms of potential clawback of existing funding.

KF39. The Inquiry heard that funders have warned there is a significant risk of clawback of existing funding, depending on the suitability of new arrangements.

KF40. Any clawback of existing funding would significantly affect future applications for funding not only for the Museum of Cardiff but for council projects across Cardiff.

KF41. The risk of clawback can be mitigated by ensuring there are clear assurances that the Museum can stay in the preferred new location for a significant period of time and by ensuring there is a process of negotiation with funders.

Staffing

KF42. The Museum of Cardiff has posts that have not been filled for a number of years. Vacant posts are significantly hindering the Museum of Cardiff achieving its potential; the Museum needs to be properly staffed to achieve its vision, goals and objectives.

Collections

KF43. Welsh Government’s Culture Strategy intends to address the need for a strategic approach to digital collections and how these are used to mitigate social exclusion and increase access to museums. Cardiff Council needs to ensure its Culture Strategy also does this.

Interpretation and Displays

KF44. Interpretation and Displays are critical to inclusivity and representativeness and the reputation of a museum. It is imperative that the Museum of Cardiff takes account of the findings of the Race Equality Task Force and the good practice guidance for interpretation and display, such

as the *AIM Success Guide* cited in the report, to ensure that its interpretation and displays promote equality and inclusivity, encouraging all communities and visitors to engage with the Museum of Cardiff.

Storage

KF45. Storage provision is a key factor to bear in mind when considering the future plan for the Museum of Cardiff. Glamorgan Archives informed the Inquiry they do not have the capacity to take large items and that, as their requirement for storage increases, they may have to end current arrangements whereby the Museum pays to store some of its collection in the Archives. Members note that, if further storage is required, the Museum would look at other options, including opportunities within the Council estate, that have the right environmental and security conditions.

KF46. Welsh Government has commissioned a Collections Review of Storage across Wales, exploring options around shared storage options. The Museum of Cardiff has been selected to be part of the next phase of this work.

Operating Models

KF47. This Inquiry found several operating models utilised by museums in England and Wales; however, for the Museum of Cardiff the only two that are possible are either to remain as a local authority-run museum or to transfer to a charitable trust.

KF48. There is no appetite for the Museum of Cardiff to stop being a local authority-run museum, as it is considered the disadvantages of doing this greatly outweigh the advantages.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Having considered the evidence presented to this Inquiry, the Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee makes the following recommendations to Cabinet:

- R1. Ahead of a decision on a new location, ensure the Museum of Cardiff has a clear vision that reflects the Administration's Stronger, Fairer, Greener values as well as the Race Equality Task Force findings, and that this helps inform location selection.*
- R2. Create a 5–10-year delivery strategy, informed by stakeholder engagement, to implement the vision for the Museum of Cardiff, to be reviewed every 3 years.*
- R3. Ensure the vision and strategy clearly set out the need to enable people to tell their stories rather than have their stories told for them, enabling community-based organisations to be involved in co-curating and host curating.*
- R4. Develop a 3-year indicative funding plan to support delivery of the vision and strategy, incorporating grants, fundraising, income generation as well as Council funding.*
- R5. Explore the potential of Cardiff-based small and medium businesses contributing funding to the Museum.*
- R6. Ensure the Working Party engages with stakeholders, including those with museum expertise, community-based organisations that work with the Museum of Cardiff and other relevant Cardiff community-based organisations.*
- R7. Ensure the Working Party takes on board the findings of this Inquiry with regard to location, most notably those set out in Key Findings 34 – 37 inclusive.*
- R8. Ensure that the selected new location enables the Museum to generate income, without diminishing the effective use of exhibition space.*

- R9. Ensure that the selected new location enables the Museum to have a viable temporary exhibition space, in addition to the main exhibition space, to facilitate special events and encourage repeat visits.*
- R10. Give a clear commitment to honour the new location's agreed footprint for the Museum of Cardiff.*
- R11. Strengthen the overall marketing and promotion of the Museum, utilising all available Council communication channels.*
- R12. Review the Museum of Cardiff's collections, interpretation and displays through the lens of the Race Equality Task Force findings and decolonisation.*
- R13. Ensure the Museum of Cardiff's collections policy strongly encourages oral histories.*
- R14. Ensure the Museum is staffed to successfully deliver its vision, goals and objectives in a sustainable manner.*
- R15. Revive the Museum of Cardiff's learning and outreach work via Schools and Hubs and other community settings, including temporary exhibitions, to encourage participation and boost access and inclusion.*
- R16. Establish an Advisory Group for the Museum of Cardiff, consisting of individuals with an optimum set of skills and museum expertise, enabling the Museum to benefit from this in the delivery of the vision and strategy.*
- R17. In establishing the Advisory Group, refer to the Charity Commission and museum governance good practice regarding how bodies are constituted and how they should operate to be most effective.*
- R18. Harness the goodwill of local stakeholders and communities with an ongoing events programme to enable and nurture relationships.*

R19. Explore the potential for external funding to cover the cost of managing and expanding the volunteer programme.

Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee Membership

Councillor Peter Wong (Chairperson)

Councillor Rodney Berman

Councillor Catriona Brown-Reckless

Councillor Jane Henshaw

Councillor Peter Jenkins

Councillor Jackie Jones

Councillor Lloyd Jones

Councillor Jon Shimmin

Councillor Leo Thomson

