



DCMS Museums Assessment Pilots The Self Assessment Submission by the Natural History Museum November 2008

Introduction

The Natural History Museum is a scientific research institution and a major cultural attraction that welcomes nearly 4 million visitors a year, at the heart of which is the national collection of 70 million specimens from the natural world and 6 million rare books and manuscripts. These collections are of international significance and we regard them as part of the UK's science infrastructure. Throughout this document references to the Natural History Museum include the main site at South Kensington, the small museum based on Walter Rothschild's former home at Tring and the storage centre at Wandsworth.

Originally part of the British Museum and founded on Sir Hans Sloane's extraordinary collections, the Natural History collections were moved to South Kensington when the now Grade 1 listed Waterhouse building was opened in 1881. The Museum became a separate legal entity with its own Board of Trustees on enactment of the British Museum Act, 1963, but was still known after that time as the British Museum (Natural History). We officially became the Natural History Museum following the Museum and Galleries Act 1992. The Museum is an exempt charity and a non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). The arm's length arrangement implicit in this status allows us to operate with a degree of independence from the government, working on a three-year cycle with predetermined objectives and levels of grant-in-aid. Such work is defined in the Funding Agreement between the Museum and DCMS.

As one of the world's premier institutions for naming, describing and classifying all life on Earth, the Natural History Museum's vast collections are used by more than 300 resident scientists and over 8,000 other scientists visiting annually from other institutions from all over the world. The collections are used in research into problems such as the control of parasitic diseases in humans, climate change and the monitoring of and threats to the Earth's biodiversity. In opening the completed Darwin Centre the Museum will also reveal to the public more of its life as a major science infrastructure. In completing the Darwin Centre the NHM is setting new standards for engaging the public with science and in presenting natural history collections in novel and compelling ways. By September 2009 the NHM will have spent over £100m over ten years on the two phases of Darwin Centre, the biggest investment in the Museum since the opening of the original Waterhouse building.

Learning is central to our mission and we endeavour to inspire a greater understanding of science. We believe that with an informed and engaged public, science can fully play its crucial role in boosting competitiveness, enhancing our quality of life and ensuring a sustainable future. In a time when humanity is facing massive environmental challenges, like climate change, we and our peer institutions have an even more important role to play in assisting the generation of and distribution of vital knowledge. We believe that science is integral to culture as it helps us to understand our place in the world. Our formal learning programmes extend through the full length of the school curriculum. Many of our scientists use their expertise in undergraduate teaching and we undertake Masters courses teaching jointly with Imperial College. The Museum also houses around 100 postgraduate students at any one time. Such students are registered for higher degrees in a higher education institution but have co-supervisors based in the Museum. Whilst our formal learning programmes are aimed at all age groups, we are particularly keen to address the drop off in interest in science from age 11 to 16 and to encourage more young people to study science at university. A special

programme, 'Real World Science', which is a partnership with a number of regional museums with natural history collections, addresses this issue. It is funded jointly by DCMS and DCSF under a special scheme, Strategic Commissioning.

1. What is the strategic vision of your museum?

Our vision is to **advance our knowledge of the natural world, inspiring people to take better care of our planet**. The Corporate Plan 2007/08 – 2011/12 articulates our vision and what steps we will take over that period to achieve it. This document and its subsequent update are supplied separately and presentations to the peer review team during their visit will focus predominantly on the 'big picture'.

We believe that we can fulfil our mission and achieve our vision by working together as one museum. Every departments' annual work plan and individual staff members' forward job plan link directly to these steps to ensure that there is a clear line of sight for individual staff members to contribute to achieving our vision. Reorganising our planning and delivery of organisational objectives in this new way was a major contribution to the NHM achieving the Investors in People standard in May 2008.

2. How do you measure success and excellence in meeting it?

We are one of the world's great public museums and a pre-eminent institution as a major science research infrastructure. On a global scale the only comparable institutions are the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in Washington, DC, the American Museum of Natural History in New York City and Le Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris, with each of whom we collaborate and network with at many levels. The reputation of each is based on:

- The size, extent and importance of collections
- The quantity and quality of scientific research output
- The quality of care of collections
- The vibrancy of the public offer and the volume and breadth of visitors

Historically the NHM has maintained the quality of its scientific work through the use of external peer review. Individual science departments are subjected to such scrutiny by Visiting Groups which are assembled from internationally recognised scientists in the relevant field under the Chairmanship of one of the NHM's scientific trustees. Additionally, the five year research programmes of individual scientists are subjected to external peer review.

We are committed to providing public value in all aspects of our work. We are now attempting to measure the extent to which we have achieved this through independent external research and through a number of internal monitoring and reporting processes.

We also measure our performance against a number of key performance indicators (KPIs) and targets which may be internally agreed or externally set through negotiation with the DCMS as part of our Funding Agreement. We also include details of how our work contributes to the strategic objectives of Other Government Departments (OGDs) in our Funding Agreement. Our KPIs are gathered locally and monitored, interpreted and reported through a central Planning and Performance office. We report results to senior management, to Directors' Group monthly, to Trustees quarterly and to the DCMS bi-annually. Visitor figures are reported to the DCMS monthly. In addition, the Director presents these performance figures and a number of current initiatives quarterly to all staff.

3. What has gone well recently? What hasn't?

In terms of visitation, broadly the NHM has enjoyed a period of sustained success over the past seven years since free admission to National Museums and Galleries was reintroduced. This government policy has been demonstrably successful and the NHM has benefited from and exploited this change very effectively. Visitor numbers have increased from c.1.7m to c.3.8m, the greatest percentage increase amongst all London based Nationals. The policy has resulted in greater diversity of our visitors, with the percentage of UK visitors from ethnic minorities increasing from 10% to 15% over the period. Data on social inclusion is compromised by a change in classification scheme from ABC1 etc to NS-SEC in 2006/7, but evidence up until that time suggests an increase in visits from UK adults in lower socio-economic groups from 21% to 28%. Tring has enjoyed seven record years in a row, with 2007/8 attendance reaching c.130,000. From 2008/9 our Funding Agreement records no targets for our key performance indicators, but up until this time we had been over-achieving on just about all negotiated targets.

Because of the large and sustained investment in Darwin Centre, the Museum has not invested significantly in the refurbishment of permanent galleries over the past seven years. Instead there has been a concentration on driving visitor numbers through the use of temporary exhibitions and programmatic activity. This has had a high annual cost but has had the benefit of our being able to trial new styles of exhibiting and interpretation, the lessons learned from which will be applied in new gallery refurbishments planned for 2009/10 and beyond. Temporary exhibitions represent a lesser factor in our overall visitor numbers than for many of the National Museums and Galleries, for two principal reasons. First, the amount of space committed to temporary exhibitions is small compared to the amount of exhibition space in total, meaning that many visitors opt only to visit 'free' exhibition spaces. Second, the cost and set-up time involved in staging natural history exhibits is substantial, meaning that longer runs are typically needed for economic viability. We also build our temporary exhibitions with touring in mind and have a thriving business based on selling our exhibitions to other venues, mainly overseas.

The NHM has had mixed fortunes with temporary exhibitions in recent years. We know that all exhibitions on dinosaurs will attract a large audience ('*T.rex* – the Killer Question' in 2004/5 and 'Dinojaws' in 2006/7 both did very well critically and commercially) but it is in our interest to broaden the scope of our programme of exhibitions to other topics. Our 'Diamonds' exhibition lost its media launch on 7 July 2005 and had to close early due to 'criminal interest,' but was important in attracting a new audience to the NHM. 'Ice Station Antarctica' which ran during 2007/8 did not meet our expectations on site, but has strong bookings for touring. As an experiment this past summer we ran 'Butterflies' in the Museum's East Garden and this exceeded our expectations by 50%.

The Museum focuses on temporary exhibitions with an emphasis on art in our Jerwood Gallery. Here for about half of the year we host the annual Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibition. This is now regarded as the world's foremost photographic competition for nature photographers and attracts over 30,000 entries per year. The exhibition and surrounding activities are now well developed and represent a lucrative franchise for the NHM. In the remaining period of the year we stage an Arts Science exhibition. These are usually free and attract a specialist audience, but typically achieve 10-15,000 visitors per month. In 2007/8 we staged *Systema Metropolis*, a contemporary art exhibition celebrating 300 years since the birth of Carl Linnaeus, the father of modern classification. This was the second in a series of Arts Science exhibitions commissioned by the Museum to explore the relationship between our collections and art, adding a further interpretation to what is largely viewed as a resource with a single research function. In a similar vein, we embarked on a project to use our collections to create a small exhibition and programme around the bicentenary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade.

Visitor numbers at Tring have been rising in response to a vibrant series of small temporary exhibitions. In 2007/8 the main exhibition there was *Walter Rothschild: The Man, the Museum and the Menagerie* which contributed to attracting yet another record number of visitors (129,853).

A rare new gallery investment, *The Vault*, opened in November 2007, being the first new permanent public exhibition gallery space to open since autumn 2002. Funding was won from the DCMS / Wolfson galleries improvement fund to which the NHM made a matching contribution. The exhibition includes world class examples of rare metals, gems, crystals and meteorites, most of which are on permanent display for the first time. The opening of this gallery achieved high media coverage. A similarly funded project is underway at Tring to refurbish a substantial gallery which includes the unique collection of stuffed dogs held there.

Building on the successful re-launch of the Museum's website in 2005 there were over 5.5m unique user visits to the site in 2007/8 which is an increase on the figure for 2006-07 (5.1m) and well above the Funding Agreement target of 3.625m. The NHM was the first national museum in the UK to create a website. We have increased our national and global reach through the Internet and use our website for the delivery of science, research, learning, revenue and information for public engagement.

In August 2007 the Museum was part of a consortium which was awarded Big Lottery funding of just under £12m for a 5 year project to develop an Open Air Laboratories Network (OPAL). OPAL is an England-wide initiative designed to encourage the public to engage with some of the country's leading scientists while becoming involved in environmental projects tailored to their region and will provide the training, practical experience, tools and support needed for communities to record the plants, animals and fungi in their local environments.

During 2007 the Museum reached agreement on a claim lodged by the Australian Government in November 2005 and to a request under that claim from the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (TAC) for the return of aboriginal remains. The Trustees agreed to transfer, after limited data collection, the remains of 17 Tasmanian aboriginal people to the Australian Government, which designated the TAC to be the receivers of these remains, and to also return the skull of an aboriginal person from Australia to the Australian Government. Both decisions were in line with advice the Trustees had received from its Human Remains Advisory Panel. The data collected from the remains will continue to be available to the world-wide anthropological community for research purposes. In addition, the agreement provides for the preservation of DNA material that had been obtained from the remains prior to the Museum's decision to return them. It was agreed that future access to this material for science research purposes will be explored in discussion between the Museum and the TAC and these samples will be held in an agreed repository under shared control.

On the collections, curation and research side (some of which is of course not under consideration by the peer-review team), the Museum continues to produce high quality science, attract funding for collections-based activities and research, and participate in international initiatives. Recent successes include:

- We completed the fourth year of the *Synthesys* project, an EU funded programme of 13 million euros led by the Museum for developing and accessing collections, linking 20 museums and botanical gardens across Europe. A further programme led by the Museum has been awarded of c7 million euros of EU funding, to support further research visits, networking activities building on the previous programme and a research project focusing on the extraction of DNA from museum and herbarium collections;
- Work continued on another significant EU funded partnership project in which the Museum plays a leading role - the European Distributed Network of Taxonomy (EDIT) which aims to overcome fragmentation of research in taxonomy. The Museum is leading on the allocation of development of websites, known as "scratchpads", with communities of taxonomists. First launched in March 2007, by December 2008 over 50 sites were already in operation;

- The Museum has continued to develop the Species Dictionary on behalf of the National Biodiversity Network. This is a compilation of the complete fauna and flora of the British Isles, and it has been agreed the Museum will become responsible for the taxonomic accuracy of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan;
- In February 2008 the Museum submitted evidence to the House of Lords' Science and Technology follow up inquiry into systematic biology research and taxonomy. The Museum has assisted the Government with their official response due in November 2008;
- Digitisation work commenced at the Museum as part of the contribution to the Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL) project. This is a partnership of ten international major natural history and botanical libraries which are collaborating to digitise the biodiversity literature to make it freely available on the web. The BHL is a key component of the Encyclopaedia of Life, established in May 2007 (www.eol.org) which is an international collaboration to develop an online reference source and database for every one of the 1.8 million species that are named and known on the planet, as well as all those later discovered and described;
- Work was completed on a £1.6m programme, known as the MOA project, developing a unified database for all the Museum's collections;
- The Museum purchased a state of the art micro-focus X-ray computed tomography (CT) scanner which produces 3-D X-rays of objects which can then be processed to produce virtual images of the internal structures of specimens at very high resolution;
- In May 2007 a landmark work *Order out of Chaos: Linnaean plant names and their types* by Museum research botanist Dr. Charlie Jarvis was published. This is the culmination of 25 years work and addresses the correct usage of scientific names which is crucial for stability in nomenclature;
- The 2nd International Conference on the *Environmental Effects of Nanoparticles and Nanomaterials* was hosted and co-sponsored by the Museum in September 2007;
- In July 2007, the Mammal Group in Zoology took delivery of a 4 metre long skull of a sperm whale, *Physeter catodon*, which was originally stranded on the north coast in the 1930s;
- 571 peer reviewed papers were published. Our peer-reviewed published output is significantly greater per researcher and per pound invested than any other major natural history museum in the world;
- Approximately 13,000 scientific visitor days were recorded, including those visiting under the *Synthesys* project;
- Approximately £26.2m scientific grant funding (including value to collaborators) was secured from 84 successful major awards (2007: 47 awards 2006-07). The value to the Museum from these awards amounted to £6.7m (2007: £1.5m)
- Through a successful fundraising campaign we were able to acquire the Kohler Darwin Collection, the largest and most comprehensive collection of books and manuscripts by and about Charles Darwin; It includes almost everything Darwin published from 1829 onwards. At £985,000, it is the biggest collection purchase in our 125-year history, made possible through a grant of £712,000 from the National Heritage Memorial Fund, as well as contributions from individual donors, trusts and charities.
- Over 50,000 scientific enquiries and specimen identifications were attended to.

Other significant developments and achievements during 2007/08 include:

- The Museum continued to lead on the Real World Science project which is a partnership with four regional natural history museums to inspire secondary school science students, increase their participation in scientific activity, and to enhance their knowledge. It is funded by Strategic Commissioning. In November 2007 the Museum hosted a Real World Science Conference addressed by The Rt Hon Margaret Hodge MBE MP, then Minister for Culture. The DCMS and DCSF have agreed to extend the funding for the project for the three year period 2008-11.

- In July 2007 the Museum hosted a British Council initiative, International Networking for Young Scientists, which is aimed at promoting the exchange of ideas and knowledge between young researchers from the UK and other countries;
- During June 2007, the Museum worked closely with the Grant Museum at University College London to put on a week long summer school for year 12 (AS Level) students – *Conservation and Extinction: past, present and future*;
- The 2nd International Student Summit: *Greening Cities* was organised in partnership with the British Council and hosted by the Museum in July 2007;
- A new and improved visitor map and signage system was completed;
- A major clean of the Whale Hall, one of the most popular galleries, was carried out during April – July 2007;
- The Museum continued to achieve accreditation to the international environmental standard, ISO 14001;
- In April 2007 the Museum was awarded OHSAS 18001 BSI certification, which is the internationally recognised assessment specification for occupational health and safety management systems;
- The Museum exceeded significantly the Funding Agreement targets for net generated income from trading activities and efficiency savings in 2007/08;
- Our Conference and Events business has been relaunched and up until very recently has been performing very well, but due to the current economic climate, we expect this business to slow down in growth due to cuts to corporate entertainment and marketing budgets;
- Our Planning Design Consultancy business has managed to secure a number of high-profile profitable contracts in the last couple of years, including the consultancy for the Restless Planet project in Dubai, which is the construction of an educational and entertainment dinosaur-themed attraction;
- Earlier this year we achieved Investors in People accreditation and continue to work towards becoming a learning organisation.

The favourable settlement from the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007, CSR07 clearly demonstrates the Government's confidence in the Museum. The uplift in grant-in-aid and capital means that the Museum can progress a number of projects that will enhance the collections storage, public offer and general maintenance of the estate. This has been a success of our advocacy programme and our ability to demonstrate our value to society.

Due to the increase in capital funding from the DCMS out of CSR07, the Museum is now able to advance its plans for the redevelopment of our permanent galleries, continue to move collections into minimum storage conditions, improve our science research spaces, and modernise and maintain our infrastructure. We have recently completed a Masterplan Development Framework for our South Kensington site which provides us with a guide for the development of our physical site over the next 25 years. During 2008/09 we will also create Masterplans for our sites in Tring and Wandsworth. The management of capital-funded projects is of critical importance to ensure value for money and efficiency, so we have recently established a Programme Office to centrally oversee all the Museum's projects going forward.

We have managed to attract support for a number of our sustainability initiatives, including a grant from HM Treasury Invest to Save fund for the measurement of carbon emissions by the South Kensington academic and cultural estate, which we lead.

The recent completion of the construction of the second phase of The Darwin Centre on time and on budget is a success. The way in which the programme has been managed has been monitored and approved by the OGC Gateway process and the change management principles which have been established has ensured strong involvement in the project from across the Museum. The fit-out of the

collection, science research and public offer spaces, preparation for public opening in September 2009 and operational management is a corporate priority for 2008/09 – 2009/10.

4. What are your particular plans and how do you plan to meet them?

Our vision, brand positioning and mission guide us, along with our requirements from the DCMS. The current 5 year corporate plan, which is updated annually, provides us with a framework for how we will realise our vision.

The current plan recognises four corporate priorities to which the Museum's efforts are focused:

1. To deliver Darwin Centre Phase 2 ready for opening in 2009 and ensure that the anticipated benefits are realisable.

The large investment in Darwin Centre and its strategic importance in effecting the change in public perception of the Museum that we seek to deliver, make this our number one priority until the project is complete and the anticipated benefits have demonstrably been realised. Darwin Centre Phase 2 is managed as a Programme of projects by a specially established Programme Office. Senior Responsible Owner for the Programme is the Museum Director, Dr Michael Dixon, and the Programme Director is Director of Finance and Administration, Neil Greenwood. The Darwin Centre programme is subjected to the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) Gateway Review process, the most recent of which, Gate 4, 'Readiness for Occupation', was undertaken in May 2008.

2. To ensure the long-term future of the Museum by:

- **delivering more explicitly our public value through a stakeholder-centred approach to all our work,**
- **completing a plan for more effective use of our estate that optimises collections storage spaces and a programme of gallery improvements.**

This priority reflects on the fact that as a publicly funded institution the NHM needs to be able to demonstrate the delivery of both public value and value for money. The perception of public value is currently compromised by a lack of understanding across some of the stakeholder groups that we engage with as to what the NHM actually stands for and delivers. We seek to address this as part of our 'brand shift' work (see 4 below) and the demonstration of public value using the DEMOS model. We have conducted initial evaluative research using the consultancy firm 'Opinion Leader Research'. The outputs of this evaluative research and the work of the Brand Development Group (4 below) will inform future delivery plans.

The second part of this priority acknowledges the importance of our physical estate in the delivery of future objectives, and the need to have a long-term, strategic approach to capital developments. We have recently drafted a Masterplan Development Framework, which will guide our activities over the next 25 years with regard to the fabric of our sites. It is founded on three objectives:

- To move all our collections into at least minimum standard storage conditions,
- To redevelop our permanent public galleries,
- To modernise and maintain our infrastructure to ensure delivery of the above.

Work is now commencing of use of the Masterplan Development Framework to determine a new sequence of expenditure on capital developments.

3. To increase the impact of our virtual environment for scientists, visitors and learners.

This priority recognises the fundamental importance of communication via the web for much of the work that we do. It acknowledges the power of opening up access to our collections and collection data through a programme of digitisation and other web-enabled technologies, as well as the opportunities to increase the impact of our scientific research through increased collaboration with experts elsewhere in new ways of peer to peer communication. We seek to link our site based activities (exhibits and programmes) to our virtual offer (our website) by the creation of a 'virtuous circle' whereby visitors to our Museums can plan their visit in advance using our web content, collect and bookmark information during their visit and email it to themselves, and extend their interaction with the Museum later by further engagement with our web content. This has successfully been trialled in a number of temporary exhibitions.

This piece of work is new but has commenced with the mapping of our idealised requirements for both science and public engagement. We are also looking at how our ICT infrastructure needs to support our future aspirations. The organisational structure and management of this work are under review at this time.

4. To use our voice of authority to promote better integration of science with society.

The NHM is recognised to differing degrees by different stakeholder groups as an objective and independent voice of authority on matters relating to the natural world. We seek to extend this positive association by developing a clear picture of how we want different stakeholder groups to perceive the NHM in the future, and use this to influence the delivery of future objectives. We refer to this work as our 'brand shift'. A logical extension of achieving our brand shift is to use our voice of authority more proactively in different arenas, for example, to contribute more significantly to the evolution of the science teaching curriculum, to provide greater input into government policy in relation to international treaties such as the Convention of Biological Diversity, and to promote higher levels of overall scientific literacy in the UK population.

The brand shift work is being steered by a Brand Development Group under the Chairmanship of the Museum Director. Ultimately, successful delivery will depend on the management of brand being embedded in all the activities the NHM undertakes.

5. What challenges and opportunities do you foresee in delivering them?

We regard it as vital that the Natural History Museum defends its international leadership role in collections management, scientific research and public engagement with science. In order to maintain our strong globally competitive position and reinforce the UK's commitment to the promotion of biodiversity conservation and sustainable development, we need to ensure our stakeholders and audiences: visitors, peers, government and parliament, the media, and our current and potential donors and sponsors understand what we do and what we stand for. The opening of the completed Darwin Centre is an ideal opportunity to do this and we have organised our resources to be able to take advantage of this. It also presents a significant challenge. The fit-out and opening of the second phase of The Darwin Centre is critically important for our operations and reputation, providing a benchmark for collections storage standards, new models of working for the whole Museum, and extreme innovation in presentation of science to our visitors.

The period covered by our current Funding Agreement presents a number of opportunities which we can leverage to good effect:

- We are a major partner in Darwin200, the campaign to celebrate the bicentenary of Darwin's birth. Widespread attention to the celebration of one of the UK's most accomplished and well known scientists will provide numerous opportunities for the NHM to be in the public eye.

- The redevelopment of Exhibition Road and its focus as a major cultural quarter will benefit all the major cultural institutions sited around it.
- Focus on 2010, the year of biodiversity, and the reconsideration of the Convention on Biological Diversity is an opportunity for the NHM to contribute more to national and international policy in this area.
- The 2012 Olympics and Paralympics and the supporting Cultural Olympiad will draw attention to cultural institutions across London from greater numbers of visitors to the UK from overseas.

The major challenges we face are:

- Attracting funding during this indeterminate period of economic slowdown. We are working to maintain our relevance to funders and diversify income streams as well as working on new commercial initiatives;
- Maintaining levels of government funding in the next spending review will be yet more difficult due to the economic climate and increased competition for available funds;
- Investing appropriately in our estate and physical infrastructure is vital. Like many publicly funded institutions we can afford to invest only a mere fraction of what commercial property owners and developers put into their estate management;
- With the impending retirement of a number of key members of senior staff, we need to ensure knowledge transfer takes place and a succession plan is established whilst also taking this opportunity to review our organisational structure;
- Recruitment and retention of key staff will be difficult in a period of extreme public sector pay restraint;
- A possible change of Government could mean the change of policy agendas and priorities, which we need to ensure we are able to meet, alongside the delivery of our current corporate priorities.

6. Do you have the leadership needed to achieve your goals and are you positioned to be adaptable to change?

The Museum is governed by a Board of 12 Trustees, nine of whom are appointed by the Prime Minister and the DCMS and three are co-opted by the Board, following the same rigorous selection process as is applicable to Prime Ministerial appointments. The Chair, currently Oliver Stocken, is elected by the Board. The Museum is fortunate in having been able to appoint Trustees that are both generous with their time and committed to the Museum. Typically the Board has been dominated by senior scientists, but in recent years the balance has been changed as we have recognised the need for and value of individuals with differing expertise and background. The Board undertakes an annual assessment of its own effectiveness and we plan to introduce interim appraisal of individual Board members in the near future, in addition to that already required by government. It is clear that the Board believes that it functions well and the appropriate skills of its members are well utilised. The Board oversees the objectives of the Museum's Senior Executive team through its Remuneration Committee. Management of the Museum is led by the Museum Director, Dr Michael Dixon and the six other members of Directors' Group, each of whom have proven track records in the private, voluntary and public sectors. The Directors' Group enjoys an extremely good relationship with the Museum's Board of Trustees, and there is a clear distinction between governance and management.

We believe that the Museum does have the leadership needed to achieve our goals and realise our vision. Our vision is collectively supported; it was formulated by a number of staff of different levels of seniority and is the consensus view of our staff with the full support and engagement of the Trustees, who engage effectively with new strategic developments at an annual Trustees' Strategy Day. We have recently taken steps to ensure that we take a longer term view of corporate planning, creating an

office of performance and planning, led by the Director of Policy and Planning, Teresa Wild. Longer term planning makes us more flexible and adaptable in the face of changing external factors such as funding and government policy. We are currently also reviewing our decision-making model to enable us to better prioritise and manage individual projects and programmes, to avoid unnecessary resource overlap, freeing up management time to focus on strategy and long term planning.

We recognise the need to develop the next generation of Museum leadership and are currently devising a Talent Management scheme that will identify candidates for accelerated development and equip them with the skills and expertise they will require to move into senior management roles in the future. Talent Management will form part of our overall Succession Planning as we acknowledge the age distribution of staff in senior positions and the need to ensure we can promote appropriate staff internally as well as recruiting new skills externally.

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