

Tyne & Wear Museums

DCMS Museums Assessment Pilot

Self Assessment November 2008



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This document forms the self assessment for the pilot DCMS Pilot Assessment process. It will also provide the basis for the Peer Review Process to be carried out on December 1-3, 2008.

Picture, above: Sunderland Learning Officer, Jennie Beale sets off on the Sunderland to Saigon trip (see section 5.2)

Tyne & Wear Museums

DCMS Museums Self-Assessment Pilot, November 2008

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document forms the self assessment for the DCMS Pilot Assessment process. It will also provide the basis for the Peer Review Process to be carried out on December 1-3.
- 1.2 Unlike most DCMS sponsored museums, Tyne & Wear Museums (TWM) is neither a non-departmental public body, nor is it restricted to just one, or a few sites, rather it runs twelve museums and galleries and a number of regional and sub-regional programmes, on behalf of nine funding clients.

2. Context

2.1 A complex organisation

Given the complexity of TWM, it is necessary to explain the stakeholder and funding context. TWM is a collection of twelve museums and galleries across Tyne & Wear, supported by the five local authorities of the area. The partnership of the five authorities represents their commitment to provide high quality cultural and heritage services to the people of Tyne & Wear and visitors to our region. A sixth partner is Newcastle University. It employs some 340 staff (including temporary and contract staff) and its budget is currently £14-15 million per annum.

2.2 DCMS relationship

TWM receives annual grant-in-aid support from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in recognition of its commitment to the successful delivery of services to new and diverse audiences.

2.3 Other funding partners

Other funding partners include the Ministry of Defence, who fund a post to curate the collections of the 15th/19th The Kings Royal Hussars and the Northumberland Hussars – now the *A Soldier's Life* gallery in Discovery Museum. Discovery Museum also hosts the John George Joicey Museum in the form of the *Newcastle Story* gallery by arrangement with the Trustees of the John George Joicey Bequest.

2.4 Renaissance and the North East Regional Museums Hub

Since 2003, TWM has led the North East Regional Museums Hub on behalf of its Hub partners, Beamish: the North of England Open Air Museum, the Bowes Museum and Hartlepool Museums. The Hub is funded through the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council as part of the Government's Renaissance programme.

2.5 Building on success

TWM is shortly to merge with the Tyne & Wear Archives Service (TWAS) and is preferred delivery partner for two Creative Partnerships programmes (Northumberland and NewcastleGateshead) in the region through the North East Regional Museums Hub.

2.6 Making sense

The current structure, stakeholder relationships and governance structures, prior to next year's merger with TWAS, are summarised in Figure 1.

3. Strategic vision of Tyne & Wear Museums

3.1 **Our mission** is to help people determine their place in the world and define their identities, so enhancing their self-respect and their respect for others.

3.2 **Our vision** for the future is for everyone to have access to museum provision in Tyne and Wear, to use this access and to value it for the significant and positive impact that it makes upon their lives. We will provide real or virtual, worldwide access to our museums and their collections.

3.3 **Our commitment** is to a World-class service that is innovative, imaginative, creative, totally inclusive, secure and sustainable.

3.4 **Our beliefs:**

At Tyne & Wear Museums we believe that we:

- make a positive difference to people's lives
- inspire and challenge people to explore their world
- are a powerful learning resource for people of all needs and backgrounds
- act as an agent of economic regeneration and help build and develop communities and the aspirations of individuals
- are fully accountable to our stakeholders and users
- should make our resources accessible to everyone

3.5 **Corporate Plan**

These elements of our strategic approach are expanded in the TWM Corporate Plan, attached.

4. Measuring success and excellence in realising the vision?

4.1 **Realising the Vision**

The key words in TWM's vision are **access, value** and **impact**.

4.2 **Performance measurement, monitoring and management**

TWM has utilised a range of performance indicators and performance measurement, monitoring and management techniques. These have included traditional 'Best value – type' and DCMS monitoring protocols as well as additional internal measures. Stakeholders and users are also involved in monitoring and evaluating impact.

Figure 1:

Tyne & Wear Museums Funding Stakeholders

Governance is shown in colour blocks.
(N.B. size of blocks does not represent level of contribution or activity.)

Tyne & Wear Museums Joint Committee:
23 councillors from the five Councils indicated



Great North Museum Committee:
Representatives from Newcastle University, two learned societies, Newcastle City Council and Director

Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport

4.3 Gauging usage and penetration

In terms of visitor numbers, TWM attracted some 1.5 million actual visits and 0.5 million visits to its eleven sites (the twelfth site, the Hatton Gallery has only joined the group this year). The population of Tyne & Wear is approximately 1.1 million, therefore visits, in person, per head of population equals 1.36. This is considered to be a significant achievement, particularly given the relatively low number of tourists swelling the local population as compared to many other areas.

Another impressive statistic relates to the 'reach' to non-traditional audiences: some 44% of our visitors are from socio-economic groups C2, D and E.

With regards to school age children, despite the relatively small population, the number of children in organised parties (i.e. schools!) using the museums and galleries is the highest for any large conurbation outside London. The North East Regional Museums Hub, which TWM leads, has contributed to the development of the whole sector in the region, with the result that almost every school in the North East engages with museums annually.

Outreach and community work has developed, not least because of the DCMS and Renaissance contributions. Outreach activity with young people grew a staggering 7,000% in the first three years of Renaissance funding.

4.4 Building and measuring Access

If TWM has a Unique Selling Proposition, then it is its long-standing commitment to access: physical, sensory and intellectual. This has been developed with disabled people and their representative organisations. Consultants have also been used, but where possible, there is always a predisposition to utilise existing local users. This approach has been rewarded by a high level of engagement with people with disabilities. New developments and the utilisation of existing spaces have always been characterised by sensitive design and, of course, good design for people with disabilities usually means good design for all users.

4.5 Equality

TWM has continued to attract representative audiences from its local population so that the degree of visitation by, for instance, BME audiences has either kept track or exceeded the local, albeit low, level of representation. Over half the visitors to TWM venues are under 16. TWM has developed specific programmes with diverse audience including socially and economically excluded groups, young carers, young people at risk of offending and the lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender community.

4.6 Quality

Needless to say, whilst counting participants is one thing, ensuring that they have a high quality experience is another. Consequently, TWM's annual benchmarking surveys obviously include a measure of visitor satisfaction. The combined figure for people who claim to be satisfied, or very satisfied, is routinely between 97% and 98%. Indeed in a national survey for Renaissance in the Regions, Discovery scored the highest satisfaction levels against expectation of any museum in the survey, right across the country. TWM is also recognised under the Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme (VAQAS).

4.7 Impact

Beyond quality, is the issue of making real and lasting impact and TWM has been at the forefront of social impact studies, commissioning an early study (2005) jointly with Bristol's Museums Galleries and Archives. It has led on the development of Generic Social Outcomes, working with the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, and has been actively involved in developing ways of monitoring social outcomes and impacts.

4.8 Awards

TWM's work has been recognised by many awards for a range of activity. In particular, last year TWM was recognised at the national Museums and Heritage show with the 'Classic Award', which was awarded in recognition of many years consistent achievement, whilst Discovery Museum won the gold award in the Regional Tourism Awards as large visitor attraction of the year. A full list of TWM's achievements in awards is appended.

4.9 Evaluation and planning

The importance of the individual's experience cannot be underestimated and to this end a programme of benchmarking and evaluation is incorporated into all major projects as well as the 365 days of the year offer. This has now been backed up with a planning framework that helps ensure that new projects are mapped against the priority areas of the Corporate Plan, that the potential impact on a number of core indicators is assessed, and that evaluative requirements and mechanisms are put in place at the outset.

5. What has gone well recently?

5.1 Capital Programmes

TWM has developed the estate of its partners and has taken advantage of funds available, particularly through the HLF, to complete a series of capital developments including:

- **Segedunum Roman Fort** (2000; budget c. £9 million): creation of significant site based museum, reconstructed Roman baths and refurbished World Heritage site; named by Sunday Times as one of the top ten 'Citadels of Culture' in the World.
- **Sunderland Museum and Winter Gardens** (2001; budget c. £13 million): popular re-development of museum and winter gardens creating one of the most popular visitor attractions in the region. Runner-up, England for Excellence Visitor attraction of the Year (2005).
- **Laing Art Gallery** (2004; budget c. £600,000): refurbishment and creation of dedicated watercolour gallery. Winner, North East Visitor Attraction of the Year, 2006.
- **Discovery Museum, Newcastle** (2002-2005; budget c. £14 million): sequential re-development of museum building to create the most visited museum in the North East (c. 430,000 visitors per year). Short-listed for European Museum of the Year, 2005.
- **Monkwearmouth Station Museum** (2007; budget c. £1.1 million); refurbishment and re-launch of popular railway and land transport museum. Bronze award winner for Access for All at Regional Tourism Awards, 2008.
- **Shiplay Art Gallery** (2008, budget c. £600,000); creation of *Designs for Life* gallery. Receiving very positive reviews and proving popular with local schools and colleges.
- **South Shields Museum and Art Gallery** (2004 and 2008; combined budget c. £2.5 million); structural and access improvements, creation of four new galleries and cafe.
- **Regional Resource Centre** (2007; budget c. £2 million); second phase of regional storage facility and collections access programme developed jointly with Beamish.
- **Great North Museum** (2009; budget c. £27 million); Refurbishment of Newcastle's Hancock Museum and incorporation of two other major museum collections into a re-branded museum. A complex partnership led by Newcastle University, managed by TWM, and featuring Newcastle City Council, the Natural History Society of Northumbria and the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne. Coming soon!

5.2 Other projects

With a dozen museums, there are so many projects alive at any one time, it would be impossible to do them all justice here. The following examples are just a few recent ones that illustrate the diversity of our work through special projects and temporary exhibitions:

- **Memory Net** (2005-06): A spin-off from SeaBritain 2005 this programme captured the lives of coastal communities leading to a high quality publication and web-based resource (<http://www.twmuseums.org.uk/memorynet/>).
- **Street Skate Style** (2007): One of a series of exhibitions created by and for local people at Discovery Museum. Working with local street skaters and skateboarders, a popular exhibition was created and new objects relating to the lives of young skaters added to the collections.
- **Face of an Emperor** (2007): Exhibition co-produced by TWM with the British Museum featuring bronze head of Hadrian. TWM provided interpretation and learning input: exhibition shown at Tullie House Museum, Carlisle and then at Segedunum Roman Fort, Baths and Museum.
- **Remembering Slavery** (2007): TWM, through the North East Regional Museums Hub, led a regional programme of research, interpretation and commemoration to mark the 200th anniversary of the first Parliamentary Act to outlaw slavery in the British Colonies. Working with museums, libraries, archives, cultural partners, learned societies and community groups, across the region, a substantial programme of activity was coordinated and a great deal more knowledge created about the subject. This has led to the publication of a definitive new book 'Hidden Chains: the Slavery Business and North East England 1600-1870' by John Charlton in October 2008.
- **Sunderland to Saigon** (2007): an innovative scheme (pre Charlie Boorman!) to send a curator, film-maker and photographer to document the rail journey of their lives to mark the re-opening of Monkwearmouth Station Museum. Saigon (more accurately, Ho Chi Minh City) is the furthest you can get from Sunderland travelling exclusively on trains.
- **Love** (2008): this year's National Gallery, co-curated exhibition explored the theme of love and achieved record visitor numbers with work by artists including Tracey Emin, David Hockney, Johannes Vermeer, Marc Chagall and Marc Quin and events from school workshops to speed dating and participation in Yoko Ono's *Secret Piece III*.
- **18th Century Blues** (2008): a cutting edge exhibition at the Shipley Art Gallery created in association with Northumbria and Sunderland universities. With the unpromising theme of history of the study of depression in literature (!) a truly magnificent exhibition was created with loans from many UK national institutions.
- **One in Four** (2007): An exhibition created at Discovery Museum about how attitudes and feelings towards disability have changed over the past 170 years and including personal stories from people living in the region.
- **Ancient Greeks** (2008): A partnership project with the British Museum creating a touring exhibition now showing at South Shields Museum and Art Gallery, and creating great interest amongst schools.
- **Exploring Your Environment** (2008): Funded by the HLF and Northumbrian Water, and created in partnership with Newcastle University and the Natural History Society of Northumbria, this ambitious project makes biological recording accessible to everyone by providing a user-friendly Wiki-website (<http://www.eyeproject.org.uk/>).

5.3 Partnerships and Profile

One of the strongest and continuing developments of recent years has been the degree to which TWM has been able to develop partnerships within the region, nationally and now internationally. Examples of key partners include:

- Several national museums, notably the British Museum, Natural History Museum, National Gallery, National Portrait Gallery, V&A, National Museums Liverpool.
- MLA and other regional museums to deliver the Renaissance programme.
- Tyne & Wear Archives service (now moving towards full merger).
- Arts Council England North East (ACENE) to manage two Creative Partnerships programmes.
- *Connecting through Culture*, the largest business partners scheme in the region.
- TWM has actively supported other cultural organisations in achieving their ambitions, for example providing heritage consultancy services to the Tyneside Cinema helping them secure a grant of £3m towards the restoration of the art deco news theatre and has advised Nova International on its plans for a museum to celebrate the Great North Run.

5.4 Investors in People

TWM has just undergone its first *Investors in People* biennial review. This time the organisation submitted itself for the more onerous 'Profile' style review. It surpassed the standard 'across' the board, but achieved level three assessments in a number of areas, Assessors were complimentary about commitment of staff, opportunities for development and the fact that people enjoyed working for TWM! A summary of the report is supplied.

5.5 Governance

Over the last two years, TWM has developed enhanced governance arrangements including creation of an Audit Committee with independent Chair and enhanced risk management processes. TWM now has a much more robust governance structure and has received successive complimentary assessments from the Audit Commission which has been particularly enthusiastic about the successful operation of the Audit Committee.

5.6 Consultation

TWM works to increase meaningful consultation with users in order to assist with the design of services. It has now established three standing consultation groups:

- **The Museums and Galleries Disabled Access Group (MAGDAG):** a group of disabled people serving as advisory body, critical friend and conscience to TWM. It informs both new developments and the improvement of existing facilities.
- **Collective Minds:** a young persons' group informing programme development.
- **The People's Panel:** a group of people from a range of backgrounds created as part of the three-year project with the National Gallery to provide alternative interpretation at the Laing for the major annual exhibitions. This group will be retained to advise on the Laing's policy and practice.

TWM also consults with other diverse groups on a project specific basis and is currently developing plans for implementing participatory evaluation.

5.7 Renaissance (in the Regions)

The implementation of the Museum, Libraries and Archives Council's Renaissance Programme has been a major success. Having won the right to become a so-called Phase-one Hub under the programme, the North East Regional Museums Hub, led by TWM, has exceeded every target set by MLA in terms of increased participation, has addressed some of the major collections and conservation issues facing the region, and has worked with every single registered museum in the North East region. It has also managed to utilise its budget fully within the agreed time scales, unlike the other two Phase-one hubs. The North East Regional Museums Hub has been held up across the UK as a model of good practice.

5.8 Fund Raising from Heritage Lottery Fund

TWM is heavily dependent on external funding. The capital development that has taken place over the last eight years would not have been possible without a successful fund-raising programme, particularly from the Heritage Lottery Fund. TWM has an impressive record of success rate for grant getting from the HLF, with a total value of £38,301,000.

5.9 Access

One of TWM's main strengths has been its investment in ensuring that its services are accessible to as many people as possible. Through our consultation work, our design, our staff development, our commitment and our specific policy on access for people with disabilities, we continue to earn accolades for this aspect our work.

5.10 Diversifying the workforce

We have hosted successful Diversify traineeships and our diversify graduates have an impressive record of finding work within the sector. The North East Regional Museums Hub has also led the DeciBel project to create three curatorial fellowship posts in major art galleries for curators from BME backgrounds. We worked with colleagues in other cultural organisations on Tyneside to secure funding, in partnership with Gateshead College, for a programme of Creative Apprenticeships which will start in January 2009.

5.11 Out of Hours

An important part of our wider access policy is to increase the opportunities for people to use our facilities. To this end there has been an encouraging increase in the degree of out-of-hours hirings, particularly at Discovery Museum. One of the most successful evening initiatives developed through the Hub is the *Late Shows* which has run for two years now and involves the museums leading a group of institutions in a late night Saturday opening to mark the International Museums Night.

6. What has worked less well?

6.1 Maintenance of Exhibits

One of the greatest challenges has related to the high level of usage of galleries, resulting in damage to display materials and interactive exhibits. Despite reviewing the work of our technical services team, and re-designating some staff to enable more work on maintenance; this continues to be a problem, particularly in Discovery Museum. Damaged or broken exhibits have a very negative impact on user satisfaction and this is an area where we need to improve our performance, in terms of the design of durable, repairable or easily replaced exhibits, in terms of timely and effective maintenance, and in training front of house staff to undertake simple repair and maintenance.

6.2 Fund raising

There are several headings that are repeated in the 'What has gone well' and 'What has worked less well' areas. So fund raising from the Heritage Lottery Fund and a small number of charitable foundations has been extremely successful. We have been far less successful at raising funds from the corporate sector (admittedly, a small and over-committed resource in our region), from individuals, including legacies, and from certain national charitable foundations. These are areas that we are actively addressing, having commissioned a report from a fund-raising consultant, but we still have much to do.

6.3 Management deficit

TWM's Senior Management Team is made up of strong individuals all of whom are over-worked. There is a tendency to over-stretch ourselves as an organisation. There used to be a lack of management capacity amongst so-called middle managers and although this is improving, there is still, a management deficit. Managers at senior and sometimes middle levels have to spend too much time on detail when they should feel able to delegate.

In such a complex and dispersed organisation, where in many cases, managers are serving several functions, there is always a danger of role opacity and this may be the case in some instances as was borne out in the detailed *Investors in People* feedback. Developing managers has become a priority for our training and development programme.

6.4 Arbeia Roman Fort

Arbeia is part of the Roman Frontiers (Hadrian's Wall) World Heritage site, although it is not part of the Wall itself. It was the first Archaeological Park to be designated in the UK and is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Although it has been possible to build reconstructions of buildings that would have stood on the site, access around, and interpretation of the site are underdeveloped. A proposal for a new museum and visitor facility has been blighted by local objections to re-development adjacent to the site.

6.5 Shipley

The Shipley Art Gallery is proving a challenge. Targeted investment in new galleries, an impressive exhibition programme and extended learning activity has failed to generate an increase in usage. The location of the building is not ideal, however we still strive to improve performance in particular through enhanced partnership with Gateshead Council.

6.6 Galleries

TWM has an impressive record of attracting non-traditional audiences to its venues. Some 42% of visitors are from socio-economic backgrounds C2, D and E. This is a considerable achievement in national terms; however, the success is unequal across all venues, with city centre museums such as Discovery and Sunderland Museum and Winter Gardens often exceeding 50%, but the art galleries such as the Laing and Shipley, barely reaching 30%. One of our key aims is to increase the diversity of our art gallery visitors.

6.7 Funding and planning blight

TWM's complex funding structure and the uncertainty over some funding streams makes effective planning very difficult. Particularly difficult is the annual delay in decision-making over the level of the Renaissance settlement from MLA. The Tyne & Wear authorities are under extreme financial pressure due to poor government grant awards, implementation of single status job evaluations and the prospect of major equal pay settlements. The uncertainty surrounding all of these funding streams and the lateness of decisions, make effective forward planning a frustrating process.

7. What are your particular plans and how will you fulfil them?

7.1 Great North Museum

April 2009 sees the opening of the Great North Museum, which TWM has project-managed on behalf of Newcastle University. The Museum will be managed by TWM on behalf of a partnership including Newcastle University (lead), Newcastle City Council, The Natural History Society of Northumbria and the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne. This is the largest capital museum development ever to happen in the North East and will bring together world class collections with a world class visitor experience. It was a condition of the HLF funding for this project that the museum be managed by TWM, showing HLF's acknowledgement of TWM expertise in successfully running major museums.

7.2 Three major ongoing revenue projects supported by HLF are:

- **Culture Shock:** TWM is leading this project on behalf of the Regional Museums Hub. Funded with £400,000 from HLF and £10,000 from the Gillian Dickinson Trust, the project is engaging 1,000 individuals from diverse communities across the region in creating 1,000 digital stories inspired by North East museums and their collections. These stories will be broadcast in the region and via the web and then accessioned into museum collections.
- **Portrait of a Nation:** in partnership with the Tyneside Cinema and their Northern Stars Young Filmmakers Academy, TWM has facilitated the making of three films by young people from Newcastle and Gateshead as part of the Cultural Cities Network. The films will be shown in Liverpool in December 2008 as part of Capital of Culture year.
- **The Great British Art Debate:** TWM is leading this partnership (also including Tate Britain, Museums Sheffield and Norwich Castle Museum) which received £1.16m of HLF funding. The project will engage people in debate about identity, nationhood and British-ness through the combined historic art collections of the partners. Exhibitions, 'tasters', events, activities and a website will allow people to engage actively in this debate. The project explores ideas related to the Cultural Olympiad, culminating in 2012.

7.3 TWM Online

It is now planned to further develop this resource with increased collection information, and more opportunities for users to customise their interaction with the website and increased engagement of users, for instance, through use of social networking.

7.4 Laing Art Gallery

The Laing is a major regional gallery with a very significant watercolour collection (perhaps the finest outside London) and important 19th century paintings. Space and environment restrict its ability to show its collection, further develop learning programmes, or to host really major exhibitions without taking almost all the permanent collection off display. TWM has begun options appraisals on a major capital redevelopment to commence in 2012. In the interim TWM is also leading the **Creative Spirit** project in partnership with Newcastle University and supported by HLF, DCMS/Wolfson and AHRC to create a new gallery exploring significant regional art and artists.

7.5 Stephenson Railway Museum

Feasibility work is underway with North Tyneside Council to produce a long-term strategy for the development and refurbishment of Stephenson Railway Museums and an extension

to the associated steam railway.

7.6 Segedunum Roman Fort

Work is also underway with North Tyneside Council and Hadrian's Wall Heritage to identify ways in which both Segedunum and the associated landscape of Hadrian's Wall, in North Tyneside can be developed.

7.7 Shipley Art Gallery

Work will begin, shortly, on the latest of a series of developments at the Shipley Art Gallery, namely the creation of the Henry Rothschild Study Centre which will create a dedicated facility for the display and study of the Rothschild collection of studio ceramics. The collection, one of the finest in the country is currently on long loan to the Shipley, but will be gifted as part of the development of the Centre.

7.8 Arbeia Roman Fort

As noted in 6.4, above, TWM is working with South Tyneside Council to carry out a new feasibility study on the development of the Fort and an associated visitor centre. In the meantime, £50,000 has just been secured from a landfill trust (SITA) to carry out improvement works on the existing site and buildings.

7.9 Sunderland Museum and Winter Gardens

Although Sunderland Museum and Winter Gardens remains one of TWM's most successful venues, it has no major capital development since 2001 and so a long term renewal plan is necessary.

7.10 Sustainability

In common with most organisations, TWM faces the challenge of increasing its sustainability in all senses, but particularly environmental and financial. The price of energy at the current time means that these two factors are closely linked. TWM is, for instance, seeking to reduce its energy consumption by 10% this year.

7.11 Renaissance North East

With the demise of the so-called Regional Agencies, TWM will not only be running the Regional Museums Hub, but also picking up elements of MLA North East's responsibilities. As chairing organisation of the North East's Regional Renaissance Board, TWM needs to establish with MLA, just what its role is in this respect.

7.12 Re-visioning Discovery Museum

Over the past 15 years Discovery Museum has developed from a technologically focused museum of science and engineering to a major regional museum exploring the history of the people of Tyneside and celebrating the innovation and invention which took place here. As some of the 'new' displays are now 15 years old, planning is now under way to 're-vision' Discovery, building on its success and looking at how to work with users and non-users to replace and redevelop displays and interpretation. Critical to this will be the relationship with the Archives service and the creation of a joint service from April 2009.

7.13 Archives

TWM and Tyne and Wear Archives (TWAS) are to merge in March 2009. This provides a variety of opportunities, in particular;

- integrated management of collections
- potential for joint capital developments

- single point of access for customers
- skill sharing and development
- improved public service

7.14 Creative Partnerships

The management of two Creative Partnership Programmes will be integrated into the Regional Museums Hub operation over the coming year.

7.15 London 2012 Olympics

Through our own programmes, through our work with the regional Legacy Trust, through the Stories of the World programme, and through our link with the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro Authority in Port Elizabeth (especially the World Cup, 2010 celebrations in South Africa), we will seek to maximise our contribution to the Cultural Olympiad.

7.16 Improved collections management and Virtual Access

TWM's Collections Management Process project is reviewing collections management practice and will address documentation backlogs, weaknesses in existing collections management processes and facilitate significantly greater online access to TWM collections

7.17 Improved staff development

TWM's Workforce Development Group, HR and Training Team and Trade Union Learning Representatives will implement the recommendations of our liP 'profile' report. In particular, over the next year we will address management development and bring in a framework of Manager Competencies.

7.18 User-defined services

Working with stakeholders and users, and through the use of consultation groups, we will increase the relevance and quality of our services.

8. What challenges and opportunities do you foresee?

8.1 In the Plan

In the interests of brevity, we would refer reviewers to the previous section as many of our plans seek to address challenges and seize opportunities. Additional issues are addressed in 8.2 – 8.5, below.

8.2 Financial

There is no doubt that the greatest challenge is uncertainty over revenue funding, both from public and private sources. The current financial situation will impact on public finances, corporate support and sponsorship, individual giving and trading potential. Equally, such situations create opportunities for entrepreneurialism. In particular, we need to develop more effective trading and fund-raising activity, particular from high net-worth individuals.

8.3 Planning blight

The difficulty in making decisions without reliable or timely information about funding streams or programme requirements is problematic, although we are now quite adept at dealing with this environment.

8.4 Capital contraction

The reduction in funding available from the HLF and the Northern Rock Foundation, and the general pressure on trust funds through decline in investment income will restrict the opportunities for capital development. This is perhaps the time to concentrate on the quality of service rather than capital expansion?

8.5 Political dimensions

Current and changing political circumstances at a local, regional and national level can all impact on financial, practical and ideological support and recognition of our potential. Good environmental scanning and political advocacy can provide opportunities. The fact that we have been approached to incorporate the Archives Service and to run two Creative Partnership Programmes suggests that our reputation is good. In short, we believe that the best form of advocacy is achievement.

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

9.1 Governing body

The Tyne & Wear Museums Joint Committee currently consists of 23 elected members from the five Tyne & Wear authorities. This is too large and will be reconstituted in 2009 when TWM merges with Tyne & Wear Archives Service to create a smaller committee. Members are engaged with museums activity and are supportive. Both Chair and Vice-Chair are deeply engaged in the cultural sector. The Committee challenges officers, but also supports them and recognises the difference between governance and executive functions.

9.2 Audit Committee

The Audit Committee plays an important scrutiny role and its effectiveness is enhanced through the engagement of independent Chair and Vice-Chair from the private sector.

9.3 Director

The Director is experienced and well-respected both regionally across sectors and nationally within the sector. He is opportunistic and enabling and gets a lot from his staff. He has been instrumental in brokering a number of important partnerships.

He is totally committed to the organisation, passionate about its mission and has a powerful 'can-do' attitude. Such qualities can, of course, result in over-extending the organisation and he has to sometimes keep his enthusiasm in check.

9.4 Senior Management Team

The Senior Management Team comprises six people with some co-options as necessary. The team is highly committed and motivated, deeply loyal to the organisation and aspirational.

The team is over-stretched and perhaps needs to sometimes curb its enthusiasm for new projects and for dealing with detail.

9.5 The Staff

Staff are highly motivated and this has been borne out by the *Investors in People* biennial review. There are a number of emerging leaders and there has been significant investment in leadership development at middle and senior levels.

Perhaps the main issue is the frustration of staff on temporary contracts, but this is a function of our funding regime. We do need to develop our middle management capacity, improve role clarity and increase communication within the organisation.

9.6 ...and so?

We believe that we are well positioned to achieve our goals. We also believe that we are aspirational, inventive, flexible, positive and opportunistic – all qualities that will help us adapt to change.

We recognise the value of partnership and the value that working with others can bring, whilst being wary of mission drift.

We are also, however, self-aware and we realise that we can always improve, always learn and must always ask and remind ourselves of our mission and of why we do what we do.

Above all, we are public servants and our users are our ultimate stakeholders.

Tyne & Wear Museums

DCMS Museums Self-Assessment Pilot, November 2008

Supporting Documents supplied

(These will be e-mailed folder by folder)

Annual Report and Governance

- Annual Report 2007-08 pdf
- Local Code of Governance

Awards and Grants

- Grants Register TWM
- TWM Awards

Corporate Plan, Planning, Workforce

- Corporate Plan 2008-2013
There are two sub-folders with individual team and venue plans
- Diversity Working Group Terms of Reference
- Project Planning Framework
- Workforce Diversification Plan

External Evaluation

- Annual Audit letter
- DeciBel BME Fellowship Learning Log
- Investors in People Review Summary
- NERMH 2006-08 Education Programme Impact Study
- People's Panel Evaluation August 08
- Positive Action Trainee Evaluation
- Remembering Slavery 2007 Evaluation
- Report on Real World Science Programme

Organisation Charts

- Four organograms of staff structure
- TWM Stakeholders

Policies

- Access for Disabled People
- Diversity Policy
- Leading, Managing and Developing Policy
- Protection Policy
- Volunteer Policy

Visitor Feedback and Surveys

- Late Shows – Evaluation Report
- NERHM Data 2008-09
- People's Panel End of Project
- Shipley Lates Feedback
(n.b. these are only examples: extensive annual benchmarking surveys are available on request).

Additional publications sent as hard copy

- Regional Museums Hub Publications
 - Happy families: family learning in museums & galleries
 - Literate Museums: Literacy in museums and galleries
 - Worth the Visit The Value of Museums in Education
 - Working together: teachers & museums
 - Memorynet
- Investors in Volunteers Assessment Report
- Oil Paintings in Public Ownership Tyne & Wear Museums
- TWM News (3 copies of staff newsletter)