



**The Federation of Museums and Galleries of Wales' response to the Written Statement issued by Ken Skates, Cabinet Secretary for the Economy and Infrastructure on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2016 in relation to 'Historic Wales'.**

It is of grave concern to the Federation that the report commissioned by PwC, as a method of creating a sustainable historic heritage sector seems largely focused on its benefits to and resolution of issues affecting CADW, as opposed to the effects on Amgueddfa Cymru and in turn the wider museum sector. This is clearly stated in the Introduction to the PwC report: "This report focuses on Cadw and in particular on its property operations, and looks at opportunities to grow commercial income through a different organisational structure for managing the properties in care" (p.3).

As an advocacy body for the Welsh Museum Sector as a whole, it appears that this has served as a missed opportunity to take a holistic approach to how heritage and culture in Wales can be best served and better protected for the benefit of the people of Wales, both now and in the future. It is also essential to understand that while forging greater collaboration between the two bodies is unequivocally positive, these findings have not taken into account the unique nature of Amgueddfa Cymru and all that it provides to the heritage sector in Wales. It is notable that authors of this report highlighted the importance of understanding these differences in objectives, responsibilities and terms of reference for service delivery and explicitly stated that far greater work needs to be done before proceeding with any form of merger: "...potential benefits should be very carefully considered against the strategic case for bringing together four organisations that have different objectives, responsibilities, cultures, terms and conditions, pension arrangements and scale of operations"(p.85).

It is of great concern to the Federation of Museums and Galleries of Wales that opportunities for the Welsh Museum Sector to lead by example, as it did with its first Museum Strategy (the first of its kind in the United Kingdom), have been overlooked by the announcement of this report. We feel very strongly that the recommendations of the Expert Review of Local Museum Provision, which have largely been ignored since publication in 2015, should be pursued in order to create a stronger and more resilient museum sector that paves the way for museums across the United Kingdom and beyond.

Following the publication of the Expert Review of Local Museum Provision in Wales, a key recommendation of the report was that the museum sector needs to be supported in order

to become more financially resilient into the future. I think it is essential at this point, that as President of the Federation of Museums and Galleries of Wales that I emphasise how crucial a role Amgueddfa Cymru has played in helping local museums to continue their work at times of crisis where museums were facing severe financial cuts, staff reductions and in some cases even museum closure. Amgueddfa Cymru's role in injecting historic and commercial specialism into projects with local museums is not to be underestimated or under-valued.

Many Local Authority Museums have had resources to income generate removed from them in this climate of severe budget cuts. Projects such as the Sharing Treasures project have enabled local museums to be able to continue delivering that projects that enrich lives in Wales. As a leader on the Welsh Government's Fusion programme work in Pioneer areas and its work towards delivering the outcomes of the Future Generations Act; Amgueddfa Cymru has played an integral role in delivering social impact with visible social outcomes.

The Federation is very disappointed that this announcement has been made at a time when a new Museums Strategy for Wales is being developed by the Welsh Government and partner organisations, of which Amgueddfa Cymru is a key collaborative partner to all museums in Wales. It is difficult to see how this announcement will not disrupt productivity on this work, let alone destabilise the future of the sector in a Wales.

There was a time when Wales, through Government, led the way in terms of being pioneering in its approach to the museum sector. Sadly, we are now lagging behind and are in danger of weakening and destroying an institution which is integral to the future of the sector in Wales. The Expert Review offers many solutions that, if implemented, would be of real value to the people of Wales. We need a strong National Museum for our nation if this is to be realised.

**Rachel Silverson**

**President**

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- Museums make a significant economic contribution through tourism and regeneration
- Museums and their collections strengthen community identity
- Museums empower people through learning, participation and inspiration