



Department for
Digital, Culture
Media & Sport

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My Lords,

I am grateful to the Noble Lord, Lord Cormack, for introducing this debate, and to all Noble Lords for the thoughtful and interesting contributions to the discussion. Our museums and galleries are among the highest quality and most visited in the world. They are integral to the preservation of our heritage, cultural education, placemaking in local communities, wellbeing and promoting Britain globally. DCMS asked Neil Mendoza to conduct the first sector wide review in ten years, to understand how Government can continue to help the sector thrive in the face of contemporary challenges.

Funding

A number of Noble Lords referred to funding for museums. The Mendoza Review found that Government's financial support for museums has averaged £844m per year over the past ten years, and that museums are able to access 11 different funding sources. A new tax relief for exhibitions is now in effect and is expected to benefit museums to the tune of £30m per year; and the DCMS/Wolfson Fund will award £4m to museums in 2019/20. Museums will also benefit from Government's recent commitments to create a Cultural Development Fund and a Curriculum Fund.

The number of museums supported by Arts Council England (ACE) is also increasing, with 57 museums in total becoming part of the National Portfolio from April. This includes the Bowes Museum and the People's History Museum, both referred to during the debate.

Museums continue to benefit from significant funding through the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), despite the rationalisation of its funding streams as a result of a decrease in lottery receipts. The Noble Lord, Lord Clement-Jones, argued that society lotteries - such as the Health Lottery - damage the ability to raise funds for good causes such as museums. Society lotteries are unique entities whose primary purpose is to raise money for good causes; Government recognises the benefits they bring to society, and considers them to be complementary fundraisers to The National Lottery.



International Work and Tourism

As many Noble Lords alluded to, museums are a vibrant, pivotal part of our tourist industry, also contributing to our high ranking in the soft power index. International loans and skills exchanges are vital to professional development and the maintenance of relevant museum collections. DCMS continues to work closely with all of its sectors to ensure they have a voice as the country negotiates to exit the EU. Simultaneously, we are seeking to ensure that cultural and education links are maintained after the UK exits the EU. This will include looking to ensure that loans between museums in the UK and Europe continue. There may be a few funding programmes, including Erasmus+, in which we want to continue participating in the next EU multiannual financial framework (2021-2027) provided it is in our interests and delivers value for money for the taxpayer. However, this will be subject to negotiations. These issues were raised by the Noble Earl, Lord Clancarty.

Lord Clement-Jones also asked why museums are no longer represented on the Tourism Industry Council and whether, as part of the Industrial Strategy, the tourism sector deal will encompass museums. Museums are increasingly reaching out to join up with complementary sectors - for instance, joining the Creative Industries Federation. A number of possible sector deals which could involve museums are in progress. DCMS encourages the museums sector to get involved with these and will seek to join up at departmental level, as recommended in the Mendoza Review.

Implementation of the Museums Review

DCMS is committed to implementing the recommendations of both the Mendoza Review and the Strategic Review of DCMS-sponsored museums. Mendoza highlights nine priorities for the sector and recommends a more strategic approach to funding and activity across Government and its Arm's Length Bodies. For ACE and HLF, this will be captured in an Action Plan for the sector, underpinned by a more assertive development role by ACE. For national museums, this will be captured in a Partnership Framework to ensure partnership working around the country is more joined up and targeted. Both of these will be published in September.

The Mendoza Review, the first of its kind in ten years, and the actions highlighted above are evidence of DCMS' commitment to the museums sector. From adapting to the current funding environment, to the adoption of digital technology to enhance audience's experience and business models, the Action Plan and Partnership Framework will ensure continued support to a sector whose prowess is internationally recognised and commended.

Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport

I am copying this letter to all who spoke in the debate and to the Minister for Arts, Heritage and Tourism and will place a copy in the House library.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Henry Ashton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'H'.

Lord Ashton of Hyde
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State