

# Museums Marketing Strategy for Wales 2013 - 2016



copyright Newport Museum and Art Gallery

**Marketing strategy in full**



Ariennir gan  
**Lywodraeth Cymru**  
Funded by  
**Welsh Government**

## Creative Cultures

Creative Cultures  
159 Alexandra Park Road  
LONDON N22 7UL  
020 8888 3555  
[www.creativecultures.co.uk](http://www.creativecultures.co.uk)

# Museums Marketing Strategy for Wales

## Audience Development and Marketing Strategy for Museums in Wales 2013 – 2016

### Contents

1.	Introduction: why a marketing strategy for museums in Wales - why now?	4
2.	Museums in Wales today	10
3.	Marketing in museums in Wales - the current picture	16
4.	Partners for museum marketing in Wales	22
5.	Opportunities and challenges for marketing	24
6.	Our strategy for museum marketing in Wales	29
7.	Making the strategy work	32
8.	Implementing the strategy	51

### **Appendices (separate document):**

- A. Commission Brief
- B. Interviewees and staff at Wrexham CBC
- C. National Museum Strategy Steering Group members
- D. Selected list of published documents consulted
- E. List of potential partner organisations
- F. National initiatives, programmes and events
- G. Sources and Resources

# Museums Marketing Strategy for Wales Audience Development and Marketing Strategy for Museums in Wales 2013 - 2016

## 1. Introduction: why a marketing strategy for museums in Wales – why now?

### 1.1 Museums in Wales and their visitors

In 2010 there were an estimated 3.5 million visits to Wales' 160 museums and numbers are on the increase<sup>1</sup>. Some places regularly attract as many as five repeat visits from satisfied customers within a single year.

Appealing to families, tourists, school groups, 'cultural' visitors and individuals looking to enjoy, learn and expand their horizons, museums make an undeniable and growing contribution to Welsh cultural and economic life. They support the Welsh people's interest and identification with national, regional and local heritage, helping to nurture and promote a powerful sense of identity and place. Yet we know that, as in the rest of the UK, nearly half the resident population visit very rarely if at all<sup>2</sup> and around 60% of day trippers and holidaymakers<sup>3</sup> don't include museums on their itinerary.

Creative Cultures was appointed in December 2012 to develop this Audience Development and Marketing Strategy as part of CyMAL and the national Steering Group's delivery against the objectives of the Museums Strategy for Wales 2010-2015<sup>4</sup>.

### 1.2 Who is this Audience Development and Marketing Strategy for?

This strategy is written for governing bodies, paid staff and volunteers working in the museum sector across Wales, the funders that support them, the stakeholder bodies that represent and serve them and a wide range of existing and potential partners – most especially in the tourism sector - at national, regional and local level.

The strategy's aim is to support all these individuals and organisations to work together to deliver messages that will both reinforce the already very positive perceptions of the 'museum brand' held by existing visitors and raise museums' profile for clearly identified target groups of infrequent or non-visitors.

---

<sup>1</sup> Spotlight on Museums data collection from 106 museums in 2011 indicates 9.3% increase on total visitor numbers as compared with 2006 figure for 106 museums. Suggested figure of 3.5m includes estimated total of c. 221,000 visits to the remaining 54 museums.

<sup>2</sup> Wales Omnibus Museums, November 2012, Prepared for the Contemporary Collecting Project

<sup>3</sup> Visit Wales 2011 Visitor Survey Tabulations, Nov 2011, Beaufort Research

<sup>4</sup> Museums Strategy for Wales 2010-15, CyMAL 2010

It is expected that implementation of the strategy's recommended initiatives between 2013-2016 will be managed by the national marketing team that is funded by CyMAL and hosted and managed by Wrexham County Borough Council.

### **1.3 Welsh museums and their collections**

The strategy recognises and builds on the rich diversity of the museum sector in Wales not only in terms of size, collections, budgets, size of workforce, location and governance but also in terms of museums' strengths and objectives: the communities they serve; the audiences they seek to reach; the experience they seek to offer; and the extent and nature of their collections.

The strategy acknowledges perceived and potential disparities and tensions, particularly between those public sector supported museums whose core funding allows them to offer free entry to all and those independent museums that rely heavily on admission charges – although not all local authority museums are free and many volunteer run independents are. In the current climate all museums are required to develop a keen entrepreneurial spirit. The strategy takes account of the increasing financial constraints under which museums are working – the likely reduction over the period of this strategy in already stretched marketing budgets and an anticipated reduction in workforce and expertise.

It also recognises that there are many genuinely universal good news stories to be told about museums across Wales: the power and significance of the collections they hold in trust; the opportunities in their galleries for excitement, inspiration and inclusion; the services they provide for schools and communities; and their impressive contribution to tourism and the wider economy. In the spirit of the national Museums Strategy for Wales, this Audience Development and Marketing Strategy argues, that in terms of raising the sectors' profile with public, politicians and partners, Welsh museums will certainly be stronger by working together.

The range of collections held across museums of every size and type is compelling: from internationally renowned fine art; impressive reflections of Wales' unique craft and design history; to powerful evocations of everyday life, industrial, agricultural, technological and built heritage and military service; and Welsh, Roman and Egyptian archaeology. There is much to celebrate – both on show and behind the scenes: the on-going work of developing, caring for and researching collections that makes museums such a rich and relevant resource for their users - repositories of expertise and knowledge for exploration and sharing.

This strategy recognises the particular role that many smaller independent museums play for communities in Wales, keeping collections and the stories they tell rooted, relevant and local. It recognises that for many museums across Wales collections are not their only, or even their prime resource. Around two thirds occupy and care for listed buildings or scheduled monuments<sup>5</sup>. Many are sited in well loved natural or man-made landscapes and as a consequence can sometimes be seen as a rather 'incidental' attraction by visitors – and sometimes by their funders and managers.

---

<sup>5</sup> Spotlight on Museums, 2006, CyMAL, 2007

## 1.4 Modern marketing for museums

Marketing is often misunderstood as relating primarily or wholly to publicity and promotional activities. This is part of the marketing mix but not the whole. The Chartered Institute of Marketing defines marketing as:

*The management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements profitably.*

This needs to include: collecting and analysing data on users and non-users; managing and maintaining customer service standards; developing partnership and outreach initiatives and online activities; as well as a wide range of press, PR, promotional, and other activities – anything that helps an organisation to first identify and then meet customer needs in a cost effective and measurable way.

Effective marketing for 21st century museums is a broad and complex process reflecting the multiple roles that museums aspire and are expected to fulfil in contemporary society. The current Museums Association definition of a museum tells us:

*'Museums enable people to explore collections for inspiration, learning and enjoyment. They are institutions that collect, safeguard and make accessible artefacts and specimens, which they hold in trust for society<sup>6</sup>.'*

But in its recent 'Museums 2020' discussion paper the Museums Association quotes this more far reaching definition:

*Museums can be so much more than buildings that interpret collections. Just for starters, they can help people "develop their identity, build confidence through volunteering, understand cultural differences, have non-partisan public spaces to enjoy, support intergenerational understanding, help recently arrived migrants learn a language/culture/history and find their place in it, give a place for a father to take his son/daughter on their one day a week/ month together, inspire the next generation of scientists, provoke debate, build community cohesion, help prevent illnesses associated with old age, make people go 'wow', encourage tourism, promote economic growth through cultural regeneration, and let people learn through the power of touch<sup>7</sup>."*

Museums should never lose sight of the fact that they do have the potential to achieve all of these things through the unique power of their collections – the excitement of accessing genuinely tangible heritage. But as well as celebrating the 'product' they offer - collections, people, knowledge, buildings, and surroundings - museums need to focus too on marketing the rich, multi-layered experience that visiting can bring. To do this effectively they need to understand the diverse needs and interests of their potential audiences, develop their 'brand identity' and pitch their message accordingly. They need to ensure that an audience-centred marketing ethos permeates everything that they do: from training the front-of-house team in customer service and making sure the loos are clean; to designing exhibitions; developing online resources; and delivering meaningful, collections-focussed community outreach.

<sup>6</sup> Museums Association definition of a museum at [www.museumsassociation.org/ethics/code-of-ethics](http://www.museumsassociation.org/ethics/code-of-ethics)

<sup>7</sup> Peter Davis, comment at [www.museumsassociation.org/maurice-daviesblog/15052012-what-next](http://www.museumsassociation.org/maurice-daviesblog/15052012-what-next)

In a recent article, business management academic Paul Williams offers the following 'market-led, mission-relevant definition' of museum marketing as 'fit for purpose':

*In order to further their strategic goals, museums are strongly encouraged to view marketing as being a societal and managerial process which authenticates a museum's mission and is then responsible for the effective, efficient and sustainable identification, anticipation and satisfaction of the requirements of its users and other stakeholders<sup>8</sup>.*

Beyond that definition, this strategy recognises that, for museums, the whole marketing process is very closely allied with advocacy. As part of its 2010 'Love Museums' campaign the Museums Association defined advocacy as:

*Advocacy is the process whereby an organisation seeks to influence others in order to gain support for its mission, interests or course of action. In order to achieve this, networks of support are developed and used to lend credibility, wield influence and offer third-party endorsement.*

The museum sector in Wales needs to develop and communicate a strongly coherent message to politicians, funders and the general public – gathering evidence and raising awareness that, in the words of the Museums Strategy for Wales:

*Museums promote the cultural life of our nation, they encourage active participation in culture, protect our heritage, help expand our international profile and contribute to our tourism industry. At a local level, museums have a role in delivering vital learning and community services.*

The Museums Strategy for Wales' action points included the need to 'Provide strategic advocacy for museums in Wales' and this strategy seeks to build on the excellent work already achieved in the Federation of Museums and Art Galleries of Wales' advocacy strategy and toolkit<sup>9</sup>.

## 1.5 Developing the strategy

This audience development and marketing strategy is rooted in the national Museum Strategy for Wales' three guiding principles: museums for everyone, a collection for the nation, and working effectively. It takes on board the national strategy's key thoughts and recommendations for action on marketing:

- In a world of competing calls on people's leisure time, museums must market themselves if they are to convince the public to make a museum their visit of choice.
- Amgueddfa Cymru: The National Museum has a communications department that includes specialist marketing staff, and is encouraged to take a strategic role in developing marketing opportunities for museums on an all-Wales basis.
- All museums must identify opportunities to take part in and support collaborative marketing initiatives, celebrate success, and make the most of joint marketing campaigns.
- Museum governing bodies need to understand that remote access [to collections information] is essential ... Identifying and making the most of opportunities in the virtual domain is crucial in a world that increasingly uses technology to communicate, share and learn.

<sup>8</sup> A Modern Approach to Museum Marketing, Paul Williams, Oct 2009 See: [www.insights.org.uk/articleitem.aspx?title=A%20Modern%20Approach%20to%20Museum%20Marketing](http://www.insights.org.uk/articleitem.aspx?title=A%20Modern%20Approach%20to%20Museum%20Marketing)

<sup>9</sup> See: <http://welshmuseumsfederation.org/index.php?page=advocacy>

It is informed by the national strategy's wider commitment to museums raising their profile and engaging with partners to reach the widest possible audience:

- *Museums need to understand and consult with their communities, use demographic information available and apply it effectively.... [then] informed decisions can be made about how to develop new relationships with groups that do not currently use their services.*
- *Understanding and dismantling barriers, real or perceived, that deter those who do not currently visit or work in museums, or do not participate in our activities is crucial if museums are to be fully inclusive.*
- *Museums are part of the wider tourism industry and we must work closely with other heritage and tourism organisations ... to develop and improve the heritage offer for visitors.*
- *Workforce development is a key element of continuing to work effectively*
- *Museums have a role to play in raising the profile of Wales in the world*

In developing the strategy, the Creative Cultures team interviewed representatives from key 'stakeholder' groups including CyMAL, AIM, the Federation of Museums and Art Galleries of Wales, the Museums Association, the Wales Council for Voluntary Action, and the Welsh Local Government Association, and a wider range of potential partners, including Visit Wales and all four regional Tourism Partnerships.

In a consultation exercise open to all museums the Creative Cultures team interviewed representatives from over 25 institutions of every size including small and large independents, local authority run services and Amgueddfa Cymru – The National Museum of Wales. In addition they reviewed a range of published research reports<sup>10</sup> and were given access to a number of internal reviews and reports as well as individual museums' Audience Development Plans and survey results.

## **1.6 Key findings and recommendations**

The findings from the interviews and research are explored fully below. In short:

- Museums were keenly aware of the diversity of the sector and did not want a strategy that offered 'one size fits all' solutions or sought to impose Wales specific 'national initiatives'.
- Not only are museum marketing budgets low, and likely to shrink, but the paid and volunteer staff responsible for marketing, while often enthusiastic and imaginative, tend to be untrained and have little time for the work. Most said that they would welcome access to guidance and training in basic audience research and marketing skills and practice.
- The available data on users and non-users of museums across Wales is patchy, but it indicates that while museums enjoy some loyal and enthusiastic support in the family, tourist and schools markets there is a substantial proportion of non-visitors who don't view

---

<sup>10</sup> See Appendix D

museums as stimulating, welcoming or social spaces - especially for family groups.

- The museum sector in Wales is well served by an existing infrastructure of professional and other bodies that provide both networking opportunities and sustainable mechanisms for online support and resource delivery. This offers the national marketing team a strong array of potential partners.
- The UK museum sector is well served by 'initiatives', such as 'Kids in Museums' or 'Museums at Night'. Many of the museums interviewed were aware of some or all of these and some were participating selectively – choosing opportunities that matched their target audiences or collection strengths.

As a result of this research and in response to what museums and their partners told us, the strategy recommends two priority areas for strategic intervention:

- 1. A capacity building programme directed at the entire sector with the aim of improving and developing audience research and development and marketing skills and practice and laying the basis for sustainable development of marketing in the future.**
- 2. A profile-raising advocacy programme aimed at raising awareness of the value of museums and their collections, their social and cultural value, and the enjoyable and stimulating experience they can offer.**

It is anticipated that work on initiatives to put these priorities into action will be led by the Wrexham based national marketing team working in partnership with bodies in the museum, tourism and other sectors.

## 2. Museums in Wales Today

### 2.1 Museums are diverse

'A Museums Strategy for Wales'<sup>11</sup> notes that there are 160 organisations in Wales that hold and display collections of objects. The oldest is Swansea which was founded in 1841, but, perhaps surprisingly to many people, most museums in Wales have been founded in the last 35 - 40 years.

These 160 museums are run by a variety of bodies. This is one of their most distinctive features and a significant factor in the rich diversity of their offer to visitors. Sixteen Welsh Local Authorities run a total of 40 museums, and Amgueddfa Cymru – The National Museum Wales, which was incorporated by a Royal Charter in 1907, has seven museum sites. The remainder of museums in Wales are run by a considerable array of independent and local bodies ranging from community based organisations and one-person operations to a small number of substantial bodies, both commercial and not-for-profit. A large proportion, 46% of independently run museums, receives no public funding<sup>12</sup> with at least one acting as a Trust with some support from a local authority.

The independent sector in Wales also includes the National Trust, whose nine historic properties house collections form a significant part of the Welsh museum and heritage sector. Museum collections may also be part of historic sites, such as those overseen by Cadw<sup>13</sup>, be part of outdoor or visitor attractions, attached to universities, or combined with libraries or art galleries.

Sixteen of the largest museums attract over 50,000 visits per year, 44 receive between 10-50,000, but the majority receive under 10,000 visits per year<sup>14</sup>. Visitors to museums in Wales may be charged or gain free entry. Entry is free at all Amgueddfa Cymru sites and special exhibitions, whilst about two thirds of local authority and one-third of independent museums provide free entry<sup>15</sup>. Many independent museums derive the majority of their income from admission charges.

Museums in Wales also differ enormously in their size and scale of operation, with many operating on a small scale. Operating budgets also show a considerable range with local authority museum budgets averaging £200,000 pa and independents averaging £52,000 pa, but with huge disparities underlying this average, for example some small museums operate on as little as £500 pa<sup>16</sup>.

Museums vary considerably in the scale and make-up of their workforce. The average workforce for all local museums is seven<sup>17</sup> whilst Amgueddfa Cymru has over 1700 across its seven sites. Two thirds of the workforce is in the independent sector, where many are volunteers. Some local authority museums are also dependent partly or even wholly on volunteers. Overall, 62% of workers in the museum sector are volunteers, many of whom are part-time and seasonal. 90% of museum volunteers work in the independent sector whilst of the paid and mostly fulltime museum workforce of approximately 3,400<sup>18</sup> people, half work for Amgueddfa Cymru – The National Museum Wales with Amguedda Cymru having 20% of the total workforce.

<sup>11</sup> 'A Museum Strategy for Wales', or Museum Strategy for Wales 2010-15, CyMAL, 2010

<sup>12</sup> 'A Museum Strategy for Wales' op cit p 11

<sup>13</sup> Cadw is the Welsh Government's historic environment service working for an accessible and well-protected historic environment for Wales.

<sup>14</sup> Spotlight 2011 Abstract, CyMAL 2013

<sup>15</sup> Spotlight 2006 tables, CyMAL, 2007

<sup>16</sup> 'A Museum Strategy for Wales' op cit p30

<sup>17</sup> Spotlight 2011 Abstract, CyMAL 2013

<sup>18</sup> Spotlight 2011 Abstract, op cit

## 2.1 Museums are dynamic and focussed on visitors and communities

Museums in Wales attract up to 3.5m visits each year and surveys suggest that this was rising at least until the latest available figures for 2010<sup>19</sup>. Visitors to museums include local people as well as tourists from the UK and around the world. As might be expected, the most heavily populated areas experience the majority of visits. Included in total visits are over 300,000 visits by school pupils. Museums in Wales top the list of attractions for school visits. There is unfortunately very limited consistent, nationally based, data on visitors to museums in Wales – who they are, why they visit and their satisfaction levels - an issue which this strategy seeks to address for the future.

Some useful information about museum users is, however, available from specific surveys. A 2011 Audiences Wales survey for Arts Council Wales, which included a range of Welsh museum sites in a national benchmarking pilot project<sup>20</sup>, suggests that the majority of visitors were female, that only 25% of visitors were aged 16 to 34, with 59% aged 35 and above. 68% of visits were of up to one hour with 20% lasting one to two hours. Repeat visits are common with 53% having visited within the last 12 months and only one-third being on their first visit. A surprising 11% of those surveyed visited a museum 10 times or more each year.

There is evidence that visitors to museums have high levels of satisfaction. In a survey carried out in 2012 for the Federation of Museums and Art Galleries of Wales<sup>21</sup> not only was there a high proportion of repeat visitors (27% visiting one museum or another 5 times or more each year) but 44% of visitors reported that the visit exceeded their expectations, with only 8% stating that their experience was worse than expected. This survey also showed that the rate of visiting was higher for ABC1 groups over C2DE groups and for older over younger visitors. Visit Wales found that 75% agreed strongly or slightly that Museums were friendly and welcoming places.

The way people (both users and non-users) see museums has been suggested by some recent Museum Association research<sup>22</sup> which found that there is a strong positive and emotional attachment to museums and that

*'it appears that attitudes toward museums have become more favourable over the last generation as they shed their image of stuffiness and sterility and become more entertaining and interactive.'*

The research highlights how important and trusted museums are, in keeping our heritage and making it available in a way that increases the public's knowledge of community and its past.

<sup>19</sup> Spotlight 2011, op cit, suggests a rise of 9% between 2006 and 2010 whilst Visit Wales surveys suggests museum visits in Wales increased by 5.4% 2008 to 2009 after an increase of 8.2% from 2007 to 2008. National Trust sites accounted for 34% of visits according to the Spotlight survey.

<sup>20</sup> Audience Wales with Audiences UK and Audiences London, Visual Arts Benchmark Pilot Project, 2011

<sup>21</sup> Wales Omnibus Museums, Beaufort Research, Nov 2012, prepared for John Marjoram, Contemporary Collecting Project

<sup>22</sup> Public perceptions of and attitudes to the purposes of museums in society: A report prepared by Britain-Thinks for Museums Association, BritainThinks, Museums Association, 2013. [http://www.museumsassociation.org/news/03042013-public-attitudes-research-published?utm\\_source=ma&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=03042013](http://www.museumsassociation.org/news/03042013-public-attitudes-research-published?utm_source=ma&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=03042013)

Museums are increasingly making good use of online and mobile-based technology to reach potential visitors. The Spotlight 2011 survey reports that 86% of museums have a website with 64% of them actively monitoring the use of it. A growing number are making use of social networking and recognising the importance of access to information by mobile devices, particularly by visitors to Wales. Survey data from Visit Wales for 2011 suggests that nearly half of 'staying visitors' to Wales are now using websites for information, a marked increase over 2009. This shift to use of web-based information is also apparent in the way day visitors to Wales find out about places to visit and make their choices. They no longer visit simply because they live nearby - Web access gives them information about a much wider geographic area<sup>23</sup>.

Museums are also increasingly addressing quality issues for their visitors. A small majority of museums are now Accredited - they meet the national Museums Association standards – including that for 'Users and their experiences'. There were 87 (out of the possible 160) museums with Accredited status at the time of the *Museums Strategy for Wales 2010-15* and this number is gradually increasing. More museums are now engaged in VAQAS, the Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Service Cymru which is a quality assurance scheme administered by Visit Wales and supported by CyMAL. It is an extension of the visitor and user standards already reached for Museum Accreditation and seen as a valuable tool to monitor and improve visitor experience.

In many instances, the quality of the experience for visitors is also being addressed with new and refurbished buildings funded by the HLF and other funders and with new, local museums being created or revitalised. Many of these developments, whether in the local authority or independent sectors, provide a focus for increased community involvement with local heritage and the local museums that reflect and preserve it. The Spotlight 2011 survey lists 4,843 examples of use of museums by community groups, identifies 62 museums which provided targeted sessions to audiences determined by age or other priority target groups, and reports that 25% of local museums ran events or exhibitions targeted at young or older people.

## **2.2 Museums face challenges - non users and barriers to use**

As well as having only very limited data on museum users, we also lack a great deal of important data about people who choose not to visit - and their reasons. The Visit Wales 2011 survey found that whilst 21% of tourist visitors to Wales had visited a museum, with a further 7% intending to visit, 65% had no plans to visit, and this figure rose to 70% for 16-34 year olds and was even higher among tourist visitors in North and Mid Wales.

These sorts of results are not uncommon elsewhere in the UK and it is worth bearing in mind that tourists and day trippers to Wales often come for many different reasons, including experiencing the wonderful natural environment. Indeed surveys suggest that people not visiting museums made their choice for a number of reasons: 60% had other activities; 15% had not thought about museums; and 14% were not interested in museums<sup>24</sup>. Overall 17% of those surveyed did not feel museums were for them and this rose to 27% for 'young independents'.

---

<sup>23</sup> Visit Wales 2011 Visitor Survey Tabulations, Beaufort Research for CyMAL, Nov 2011. It is possible that reports of a decline in distances being driven more generally may impact on this development

<sup>24</sup> Visit Wales 2011 Survey, Beaufort data. But note that 0% were not visiting because they 'couldn't find enough information about museums'

The barriers to visiting for non users were also largely perceptual. Of this group:

- Only 47% saw museums as friendly and welcoming places
- 39% thought museums were 'not for people like me'
- 23% thought museums had not moved with the times

Some non-users are highly resistant to being persuaded to visit a museum whilst others have ideas of what might encourage a visit:

- 39% maintained that nothing would encourage a visit
- 15% felt better facilities and activities for children would encourage a visit
- 11% an on-site cafe would encourage a visit

Significantly only 8% thought that better advertising might encourage them to visit and, even among these non-users, 71% felt they could already find out about museums if they wanted to. Lack of promotion and publicity about the availability of museums does not seem to be a barrier to greater use of museums.

Visitor and non-visitor research carried out by Amgueddfa Cymru – The National Museum Wales in the last five years extends the picture on what visitors want and what prevents visits<sup>25</sup>. These surveys suggested that some people remain unaware even of Amgueddfa Cymru's most high profile sites. They don't feel any real sense of ownership or connection with the collections and some have clearly negative perceptions of what the experience of visiting museums might be like. This research also emphasises the importance of the family unit and the high value placed on children's needs and expected enjoyment, for both users and non-users. The latter felt that museums would not be welcoming, absorbing places to take children.

The challenge of addressing non-users of museums should also be seen in the context of the demographic projections for Wales which is expected to see a rise in population by 8% from 2008 to 2023<sup>26</sup>. This increase is boosted above the projections for England and Scotland due to net inward migration. In common with other parts of the UK however, Wales will experience this rising population as an ageing population with a growth of 35% for over 65s compared to a 1% growth for people aged 16-64, and a 5% increase for children under 15. Added to continuing pressure on household incomes and the lower average incomes in Wales, museums face a strongly competitive environment to attract new family and other audiences in the coming period.

<sup>25</sup> Amgueddfa Cymru, Visitor Profile Study, Oct 2009 & Qualitative Non-Visitor Research Report, Nov 2008

<sup>26</sup> Wales' Population: a demographic overview, WAG, 2010

## 2.3 Museums face challenges - resources

Reduced resources, both overall and those available for marketing work, are set to offer an increasing challenge across the whole museum sector in Wales.

There is already evidence of a slight decline in the number of employed professional staff in the sector in the period 2006-10<sup>27</sup>. This recent survey material also suggests a decline of 5.3% in overall museum budgets for 2011/12 from the previous year and a decline in the number of museums with dedicated marketing budgets - with only 54% having a marketing budget and this usually without dedicated marketing staff. Consultation for this strategy suggests some extremely low marketing budgets, often just covering the printing of leaflets.

This limited resourcing for marketing and improving the visitor experience in much of the museum sector is reflected in the Spotlight 2006 survey tables where museums scored low average scores on disability access, policy and planning and audience development and marketing<sup>28</sup>.

Schools are finding it increasingly difficult to afford travel costs and provide adequate staffing to cover out-of-school visits. Despite the dominance of museums as school visit locations, for most of the sector school visit bookings are declining (except for Amgueddfa Cymru sites) and there is evidence of the loss of some of the specialist staff within education authorities that have previously been museums' key contacts for supporting education visits to museums.

The nature and quality of provision for visitors within museum buildings is a vital part of the visitor experience – and an important part of customer service and marketing in its broadest sense. Not just the structural fabric of the building, but the accessibility, design and presentation of display spaces and support facilities like lavatories and cafes are key factors in determining people's enjoyment and satisfaction levels. They can have a major impact on visitors' decision to come again and on vital word-of-mouth promotion. In the Spotlight 2011 report already quoted it is reported that of those museums responding to the survey 95% occupied buildings with some level of heritage designation<sup>29</sup>, with 36% of these heritage sites being occupied by independently run museums. A high 98% of the museums responding to the Spotlight survey reported that the condition of their building met Accreditation requirements.

However, not so many were yet able to reach Accreditation standards in terms of providing a welcoming accessible environment and appropriate services and facilities – especially for users with disabilities. In the 2011 Spotlight survey 79% reported their buildings were accessible for disabled users, but of these only 63% were fully accessible. Lack of access is not always linked to occupying a heritage building. The Spotlight report notes:

---

<sup>27</sup> Spotlight 2011 Survey Summary, op cit

<sup>28</sup> Spotlight on Museums, CyMAL 2007, op cit

<sup>29</sup> this included being located within a conservation area

*The historic nature of buildings has implications for access, maintenance and upgrading or refurbishing facilities. On average, the higher the listed status of museum buildings, the higher the level of suitability for museum purposes. Museums in, or with, Scheduled Ancient Monuments find it harder to exceed minimum standards. Museums with listed or scheduled buildings, on average, had larger overall budgets although there is no information to determine whether or not these two facts are related.*

Whilst we lack any systematic overview of the condition of museum buildings and the extent to which they meet visitor needs and expectations, the Spotlight 2006 report provides a partial picture of museum amenities at that date for both Accredited and non-Accredited museums (and the differences are not great between the two). For example 57% of Accredited Museums provided a designated car park, with the figure for non-Accredited being 52%. The figures for cafes provision were 48% and 38%, toilets, 90% and 86% and for audio guides 17% and 10%. It would be a fair assumption that, as visitor expectations increase, the condition of museum buildings and the quality of amenities will become an increasing constraint on their ability to provide an experience that visitors find satisfactory.

This strategy recognises these challenges and limitations in seeking an effective way forward for audience development and marketing for museums in Wales.

## **3. Marketing in museums in Wales – the current picture**

### **3.1 Consulting with museums in Wales**

Creative Cultures' consultation with a selection of museums in Wales gave them the chance to tell us about their capacity for marketing and audience research and development, to give examples of activities and programmes they currently undertake - including participation in Wales and UK-wide initiatives and campaigns- and to tell us what they would want to see from a national marketing strategy.

We looked at museums in three groups, the seven sites run by Amgueddfa Cymru, museums run by local authorities in Wales, and independent museums in which we included university museums and museums run as part of the National Trust in Wales. For each of these three groupings the consultation process provided an overview of marketing approaches, available resources, and target groups among visitors.

Interviews were held with five staff members from Amgueddfa Cymru, eight staff from local authority museum services or local authority museums, and thirteen representatives from independent museums including three staff members from the National Trust in Wales. This captured a good cross section of the different needs and perceptions from these three groupings as well as examples of overlap – for example museums supported by and included in the county council 'offer' but run by their own independent board.

### **3.2 Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum of Wales**

Amgueddfa Cymru's marketing, PR and communications team have staff members at all seven of the national museum sites. They prioritise developing a strong profile with local and regional partners, press and broadcast media as well as working at a national and international level. The Cardiff-based PR and communications staff also focus on relationships with the press and broadcast media. There is an Advocacy and Policy Co-ordinator and a new media team - currently building and sharing expertise in efficient use of social media.

Amgueddfa Cymru is very aware of the resources at its command, but sensitive to the resistance that museums from the wider sector might feel to Amgueddfa Cymru's offering overt leadership on marketing issues. Staff from the marketing and PR teams regularly offer advice and some support to colleagues from the wider sector who are involved in Amgueddfa Cymru partnership projects such as the 'Sharing Treasures' loans programme. Some of the Amgueddfa Cymru team have posted their contact details on the Federation's Rhannu 'sharing expertise' pages and regularly offer speakers to Federation and other training sessions, conferences and seminars on marketing, advocacy and related topics. The Advocacy and Policy Co-ordinator Officer in particular contributed to development of the Federation's Advocacy resources.

Much, of this partnership work and expertise sharing has focused on local authority services and regional museums, though some independents cited support they had received from Amgueddfa Cymru.

Amgueddfa Cymru's current marketing strategy focuses on three key target audiences: family, tourists and young people. They cite their greatest recent success as attracting an increase in family group visits. They attribute the high figures for repeat visits to several of their sites to both high quality displays and facilities and to a strong, changing programme of activities, exhibitions and events – at St Fagans, for example, surveyed visitors reported coming back as often as five times a year.

Policy direction from the Welsh Government has seen Amgueddfa Cymru strengthen its offer to young people through the development and implementation of a Child Poverty Action Strategy. The introduction of the Welsh Baccalaureate has also impacted on the way individual national museums work with schools. Bucking a general downward trend across the sector as a whole, Amgueddfa Cymru's school visitor numbers rose in 2012.

UK-wide initiatives like 'Kids in Museums' have provided good PR opportunities for Amgueddfa Cymru and staff felt that there had been benefits to the sector as a whole.

Amgueddfa Cymru staff were supportive of the message behind both the Museum Strategy for Wales and this audience development and marketing strategy that the museum sector in Wales will become stronger by working together. They are very willing to work collaboratively and, for example, exchange leaflets with high quality visitor attractions local to their sites. However, Amgueddfa Cymru is keenly aware of the effort and resources its staff put into building strong a local profile for each of its sites, as well as carefully nuanced relationships with national press and media contacts. There is potential for Amgueddfa Cymru staff to offer advice to the national marketing team and to support the team developing as it develops its own contact base. In principle there was a feeling among Amgueddfa Cymru staff that it might occasionally be appropriate for Amgueddfa Cymru to lead on stories that draw on the work of museums across Wales and reinforce the nationals' own advocacy message by demonstrating the social, economic and cultural value of the museum sector as a whole.

If a marketing strategy for museums in Wales is to be effective, Amgueddfa Cymru staff felt that it must be tailored to the resources and needs of individual museums within the independent and local authority museum sectors. It should reflect and celebrate the Welsh museum sector's diversity and not seek to constrain it with 'one size fits all' initiatives. A key element must be to communicate the social value and contemporary relevance of Welsh museums and to help museums to wrap that message into all their communications with public, media, politicians and funders.

Speaking generally about the museum sector, Amgueddfa Cymru staff felt that there is the potential for cross-domain working with archives and libraries, but only in a context that demonstrated the common ground and relevance of shared working. They felt that the museum sector itself ought to be part of the audience for the marketing strategy and be encouraged to build awareness, cohere as a sector and sell itself to the public, the wider tourism sector and politicians.

The Federation of Art Galleries and Museums in Wales was seen by Amgueddfa Cymru staff as a widely trusted body and as such a key agent to support the audience development and marketing strategy and assist in its delivery. They felt that Amgueddfa Cymru would be very willing to work in partnership with the Federation on agreed initiatives, such as any award scheme for museums in Wales, should such a scheme command widespread support.

### 3.3 Local authority museums and services

Local authority museums and museum services are facing a changing and challenging economic climate. Budgets are limited and often insufficient for museums to be as proactive as they would wish. Whilst independent museums have cited the challenge they face from 'free access' being given to local authority museums, not all local authority museum services are free. Some local authority museums are under greater pressure to raise more income, but without any additional resources to invest in either marketing or product enhancement. Others have seen the impact of the first stage of budget cuts and fear that more are to come, while in extreme cases the threat of total closure has a dragging effect on morale, even if the threat has been averted.

The museums' profile is often low even within their own local authorities and, for example, their tourism departments. This can limit their capacity to promote themselves effectively as an attractive local facility offering enjoyment for local communities and visitors alike. Where there has been external or partnership investment in premises or services, however, the terms of external funding have often prompted audience development and research work during temporary closures, stimulating a growth in take up of activities when services reopen.

Most local authority services collect audience data, but don't always have sufficient time for considered analysis or application of any learning outcomes. Some of the better resourced and/or skilled services have built a good understanding of the individual character and nature of their various heritage and museum facilities and the groups they need to target – examples included families, schools and tourists – even though they might not have undertaken a sophisticated market segmentation exercise. Local knowledge and contact networks help with promoting services to schools, but school visits have been affected in many cases by reductions in school budgets for travel. Travel and transport costs are often cited as the main barrier to school visits.

Levels of engagement in marketing are mixed. Many of the museums recognise the need and value of marketing and would like to do more even though they have no dedicated marketing staff. For others marketing can occupy less than 5% of a key workforce member's time. Most are keen to access customer service training to help ensure that visitors receive good service standards. The courses provided by CyMAL have been welcomed, with take up extending to volunteers as well as paid staff. Local authority museum staff also often have access to internal council training on customer services, disability awareness etc.

The restrictions on making direct contact with the media imposed by local authority public relations rules can be a barrier and getting the right message through appropriate channels to the right contacts can be challenging. Council tourism teams don't always work closely with the museum services their council's fund. Council websites are sometimes inflexible and insufficiently interactive and barriers are imposed by some council's on the use of social media such as Twitter and Facebook. But there are also examples of success stories - especially in working with local press - and access to the media is valued, though offset by concerns on the amount of time it can take to maintain a regular flow of newsworthy stories and other content. There have been some local success stories in getting Wales-wide and national coverage. One service was justifiably proud of securing a BBC Wales piece on the redevelopment of an historic garden and of an appearance on the Antiques Roadshow.

Efficient and effective engagement with online resources was recognised as needing more support in future. Workforce members identified areas requiring further development as: being able to make greater use of opportunities offered by the use of mobile devices; having better online access; and being able to utilise the packages offered by the Peoples Collection Wales.

If websites and the online presence are recognised for their value, print communications in the form of leaflets, event brochures and similar are still important and alongside a website are often the major promotional expense.

The value of participation in national initiatives and campaigns was recognised, but services stressed the importance of being selective and assess costs, especially in terms of staffing resources, as well as the appropriateness of the timing for each initiative. For example, 'Open Doors' was felt to be valuable by one service but left little time for follow up visits as the service's museums closed soon after for the winter. Another had felt the additional staffing costs of participating in the 'Museums at night' initiative to be not worth the additional custom it might generate. Partnership working on special initiatives was mostly with local groups, though there are examples of shared work with independent museums.

The need to build and promote an individual museum identity was recognised by most services –some felt their 'brand' needed improving, for others it was wholly lacking. Museums recognised that there was a clear need for developing a recognisable museum identity which was distinct from the local authority image although it was acknowledged that the museum's branding needed to show clearly that it was part of the local authority's family of services and represent the museums' positioning as part of the local authority's community priorities. There was recognition of the need for help with widening recognition of what a museum is and does and help with developing compelling messages and stories to generate more visitors, both actual and virtual.

What did local authority services want from an audience development and marketing strategy? There were some clear messages:

- Support for local activity
- Training from people with expertise in marketing
- Training in effective use of social media
- Support to keep up with changing consumer needs
- Support for visitor research and data analysis
- Easy access to online toolkits – but not new portal website
- Champions for the museum sector

### **3.4 Independent museums and the National Trust**

The independent museum sector encompasses museums with diverse governing models, including not-for-profit as well as commercial management and governance models. Independent museums form the majority of museums in Wales and they are a dynamic part of Welsh museum scene, with several new museums established in the last three years and others seeing substantial development.

Independent museums have a varied range of collections and different levels of engagement with the communities in which they are located and both factors will need to be taken into account

in a Wales-wide audience development and marketing strategy. We have included the National Trust with the grouping of independent museums for the purposes of our consultation. However we recognise that National Trust properties are supported by a sophisticated marketing and audience development resource, both at HQ and regional level. NT properties are part of the wider Welsh museum 'sector' and the NT as an organisation should be seen as a partner for marketing the sector as a whole.

Volunteers play a much greater role in independent than in publically funded museums and they make a significant contribution to the operation of National Trust facilities. Some independent museums are wholly volunteer-run and many others have limited numbers of paid staff. Few volunteers or paid staff have a marketing qualification, or even marketing experience, and together with other types of museums, independents share the problem of attracting younger volunteers or people with particular relevant skills, including those that could be useful for marketing.

Only one independent museum had an active marketing policy aimed at tackling negative images of museums, seeing this as a way of overcoming barriers of perception and promoting the involvement of a wider range of people to support its activities.

The financial resources for marketing are likely to be low – a few thousand pounds at the most and more likely in the hundreds. The largest part of income for independent museums comes from entrance fees so a focus on getting paid customers through the door is vital. In addition, some museums raise funds from trusts and sponsorship, while CyMAL has provided grant aid for project work to some independents.

CyMAL training courses, along with those from Audiences Wales have also been welcomed by independent museums, but there are often particular barriers to their volunteer staff benefiting from training and development - with museums finding it difficult to fund travel or spare key people who might otherwise be keeping attractions open.

Some independent museums cited the value of support from local authority and other museums, including Amgueddfa Cymru. Many valued membership of AIM and the Federation. Some also have been able to reciprocate and provide the benefits of their own experience, including to Amgueddfa Cymru: – support is not always one way. But some independents felt they operated in isolation and were neglected or lost out by being away from the focus of attention in the more heavily populated South Wales.

Independent museums are usually confident that they understand their local markets and how they draw in their current visitors. Some felt that they didn't have a broad based relationship with their local community, although they might have well developed relationships with specific groups. With tourists or day-visitors to Wales forming a high proportion of their market, visitor numbers fluctuate with the season and all-year round opening is not possible for many.

Most of their audience knowledge comes from observation and experience. Museums develop an understanding of their key audiences' needs, for example the needs of families and children for safe places, and there were some examples of visitor and market research and strategic reviews, supported through grants from CyMAL. While there might be a general awareness of the effects of the current economic climate, little has been commissioned in the way of project work to identify how museums might change in response to future trends.

Branding in some form was understood by many – even if it was just a grasp of what made their museum unique. Some felt that the ‘museum’ label represented an obstacle to the audiences they wished to attract. They felt the word could have negative connotations that did not chime with the experience they were promoting to visitors. Thoughts on the key marketing messages to generate more visits, ensure high visitor numbers and a good income flow were varied, but included value for money, safety, and attractiveness to families - with this last message seen as attractive to C2DEs as much as to the ABC1 market.

For promotion, the independents relied extensively on leaflet distribution, often using commercial agents to distribute leaflets to e.g. holiday accommodation sites, and also use TICs, guidebooks, local notices and street boards. Websites and uptake of social media are being developed where not already in use.

Participation in national initiatives and campaigns was much patchier among independents than in local authority museums; this was due to a mixture of lack of resources and a feeling that the various themed campaigns were not always sufficiently in tune with their specialist message or offer. However some independents had been imaginative and selective – choosing initiatives that played to their particular strengths or complemented their collections.

There was evidence of promotional entry schemes – paid visitor passes, a family membership scheme and free entry to people living locally - as a way of raising local support. There had also been advocacy work undertaken, though this tended to take place where museums had a close relationship with the local authority which they wished to maintain.

### **There were a number of challenging issues for independent museums.**

- Customer care training for paid staff or volunteers is important, but hard to resource in terms of time and funding
- Attracting volunteers covering a wider age range for all activities
- The lack of younger volunteers or workforce with appropriate expertise is a barrier to using social media
- Smaller museums would benefit from greater integration into the tourist economy and tourist promotion
- Raising funding
- Mid and North Wales needing more attention for promotion
- Importance of getting good reports on sites like TripAdvisor and making better use of online presence – including search engine optimisation
- A presumption amongst many of their potential visitors that ‘all museums in Wales are free’

### **Independent museums wanted the marketing strategy for Welsh museums to**

- Advocate standards for good practice in marketing and operation
- Promote the unique role and place that independent local museums play via their collections, in reflecting and serving communities and heritage
- Use of existing Wales-wide website(s) to help with promotion
- Provide training and support for marketing, ranging from getting started through to making best use of limited resources, using volunteers, training board members, to judging the impact of marketing work
- Build an understanding of marketing – that it is more than just promotion

## 4. Partners for museum marketing in Wales

### 4.1 A great opportunity for partnership working

The museum sector in Wales is represented and supported by a robust infrastructure of organisations that provide professional leadership, funding, training and networking opportunities and online resources for sharing and developing expertise. These organisations strengthen the sector and provide both individual museums and the national marketing team with an array of potential partners to support delivery against this audience development and marketing strategy over the next three years and continued, sustainable support for museums' marketing and advocacy work in the future.

### 4.2 Who are the partners?

Bodies funded by the Welsh Government, including CyMAL, Amgueddfa Cymru, Arts Council Wales (ACW), Cadw, Visit Wales and the four Regional Tourism Partnerships, as well as Wales-based membership organisations such as the Federation of Museums and Art Galleries of Wales, should all be regarded as key potential partners. WAVA (the Welsh Association of Visitor Attractions) is currently developing its policies and work following reorganisation and is also a potential future partner for the marketing of museums.

Beyond Wales, there is a much wider network of support for Welsh museums and their workforce. They include the UK wide Museums Association and Association of Independent Museums, the Collections Trust and, listed on the Trust's Collections Link website, a host of Specialist Subject Networks (SSNs) such as the Group for Education in Museums (GEM) and the Social History Curators Group<sup>30</sup>. Mostly run by volunteers, SSNs provide important opportunities for contact and knowledge exchange to those working in very small teams or within areas that are not their specialism.

Beyond the museum, heritage and tourism sectors, the national marketing team will be looking to take advice from and, where appropriate, build mutually beneficial working partnerships with organisations such as the Wales Council for Voluntary Action, Cardiff University and Futurelearn<sup>31</sup> and the national and regional media.

We have placed at Appendix E a full listing and brief description of potential partner organisations many of whom can play an active role in the various marketing initiatives proposed by this strategy.

---

<sup>30</sup> See: <http://www.collectionslink.org.uk/collaborate/subject-specialist-networks>

<sup>31</sup> **Futurelearn** is a private company majority owned by the Open University. Cardiff University is one of its 17 HE partners. Futurelearn is building a multi-institutional platform for free, open, online courses and has been recommended by the Museums Strategy for Wales Steering Group as a potential partner for roll out of marketing skills development training modules for museum staff and volunteers.

### 4.3 Resource sharing and partnership activities

There are also many opportunities for museums to participate in national audience development initiatives such as Kids in Museums or Black History Month, some with associated grant or funding schemes. An indicative list of current and recent partnership initiatives is given at Appendix F.

There is a wealth of online material aimed at supporting both Welsh and UK wide museums to develop their skills and refresh their approach to museum marketing, audience analysis and inclusive approaches to audience development. Excellent examples include: the 'Learning on Demand' resources developed by Audiences Wales in partnership with ACW as one of the outcomes of a series of workshops offered to arts venues – including museums with art galleries<sup>32</sup>; and toolkits and guidance notes developed between 2004-2011 as part of the Museums Libraries Archive Council and Arts Council England Renaissance in the Regions investment programme<sup>33</sup>. A list of relevant online resources is given at Appendix G.

These opportunities for partnership working, actively pursued and developed during the three years of this strategy's implementation so that we establish a 'two way street' of mutual benefit to partners will help ensure that the strategy leaves a sustainable legacy of advice and skills sharing, accessible resources and new ways of working, particularly with colleagues in the tourism sector.

---

<sup>32</sup> See: [http://www.audienceswales.co.uk/public/main.cfm?m1=c\\_14&m2=e\\_0&m3=e\\_0&m4=e\\_0](http://www.audienceswales.co.uk/public/main.cfm?m1=c_14&m2=e_0&m3=e_0&m4=e_0)

<sup>33</sup> See: <http://www.mla.gov.uk/what/programmes/renaissance/regions>

## 5. Opportunities and challenges for marketing

### 5.1 Museums in Wales: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threat

Where do we want the Audience Development and Marketing Strategy for Museums in Wales to take us? What are the opportunities and challenges that face marketing for museums? A good starting point in answer is to use a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats). This will summarise what museums and their partners and stakeholders have told us about the sector and its current marketing.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rich variety of the sector and visitor experience</li><li>• Varied and high quality collections</li><li>• Linkages to other visitor and cultural facilities and attractions</li><li>• Strong community connections</li><li>• Most popular venue for school visits</li><li>• Committed workforce, paid and volunteer</li><li>• CYMAL development funding</li><li>• Strong support network from Federation, AIM etc</li><li>• Federation Advocacy Strategy already active</li><li>• Museums have established and well known local markets including tourists and local people</li><li>• Some new and revitalised museums buildings and facilities</li><li>• Appetite for targeted involvement in national initiatives for museums and other cultural facilities</li><li>• High level of basic online presence &amp; recognition of its importance</li><li>• High level of VAQAS accreditation</li><li>• Increasing Museums Accreditation</li><li>• Some strong branding among larger museums</li><li>• Existing training, toolkits, online resources, case study experience</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Limited or absent specialist marketing skills</li><li>• Limited workforce time for marketing work including maintaining social media, analysis of user feedback or surveys</li><li>• Minimal research / knowledge about existing user and visitor base / non-users</li><li>• Lack of statistical evidence to support advocacy case for economic benefit + relevance of museum sector</li><li>• Low budgets for marketing</li><li>• Reliance on established print promotion</li><li>• Lack of developed branding for many museums</li><li>• Limited development of online and social networking and lack of time to maintain</li><li>• Limited age range for volunteers</li><li>• Limited numbers of volunteers with professional skills</li><li>• Patchy involvement in national initiatives</li><li>• 'Distant' LA Press, PR and Tourism sections</li><li>• Limited advocacy engagement with key stakeholders</li><li>• Some resistance to customer service training</li><li>• Limited engagement with wider tourist sector &amp; visitor economy</li><li>• Limited sector-wide information on premises and amenities provision</li></ul>

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing investment in roll-out of Museums Strategy for Wales - strategic guide for museum development</li> <li>• Growth of mobile and online technology widens potential markets</li> <li>• Wrexham based national marketing team as central resource</li> <li>• Many independent museums have libraries and/or archives – potential to engage with lib and archive strategies</li> <li>• Interest in heritage as part of personal / national identity</li> <li>• Mentoring, apprenticeships, work experience initiatives to increase range of volunteers and volunteering work</li> <li>• Partnership work for national events- notably World War 1 commemoration 2014-2018 which is cross domain in several parts of Wales (Cardiff and Denbighshire examples)</li> <li>• PCW development, easier uploading, interactive opportunities</li> <li>• Cultural, social, community, economic importance of museums as basis for advocacy</li> <li>• Increased museum use of Audiences Wales’ and other expertise and training</li> <li>• MA’s current public perceptions research on what people value in museums</li> <li>• Continuing Amgueddfa Cymru support for the sector</li> <li>• Visit Wales new strategy 2013-20</li> <li>• Growth in ‘staycation’ market</li> <li>• Growth of and focus on cultural tourism, key role for museums</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited or absent specialist marketing skills</li> <li>• Limited workforce time for marketing work including maintaining social media, analysis of user feedback or surveys</li> <li>• Minimal research / knowledge about existing user and visitor base / non-users</li> <li>• Lack of statistical evidence to support advocacy case for economic benefit + relevance of museum sector</li> <li>• Low budgets for marketing</li> <li>• Reliance on established print promotion</li> <li>• Lack of developed branding for many museums</li> <li>• Limited development of online and social networking and lack of time to maintain</li> <li>• Limited age range for volunteers</li> <li>• Limited numbers of volunteers with professional skills</li> <li>• Patchy involvement in national initiatives</li> <li>• ‘Distant’ LA Press, PR and Tourism sections</li> <li>• Limited advocacy engagement with key stakeholders</li> <li>• Some resistance to customer service training</li> <li>• Limited engagement with wider tourist sector &amp; visitor economy</li> <li>• Limited sector-wide information on premises and amenities provision</li> </ul>

## 5.2 The challenges for the strategy

This overview of the sector highlights the opportunities and challenges of the changing world in which museums operate. There are clearly challenges for the strategy to address with a particular focus on:

- broadening audiences and challenging outdated or negative perceptions of museums
- increasing museums' capacity for carrying out audience development and marketing research and activities
- developing the sector's relationship to key stakeholders and partners who could help develop the market for museum visits

Paul Williams, whose comments on marketing were referred to in Section 2, has starkly stated the overall challenge to the museum sector:

*'Museums in the UK are in a state of transition and are facing a number of special challenges. Traditionally, museums have been important in gathering, preserving and studying historical objects and sites and have had a key educational role. But this is no longer sufficient to guarantee their survival. Nowadays modern museum managers must also understand, and more importantly, fully embrace the need to attract visitors and other customers<sup>34</sup>.'*

Alongside this need for museums to adopt a market facing approach is the need for them to engage with the wider political agenda, to demonstrate the benefit to communities of the work museums do, and the contribution they make to the economic benefit of attracting visitors to Wales.

This need for a wide-ranging marketing and advocacy approach presents a challenge to the museum sector in Wales for, whilst there are examples of museums doing all these things, including insightful user and non-user research<sup>35</sup>, most of the sector simply lacks the capacity and resources to develop a truly 'modern' approach to museum marketing. This would require museums to be enabled to:

- not just promote their collections and buildings or facilities, but also identify and address different audience segments and their needs, wants and attitudes
- have a marketing function which is not just about data gathering and publicity, but which is embedded as a shared philosophy across the whole service - with everyone involved and integrated into its strategic development and delivery
- recognise how the experience of the museum visit can be enriched for a variety of different visitors by increasing their direct engagement with the collections

At present, with some notable exceptions among the larger publicly funded and independent museums, this is a tall order given the numerous constraints on museums' resources, their premises and amenities.

---

<sup>34</sup> Paul Williams, A Modern Approach to Museum Marketing, Oct 2009, Tourism Insights website

<sup>35</sup> Amgueddfa Cymru, user and non user research, op cit

How to begin this task? From the analysis of museums in Wales today and the consultation undertaken for this strategy we can identify the following immediate tasks and challenges:

### **Challenges for audience development**

Museums will increasingly need to compete against other cultural and leisure attractions for visitors whose household budgets are likely to be under increasing pressure. To succeed, the strategy needs to assist museums to challenge the out-dated and negative perceptions that can act as barriers to visiting - particularly among younger people and C2DE socio-economic groups

Museums need to be encouraged and enabled to make much more efficient and effective use of online technology, recognising the importance of search engine optimisation and the growing role of mobile technology and social networking for providing information and 'word of mouth' recommendations to intending and potential visitors

Museums need to be promoted as offering a high quality and exciting visitor experience that can justify the charges that many museums need to make. They need to generate carefully targeted offers and marketing messages that can overcome visitor resistance to charging for entry or for services like education

Museums need to have access to better national and local audience data and to research into non-user perceptions, interests and needs if they and their partners are to understand what existing audiences value and want and to identify opportunities for developing new audiences and promoting the relevance of their offer to a widening range of potential visitors

### **Challenges for museums themselves**

Museums need to be encouraged and enabled to raise their level of marketing knowledge and expertise (including customer service training to improve the visitor experience) if they are to make more effective use of the very limited marketing resources they have

Museums could benefit considerably from a widening age and skill range among the volunteers who are absolutely vital to the sector and who could make a considerable contribution to improving the visitor experience and to marketing initiatives, including developing and maintaining social networking

## Challenges for the sector and its stakeholders

While not seeking to impose 'one size fits all' solutions, the strategy needs to address and overcome museum people's own doubts about the likely impact and effectiveness of a national audience development and marketing strategy across such a diverse sector. This needs to be achieved through adopting a strong partnership approach, based on the existing robust infrastructure of support for museums in Wales, through promoting the message that the sector is stronger by working together in partnership with key sectors such as the tourism and visitor market

Those implementing the strategy will need to work hard to make its initiatives and support seem relevant and accessible to smaller and less well-resourced museums as well as ensuring participation among other museums

Links to the national *Strategy for Museums in Wales 2010-15* need to be made explicit so that museum marketing maintains an important profile among key partners and decision-makers and the contribution of museums to the wider political, economic and social agenda is made clear

Meeting all these challenges is a medium to long-term project so we need to add **a further challenge for the strategy and those responsible for its implementation:**

The strategy needs to lay the basis for a sustainable and longer-term development of audience development and marketing within the museum sector beyond its limited time period whilst ensuring some 'quick wins' to achieve credibility and support.

## 6. Our strategy for museum marketing in Wales

### 6.1 A strategy for all museums and their partners

Museums in Wales exist as a very visible, and valuable, part of the wider cultural and heritage sector. They are a key component of both the visitor economy and the cultural provision for local communities across the nation providing stimulation, education and fun.

This audience development and marketing strategy seeks to strengthen and promote the important role that museums play. It is addressed to all museums in Wales and to their partners in government (national and local), in the visitor and tourism sector, in education and engaged in a range of community development and support activities.

The strategy seeks to meet the challenges we have found when consulting with museums and their partners. It seeks to support the work of the *Museum Strategy for Wales 2010 -2015* and to work in partnership with the considerable support infrastructure that already exists for museums in Wales.

### 6.2 The overall aims and what the strategy seeks to achieve

Our **overall aim is to increase the numbers and range of those visiting museums in Wales**, including those making online visits or working as volunteers.

But it is not just about increasing numbers. The strategy seeks to help promote the quality and vibrancy of what museums as a whole can offer and to raise awareness of the cultural, social, and economic benefits of deepening engagement with museums and their collections for everyone who lives in or visits Wales.

The strategy is based on a belief that the key to increasing visitor numbers lies in a range of factors including:

- increasing the satisfaction and enjoyment that each visitor gains from their museum 'visit', whether that is 'actual', on site or 'virtual', online, by understanding and responding to their needs
- applying basic marketing practices and concepts, such as market segmentation, and developing a clear and attractive 'brand' for each museum
- promoting a clear offer that appeals to target markets based on exploring the meaning and significance of the collections which are the heart and soul of museums
- promoting the benefits of volunteering in museums and maximising the opportunities for volunteers to contribute to customer satisfaction, marketing initiatives, and strengthening community engagement
- working in partnership with other museums and bodies, including tourism organisations, to raise the profile, attractiveness and accessibility of museums to important markets.

Working towards these broad aims, the **specific objectives of this strategy** are to:

- Improve the **effectiveness and impact of the resources** currently available for marketing museums (recognising that it may not be realistic for museums to substantially increase their current level of marketing expenditure)
- Build **sustainability into marketing skill development** and improved marketing work among museums beyond the limited time period of the strategy
- **Challenge the outdated views** about museums and other perceptual barriers that discourage a substantial proportion of local populations and tourists from visiting Welsh museums and using their resources (either actually or virtually online)
- **Raise the profile of museums** and the benefits that they deliver, to everyone in Wales and to visitors
- **Improve the strength and effectiveness** of all the compelling messages and stories that can be told by museums, directed at their various target audiences
- **Strengthen and extend partnership** working by museums so that they increase their level of recognition and value as an important element of the visitor economy

### 6.3 Two areas for the strategy to focus on

Research and consultation for this strategy with the museums in Wales and many of their partners strongly suggests three particular conclusions:

1. Despite the strength of much museum marketing and promotion to family, tourist and schools markets (among others) the limited and patchy available data on users and non-users nonetheless indicates a substantial proportion of potential visitors with negative or out-dated views of what a museum can provide by way of visitor experience and the benefits of museums
2. With only a few exceptions, marketing within museums takes place with very limited resources in terms of skills, understanding, workforce time and budget - and there is a clearly stated need within a considerable proportion of the sector for support in developing marketing skills and practice
3. The existing infrastructure for museums in Wales already provides valuable support and advice to the sector on many matters (as well as good online resources to support marketing and audience development work) and offers this national marketing strategy a strong array of potential partners.

Given these conclusions the strategy has identified two areas on which to focus:

#### **A: Building the capacity and sustainability of marketing work across all museums in Wales**

This will be aimed at the entire sector with the aim of improving and developing a strong set of audience development and marketing skills and practices and laying a foundation for sustainable

development of marketing in the future.

This programme of marketing support will be aimed at paid staff and volunteers from museums of all sizes and governance types and will be developed in partnership with the support and input of expert training providers, museums with good marketing practice and with museum support bodies and other stakeholders.

### **B: Promoting, profile raising, and advocating the benefits of museums across Wales today**

This will be aimed at raising awareness of the value of museums: the skills and scholarship of curators and the inspiration and satisfaction to be derived from museums' collections; their social, economic and cultural value and the enjoyable and stimulating experience they offer.

This programme will be aimed at the general public in Wales and visitors to Wales, and, importantly, at key funders and decision makers, as well as partners from outside the museum sector. It is also intended to promote the message to people working in museums that the very diverse museum sector will be made stronger by working together.

#### **6.4 Success will depend on working with partners**

Both these priority areas need to be underpinned by partnership working involving the national marketing team at Wrexham and partners both inside and external to the museum sector. The strategy will only be effective if the national marketing team has the active support and participation of the sector and its support infrastructure. Building this partnership approach should be guided by the notion of partnership as a 'two way street' so that in all cases the benefits of partnership input are clear to both or all parties involved. Establishing such mutual benefit will also strengthen the possibilities for partnership work to continue beyond the relatively short period covered by this strategy.

The strategy does not seek to replace the marketing efforts of individual museums but rather to underpin them with a strong evidence and resource base and to foster collaborative working where this strengthens individual effort.

It does not seek to identify specific market segments for individual museums but recognises that they already have, or will with training and support increasingly develop, a good understanding of their local market and its possibilities. It is intended that the strategy will increase the capacity of all museums to undertake this specific and locally based work to increase visitor numbers, both real and 'virtual', and to work to enrich their visitors' experience.

In the next section the strategy lists a range of marketing initiatives. It is intended that these will provide the basis for a focussed work programme to be carried out by the national marketing team in partnership with museums and their supporting bodies.

## 7. Making the strategy work

### 7.1 Working through partnership

Making our strategy work, so that museums across Wales can be genuinely stronger in their marketing efforts, will be achieved by working in partnership. The national marketing team based in Wrexham will work with museums, organisations working with and supporting museums, and with key partners beyond the museum sector - including those in the visitor and education sectors.

We have identified two key priority areas for intervention as the strategy is rolled out to support more proactive and effective audience development and marketing for museums in Wales:

#### **A: Building the capacity and sustainability of marketing work across all museums in Wales**

The strategy will work to build marketing and audience development capacity among museums through four initiatives:

##### **1: Training - helping make marketing effective and sustainable among museums in Wales**

This initiative seeks to help lay the foundation for more effective marketing among museums in Wales through the provision of accessible and attractive training.

##### **2: Supporting skill development and spreading good practice - developing and promoting online support**

The aim of this initiative is to work with key partners including AIM, the Federation of Museums and Art Galleries of Wales, Audiences Wales and UK bodies to collate information on online resources which can support the development of marketing in Wales and to actively encourage museums to make use of them.

##### **3: Volunteering - promoting the contribution that volunteering can make to museums in Wales**

This initiative seeks to strengthen the already invaluable contribution that volunteers make to the running and promotion of museums in Wales through promoting to potential volunteers and their support bodies the opportunities for widening the range and skills of volunteers and extending the ways in which they contribute to marketing and audience development.

##### **4: Researching user and non-user perceptions and needs - helping strengthen the basis for marketing in the future**

This initiative seeks to strengthen the basic market and visitor data for museum visiting in Wales and to develop understanding of non-visitor opinion and perceptions, so as to provide a better basis for future marketing work.

**B: Promoting, profile raising, and advocating the benefits of museums across Wales today**

The strategy will work to promote museums through five additional initiatives:

**5: Promoting museums to the visitor market through building relations with tourism and promotional bodies**

This initiative will strengthen the visibility of museums to tourists and day-visitors from inside and outside Wales, particularly those seeking information online on things to do in the area or in Wales as a whole.

**6: Promoting high profile Welsh Museum Awards**

In this initiative the national marketing team will work closely with partners to develop a regular set of awards that will reflect and showcase to the media and the general public the wide range of work undertaken by museums of all sizes and governance structures in Wales and the benefits museums deliver for society and the economy.

**7: Promoting selective, targeted engagement in a wide range of national initiatives.**

This initiative will promote the opportunities on offer to museums across Wales to participate in a range of Wales-wide and UK-wide initiatives and campaigns, that seek to extend and build audiences for cultural bodies.

**8: Delivering key advocacy messages for museums**

In this initiative the national marketing team will seek to promote a set of key advocacy messages aimed at challenging outmoded perceptions about what museums in contemporary Wales are and do.

**9: Developing media relations for the museum sector**

This initiative seeks to develop good media relations between the museum sector as a whole and the national media in Wales (and beyond).

In the following section these initiatives are briefly described with an indication of who the initiative is aimed at and the messages that can be used to promote the initiative to its audiences.

# A: Building the capacity and sustainability of marketing and audience development work across all museums in Wales

## 1: Training - helping make marketing effective and sustainable among museums in Wales

**This initiative seeks to help lay the foundation for more effective marketing among museums in Wales through the provision of accessible and attractive training.**

Many museums, particularly smaller ones, say they would benefit from basic marketing training. Others, even where they undertake considerable promotional work, often do so on the basis of very limited resources, and lack professional support or experience with marketing. With new developments like social networking and the use of mobile technology and new research highlighting user and non-user views and needs in the cultural sector, there is a need to lay the basis for a much improved and sustainable marketing effort across the museum sector. This should draw on recent research and marketing thinking and address the changing way in which users access cultural experiences.

Recent years have seen some excellent examples of training and resource development on marketing made available to museums in Wales. Museum participants expressed great satisfaction with the ACW funded training provided by Audiences Wales for example. This strategy proposes to facilitate further development of these training opportunities and resources and to make them as accessible as possible to all museums in Wales. This will be an initial step towards raising the standard and practice of marketing in museums in Wales and putting it on a sustainable basis. The aim is to support museums in allocating their limited marketing resources in the most effective way, whatever their market position, and to do so on the basis of good professional practice.

It is proposed that discussions take place with Audiences Wales and other potential partners to develop an extended training programme which can be promoted to and if possible partly subsidised for the museum workforce (paid or volunteers). Any subsidy for training from the central marketing budget should not rule out additional funding being sought including via sponsorship and other fundraising.

The training sessions could include issues like understanding the local and visitor markets, market segmentation, alignment of 'offer' to target audience requirements, the use of online and mobile technology in marketing, how to judge the effectiveness of this and other forms of marketing etc. The approach and content should be 'scalable' to ensure relevance to the needs of small museums or those with limited budgets. It would help if sessions could be arranged on a geographic basis across Wales to facilitate attendance and the use of teleconferencing and online access should also be explored.

The programme could include potential for the workforce, both paid staff and volunteers, to work towards achieving a recognised accreditation standard in marketing or customer service if required, for example through NVQs, or Chartered Institute of Marketing qualifications.

The training initiative should be linked to the second marketing initiative - promoting online resources and support - since training material should wherever possible be part of the online resources made available to museums to support marketing. Feedback from training sessions - with perhaps an early pilot series, should be used to develop the programme so that it fully meets the needs of museums.

**The target group** for this initiative would be all museums in Wales with particular emphasis on reaching and persuading smaller and independent museums of the benefits of the training. Larger and well resourced museums will still benefit from much of this training and they may also provide valuable case studies and examples of good practice.

**Marketing messages** to museums would:

- emphasise that the training sessions are specially developed for museums, including the smallest and least well resourced, and respond to clear messages given in developing the marketing strategy
- utilise feedback/testimonials from earlier sessions to promote to possibly reluctant participants saying how useful the training had been and how it adds value for continual professional development as well as being satisfying and fun
- emphasise the links with online support materials on marketing – including those generated as a specific outcome of the training programme itself
- promote any subsidy for attendance

## 2: Supporting skill development and spreading good practice - developing and promoting online support

**The aim of this initiative is to work with key partners including AIM, the Federation, Audiences Wales and UK bodies to collate information on resources which can support the development of marketing in Wales and to actively encourage museums to make use of them.**

One of the many strengths of the museum sector, in Wales and across the UK, is the range of opportunities to access online support material for skill development and for sharing and extending good practice. Not all museums are aware or are actively drawing on these resources, and many will have limited time to do so.

As training and other initiatives of this strategy get underway, the national marketing team should actively promote the inclusion of new marketing support material in online resources and should utilise their own e-newsletter, the CyMAL Current Awareness postings and the Federation's website Rhannu pages and other sites as appropriate to widen access to toolkits, training opportunities, volunteer support and examples of good practice within the sector. It might also be possible to develop partnership opportunities with Cardiff University and Futurelearn. These sites and discussion forums could also be an excellent source of good news stories about museum developments and should be actively monitored by the national marketing team.

The **target group** for this initiative will be all museums, particularly those smaller and independent museums that may not regularly access the current online resources or do not feel they have the time or interest to take advantage of online initiatives or toolkit and training resources.

**Marketing messages** to museums should include:

- Success stories highlighted by examples of good practice and training
- The range and quality of resources provided
- Ease of access and peer group support for using online resources and joining online activities
- Links with and support for the training programme promoted by the strategy

### 3: Volunteering - promoting the contribution that volunteering can make to museums in Wales

**This initiative seeks to strengthen the already invaluable contribution that volunteers make to the running and promotion of museums in Wales through promoting to potential volunteers and their support bodies the opportunities for widening the range of volunteers and extending the ways in which they contribute to marketing and audience development.**

Volunteers are already vital to Wales' museums, especially in the independent sector where they can be the bedrock for every aspect of the running of the museum as well as providing support for the paid and professional workforce. Volunteers are often older people, with years of work experience behind them, but not necessarily offering all the skills that museums need to operate in the modern world. Many museums could make better use of their existing volunteers and could also find it valuable to attract volunteers from a wider demographic, or with specific professional expertise to offer. It could also be hugely beneficial to offer volunteering opportunities to groups such as younger people seeking work experience or to enrich their CVs, and those within mentoring programmes and students.

Some museums have successfully developed volunteering support and good practice and the national WCVA and local volunteer centres can provide support to museums who might wish to develop work with volunteers. For example, museums might be encouraged to develop special projects to attract volunteers with professional skills who may be more willing to work on a time-limited marketing project on, for example, audience research. Existing volunteers could be included within marketing project work to help enrich their current volunteering experience.

The national marketing team should discuss with WCVA, AIM and the Federation how best they can assist promotion of volunteering in museums, for example by encouraging museums to contact and work with their local volunteer centres, and with educational and other bodies, and how they can ensure good management of volunteers and raise awareness of the resources that will be required for effective use of volunteers.

**The target group** for this initiative would be potential volunteers and their support bodies to promote the opportunities for increased museum volunteering, whether in the number of volunteers, specialist experience, a wider demographic or range of volunteering activity. Museums can be encouraged to develop and offer new forms of volunteering to a wide range of local people who might be attracted to volunteering opportunities with their local museum.

**A second target group** would be key decision makers at local or national level, and/or potential sponsors of programmes, who are seeking to promote volunteering and who should be made aware of both the existing level and value of volunteering in museums and the potential offered by this initiative to increase and enrich the work with volunteers, enhancing the benefits for individuals and the contribution to community well-being that museums are making.

**Marketing messages to volunteers and their support bodies** could include:

- Good news stories from museums about the contribution (including to marketing work) of volunteers
- The opportunities provided by key partners in the volunteering and educational and other sectors for support in attracting a wide range of volunteers
- The range of volunteering opportunities that could be utilised including special projects associated with audience development and marketing
- The support and training opportunities available and the potential for wider recognition (see Welsh Museum Awards below)
- Stories from volunteers and what they gained from their work

**Marketing messages to key decision-makers** and potential funders could include:

- How many volunteers are involved in museums, how essential they are to the sectors' continued health and how well the professional museum workforce copes with meeting their needs and learning requirements
- The benefits that individual volunteers gain in work experience, skills and CV development and life satisfaction
- The contribution that museums are making to community welfare through the careful management and support they offer through volunteering programmes and projects

#### 4: Researching user and non-user perceptions and needs - helping strengthen the basis for marketing in the future

**This initiative seeks to strengthen the basic market and visitor data for museum visiting in Wales and to develop understanding of non-visitor opinion and perceptions, so as to provide a better basis for future marketing work.**

Information on the pattern of visiting museums, on user needs and satisfaction levels and on the views of non-users and what keeps them as non-users to museums in Wales, is limited and patchy. Very little of it relates to the quality and nature of the experience of visitors and the barriers, perceptual or otherwise, that deter local people and tourists from outside Wales from including visits to museums in their leisure time or itinerary.

The Arts Council Wales/Audiences Wales Benchmarking pilot is an interesting experiment from which lessons have been learned about training for and implementing this sort of survey - including providing training for those leading survey work and ensuring that skills are cascaded to all the workforce. The recent BritainThinks report commissioned by the Museums Association and partners, including CyMAL, provides fascinating insights into what both visitors and non-visitors value about museums.

These excellent initiatives should be built on to help provide a more consistent and sophisticated body of data which can be drawn on by museums in developing their marketing work.

A carefully planned, survey programme, and further focus group work, could help develop understanding of non-museum visitors and of tourists and day trippers who don't currently visit museums. It could help identify what might encourage these non-visitors to visit museums or to participate in cultural activities or experiences.

Some museums, including of course Amgueddfa Cymru and the National Trust, have considerable experience of developing and commissioning audience research work and their advice and input would be invaluable alongside that of CyMAL, ACW and Audiences Wales. It may be possible also to draw in one or other of the Universities or education centres which specialise in visitor or market research work.

It is proposed that CyMAL lead a discussion with potential partners to develop a programme that will produce quantitative and qualitative data of most use to museums as a whole in their understanding of their markets and visitor needs and to explore how this can be made accessible to museums for use in developing their own marketing efforts.

**The target group** for this initiative would be a group of museum stakeholders as well as other bodies involved in undertaking or commissioning relevant research work into cultural activities and the visitor economy.

**A second target group** would be the museum sector - informing them that research was being undertaken and securing participation and support.

**Marketing messages to museums and partners in the visitor economy** would include:

- The insights into user and non-users, their perceptions, needs and the quality of their visiting experience that will be gained from surveys that sample the 3.5m visitors each year to museums of every size and type across Wales
- The benefits to museums and tourism bodies of greater understanding of user and non-users expectations and views
- The promotional opportunities and advocacy gains for museums and for national partners, including local and national government, from publishing results of well-designed surveys
- The professional benefits, necessity even, of measuring the impact of marketing investment over the long term

## **B: Promoting, profile raising, and advocating the benefits of museums across Wales today.**

### **5: Promoting museums to the visitor market through building relations with tourism and promotional bodies**

**This initiative aims to strengthen the visibility of museums to tourists and visitors from inside and outside Wales, particularly those seeking information online on things to do in the area or in Wales as a whole.**

Tourists, from within and outside Wales, are an important market for all museums. Museums offer both enjoyment and cultural stimulation to a wide range of visitors from family groups to cultural tourists. Yet many bodies working in the tourism economy, such as the regional tourism partnerships, would welcome greater involvement with the museum sector. Museums currently have variable connections with local, regional and national bodies and groups promoting Wales to tourists.

Tourists and day-visitors are increasingly using web sites as their source of information on possible activities, and accessing them by mobile devices like smart phones and tablets. In many cases, tourism promotion sites will be prominent in many online searches for activities either nationally or within an area - whilst local museum web sites may be harder to find.

The opportunity exists for representatives of local museums to forge stronger and more productive links with visitor and tourism partners and to enrich the tourist offer through promoting local museums.

This initiative will first seek to build relationships between museums and tourism bodies (for example representatives of local museums may attend meetings and assist the work of their local and regional tourism bodies) and through this seek to ensure greater access to museums by tourists.

The national marketing team will seek to secure agreement for existing visitor and other tourism websites to carry a regular 'Museum story of the month' with a picture and headline in a prominent position that links to a regularly changing, engaging 'good news' story. These stories should celebrate museums and the unexpected range of their activities, the enjoyable and stimulating experience they offer visitors, the quality and helpfulness of the workforce and the deep resources of knowledge and expertise they hold and share. Each story should provide a live link to the originating museum's own website and aim to stimulate further virtual exploration and actual visits to museums.

Securing this exposure for monthly museum stories will require the national marketing team to lead on careful negotiation with the tourism sector as well as sourcing, shaping and supplying a lively stream of stories.

**The target groups** for this initiative will be first the national, regional and local groupings formed to promote Wales to tourists and secondly all Welsh museums – encouraging them to get more involved with their local, regional and national tourist bodies as appropriate.

**The marketing messages** to promote greater involvement and visibility to the visitor market could include:

- The mutual value of partnership working to increase the attractiveness of museums in Wales to tourists and day-visitors
- The wide range of unexpected and fun activities available at museums
- Museums are everywhere and available to everyone living in or visiting Wales
- Museums have changed and offer exciting and enjoyable new experiences which are relevant to our lives today
- How museum users can access and benefit from the high standards and variety of expertise, knowledge and skills and the sheer enthusiasm of curators, learning and outreach officers and volunteers in Welsh museums today
- How visitors were surprised or delighted by something they saw or experienced

## 6: Promoting high profile Welsh Museum Awards

**In this initiative the national marketing team will work closely with partners to develop a regular set of awards that will reflect and showcase to the media and the general public the wide range of work undertaken by museums of all sizes and governance structures in Wales and the benefits museums deliver for society and the economy.**

A high profile series of Welsh Museum Awards will recognise and celebrate the successes and contribution that museums make to life in Wales and to its image outside the country. The awards should have the explicit aim of creating a positive image for museums. This must be targeted at the media and the general public as a whole, but most particularly to those who do not currently consider visiting museums. The awards should avoid any sense of a sector congratulating itself to itself, but be directed at a varied public and wide range of stakeholders.

Stakeholder bodies may already be considering awards either for museums alone or along with a range of cultural bodies and it is hoped this initiative could help bring together and press forward these discussions through the formation of a working party which could be serviced by the Wrexham based marketing team.

The proposed awards scheme should aim for a high level of professionalism both in the conception, planning, judging, presentation and promotion. It will need to achieve wide support across the museum sector and recognition of the awards' value and integrity among partners and stakeholders. As with the 'Museum stories of the month' referred to above, the awards scheme should be designed to appeal to the public and to achieve widespread coverage in all media.

There could be many ideas for the shape of the awards. Rather than featuring a single 'museum of the year' the awards scheme should include several carefully designed categories and aim to promote museum work which, for example: provides exciting and informative visitor experiences; offers involvement for local communities and volunteers; offers stimulating out-of-the-classroom learning experiences; and promotes Wales to tourists.

Care will need to be taken to ensure the award scheme is genuinely inclusive and celebrates all that is great and exciting among all museums in Wales. This may mean including categories that particularly focus on the smaller and less well resourced museums whilst others would be relevant to all museums - including of course Amgueddfa Cymru. Awards could recognise, for example: new displays; best temporary exhibition; community links and volunteering; education initiatives; best promotional campaign; positive visitor feedback; an excellent project on a limited budget (emphasising the excellence); best partnership project involving an Amgueddfa Cymru site; or a 'People's Choice' award with online voting.

Award winners can be widely promoted on museum, tourism and other web-sites. Experience from models elsewhere in the UK, for example the East Midlands region, indicate that the national marketing team and individual museums should be able to use the awards process to secure good media coverage at each stage of the process: launch; long listing; short listing and the actual awards.

Sponsors could be sought for the various categories and the active support and involvement of Amgueddfa Cymru, AIM and the Federation should be sought in their development. Awards could be annual or biennial and might be linked to other award schemes or be stand-alone.

An extensive period of discussion, planning, negotiation and fundraising will be required for these awards and it will be important to find a way of placing them on a sustainable organisational and financial basis. It is hoped that the awards will draw on the active support of key partners in their development, organisation and promotion.

**The target groups** for this initiative will include the key museum stakeholders in the first instance who will need to develop the proposal for the awards and seek a sustainable basis for them. Once the awards are established their promotion will be directed at all museums, especially to encourage and support participation from smaller and more isolated ones, museum visitors and those who do not visit, stakeholders at local, regional and national level, and the Welsh and UK media. Promotion of the awards will be to as wide a range of the general public and of stakeholders as possible.

**The marketing messages** should include:

- Museums' contribution to our cultural life deserves to be celebrated and recognised
- Museums in Wales are exciting and innovative places and centres of great knowledge and expertise
- Welsh Museums are at the cutting edge
- Even small and local museums are providing exciting experiences for everyone – visitors and workforce - and provide good value

## 7: Promoting selective, targeted engagement in a wide range of national initiatives

**This initiative will promote the opportunities for museums in Wales to participate in national promotions that seek to extend and build audiences for cultural bodies. It will then publicise the benefits to museums, who might be reluctant to get involved, and promote good news stories from museums who do participate.**

A wide range of Wales-wide and UK-wide initiatives and promotional opportunities are on offer to Welsh museums. This strategy does not suggest that the national marketing team should generate any new 'Wales only' events or programmes.

Museums across Wales differ considerably in the extent to which they participate in existing Wales and UK wide museum or cultural initiatives. Many do participate, choosing initiatives that play to their strengths as an organisation or the content of their collections. They benefit from these initiatives as they provide a ready branded and promoted vehicle for raising their profile and sometimes reach audiences who would not otherwise engage with museums at all. In other cases, however, museums do not feel able to devote their limited resources to participation or do not see their relevance.

National initiatives provide an opportunity for museums to promote themselves to new and wider audiences. It is proposed that the national marketing team should act to make known and promote a full range of these opportunities so that individual museums can assess when and where involvement will be beneficial to them. It is recognised that not all museums will take part in all initiatives. It is recognised that this needs to be tackled sensitively so that a 'one size fits all' approach is not assumed but that museums need to be fully informed of the opportunities available to them and actively encouraged and helped to participate where relevant.

The national marketing team, as well as ensuring museums are aware of the initiatives and the potential benefits, should actively collate feedback from museums on their participation and share lessons and good news stories so that other museums can consider their own future involvement.

These initiatives are also likely to provide opportunities for partnership working between museums and more widely across the cultural and heritage sector. Many museums are already closely linked to libraries, archives and galleries and others might be linked on a local or regional basis to undertake joint work with other cultural partners such as the National Trust or the Art Fund. The upcoming activities around WW1 are already a focus for cross-sector working and other opportunities should be sought.

**The target groups** for this initiative will be all museums, their workforce and their governing bodies and also potential local partners for example libraries, archives, galleries and visitor attractions.

**The marketing messages** could include:

- Museums and their collections have a unique relevance to their local communities and the development of the community
- Museums can be a means to join in some great local, regional, national and UK wide events
- Museums are accessible and open to all
- Museums offer a surprising range of fun activities to suit all and are relevant to our lives today
- You can benefit from joint ticketing or joint promotional offers that many museums make

## 8: Delivering key advocacy messages for museums

**In this initiative the national marketing team will seek to channel a set of key advocacy messages aimed at challenging outmoded perceptions about what museums in contemporary Wales are and do.**

For the museum sector in Wales and across the UK as a whole it is clear that audience development and marketing needs to be underpinned by advocacy – the promotion of key messages about the exciting diversity of what museums do and the audiences they serve.

Both as part of marketing to current non-visitors and as a basis for partnership building with the tourism sector, local authorities and others, it is critical to update people's understanding of the richly stimulating experience that museums have to offer to people with widely differing backgrounds, interests and needs and to stress museums' particular relevance to people's sense of place and community. It is important that the work of the national marketing team serves to promote museums' contribution to formal and informal life-long learning and skills development and to Wales' local, regional and national economy – especially through tourism. Wherever possible these messages need to be backed by both hard statistical and engaging anecdotal evidence.

The Federation of Art Galleries and Museums in Wales' 'Advocacy Strategy 2011–2014' and 'Advocacy Toolkit' for Welsh museums were published in 2011 and cite the definition included by the Museums Association in its 2010 'Love Museums' advocacy campaign materials:

*Advocacy is the process whereby an organisation seeks to influence others in order to gain support for its mission, interests or course of action. In order to achieve this, networks of support are developed and used to lend credibility, wield influence and offer third-party endorsement.*

*There are two main ways in which advocacy is considered and undertaken:*

**1) As a form of political communication used to influence political decision-making.** *It might be undertaken in order to influence funding settlements, policy, legislation etc. With the reputation of lobbyists in decline, many believe advocacy has become a 'softer' and more acceptable way to refer to political communications.*

**2) As a form of stakeholder communications.** *Stakeholders are broadly defined as "any group or individual who can affect and is affected by the achievement of the organisation's objectives" (Freeman, 1984). Advocacy, where it is focused towards stakeholders, is an approach that would view political decision-makers as just one of the many groups potentially interested in a museum's mission, interests or course of action.*

*The stakeholder approach to advocacy takes a broader view, and recognises that many different groups, with differing interests, are involved in making decisions and wielding influence. It also allows museums to undertake advocacy at different levels – from building relationships with a local authority to demonstrating the value of a museum's work to community leaders.*

The key advocacy messages identified by the Federation are:

1. Museums empower people through education and inspiration
2. Collections in museums help communities to regenerate and forge their identity
3. Museums contribute to the economy

A series of supporting statements for these are expanded in the Toolkit:

See: <http://welshmuseumsfederation.org/index.php?page=advocacy>

The MA's 'Love Museums' campaign materials provide statistics and analysis to support advocacy messages around visiting (visiting figures and satisfaction levels), communities, tourism, and economic benefit.

See: <http://www.museumsassociation.org/campaigns/love-museums>

### **Some key messages for the national marketing team to promote are:**

- **People value museums.** Visitor numbers are high, and increasing, and visitor satisfaction levels are good. As evidenced by the Museums Association's 2013 'Public Perceptions' research<sup>36</sup>, even non-visitors value museums' role in caring for and preserving national and local heritage and trust them as repositories and sharers of knowledge and expertise.
- **Museums are relevant.** Their role has changed over time and never more so than in the last 10–15 years. As well as their traditional role of collecting, preserving and sharing rich collections and related information, museums now play an increasing role in supporting both local and dispersed communities (including online 'virtual' communities).
- **Museums strengthen people's sense of heritage and place.** Welsh museums, from small independents to the largest nationals, have a key role to play in supporting Welsh people's engagement with their heritage and their sense of place. This can be very local – with small local museums in particular holding collections at the heart of the communities for which they have the most deeply resonant meaning and value.
- **Museums can be catalysts for regeneration** through the creation of new venues and civic spaces.
- **Museums provide exciting spaces for formal and informal learning** offering alternative, out-of-the-classroom experiences that challenge and engage young people and learners of all ages.
- **Museums support skills development.** Through encouraging participative practice (e.g. co-curation of exhibitions) and working with community groups and individual volunteers and work placements, museums can offer a resource and 'safe space' for developing people's skills and confidence both for the workforce and the community.
- **Museums are good for business and support the tourism economy.** They showcase the best of the nation's history and culture to the widest possible audiences. They attract ever-greater numbers of tourists through their doors. Through the money they spend these museum visitors deliver economic benefits to local economies.

<sup>36</sup> Public perceptions of and attitudes to the purposes of museums in society: A report prepared by BritainThinks for Museums Association, Britain Thinks, Museums Association, 2013  
[http://www.museumsassociation.org/news/03042013-public-attitudes-research-published?utm\\_source=ma&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=03042013](http://www.museumsassociation.org/news/03042013-public-attitudes-research-published?utm_source=ma&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=03042013)

- **Public expenditure on culture is a small fraction of overall government spending, but reaps dividends.** Museums are both part of and support the creative and cultural industries. The sector as a whole, and most individual museums, operate on a mixed economy model drawing on a variety of income streams, including not just public funding, but private investment, individual giving and earned income. A level of public subsidy remains vital to the on-going success of the sector and public support for this funding remains high. Museums and galleries generate meaningful economic benefits, through areas such as jobs, tourism, inward investment and regeneration. This economic return often levers significantly higher economic benefits - putting more in than it takes out. Museums and galleries are a sound investment.

And a key message for the museum sector itself is that is it stronger when working together.

**Target groups.** The advocacy message should underpin everything that the marketing team does, informing: press releases aimed at the media and general public; partnership building with the tourism industry, the wider heritage sector and education bodies who provide important markets for museums; as well as communication with local and national politicians and all local, regional and national individuals and bodies who set policy or provide resources for cultural provision.

## 9: Developing media relations for the museum sector

**This initiative seeks to develop good media relations between the museum sector as a whole and the national media in Wales (and beyond). Developing good media relations will be vital to delivering the advocacy message and individual newsworthy stories effectively at national level.**

Most local and regional museums have useful, productive relationship with their local media, enabling them to place stories regularly in the local press or on local radio. However, they struggle to interest the national media or local TV. This initiative seeks ways to broaden the national media's awareness of and links with the museum sector as a whole and increase the capacity and ability of local museums to access national media contacts.

Amgueddfa Cymru invests in a national marketing, press and communications team and has built strong, but carefully nuanced relationships with national press and media contacts. There is potential for Amgueddfa Cymru to offer advice to the national marketing team and to support the team's developing its own contact base.

As well as ensuring that projects involving partnership between local museums and Amgueddfa Cymru always get promoted to the national media, it might occasionally be appropriate for Amgueddfa Cymru to lead on stories that draw on the work of museums across Wales and reinforce the nationals' own advocacy message by demonstrating the social, economic and cultural value of the museum sector as a whole.

The regular online 'Museum stories of the Month' initiative (see above) will provide a helpful mechanism for the national marketing team to source and promote stories of potential national interest to the national media. It is vital that stories should be selected that illustrate the key advocacy messages listed below.

**The target groups** for this initiative will be all national media, traditional and online

**Marketing messages** could include:

- Examples of how museums are contributing to local or national social, economic and cultural priorities enhancing people's lives
- Unusual or exciting developments and newsworthy stories relating to collections, donations, finds or exhibitions of more than local interest
- New developments in museums particularly relating to technology

## 8. Implementing the strategy

### 8.1 The national marketing team

The national marketing team based in Wrexham will be responsible for implementing this audience development and marketing strategy for museums in Wales. They will do so over a three year programme of work which is set out in outline in the attached Implementation Plan. The current team at Wrexham are:

- Nicola Williams, the Marketing Project Officer, (3 days per week)
- Jane Purdie, Marketing Project Officer (full time)
- Bethan Richards, Marketing Assistant (full time)

This team and its work is funded by CyMAL and hosted by Wrexham County Borough Council. They have been working on marketing campaigns on behalf of libraries since 2006 and more recently on archives in Wales. Wrexham County Borough Council has bid successfully to continue hosting the team and supporting Wales-wide marketing for libraries, archives and museums during 2013-14 – and in principle until 2016. CyMAL will continue to make decisions on budget allocation between the three domains in line with decisions on their own budget by the Welsh Government.

### 8.2 Opportunities for the central marketing team

Bringing the marketing work on museums together with the ongoing work on libraries and archives will facilitate learning from the experience already gained as well as ensuring that opportunities for cross-domain working are fully exploited.

There are substantial differences between the Welsh museum sector and the country's library and archives sectors. Notwithstanding internal diversities (e.g. between the public library sector and university libraries) both libraries and archives are more homogeneous as a whole than the museums. The team's work in supporting the museum sector presents some serious challenges, but also great opportunities. In particular, there is considerable potential for the team to collaborate with some of the key bodies that currently support the Welsh museum sector as well as with the wider tourism sector as they develop marketing support work in a number of new and innovative ways.

The national marketing team will be challenged to undertake a number of roles which include:

- **A wider role in partnership liaison and securing input from key stakeholders**, especially tourism bodies, Amgueddfa Cymru, National Trust, AIM and the Federation
- **Searching for sponsorship** and negotiating partner hosting and support as part of the work supporting development of Welsh Museum Awards
- **Building press and media links and building effective links with the tourism sector** including Visit Wales and the Regional Tourism Partnerships
- **Building a network to receive and celebrate success stories** so that good practice and good experience examples are available to all and can be used for initiatives such as the Museum Story of the Month

- **Promoting greater use of capacity building resources and opportunities** across the sector (e.g. training, sharing examples of innovation, new approaches to marketing and data collection) and seeing these increasingly adopted across the sector
- **Engaging museums with libraries and archives** in roll out of library and archive marketing strategies and encouraging joint participation, where appropriate, in national initiatives

Meeting these challenges with imagination and energy will be absolutely essential if this strategy is to make a real contribution to the marketing of museums in Wales. The team will deserve and require the full support of key partners who themselves have important contributions to make.

An immediate requirement will be for the national marketing team to establish their own profile and regular communication with the sector. This should be partially achieved by using the channels of communication already established by key partners: the Federation, AIM and CyMAL through its Current Awareness e-mailings.

It is also proposed that the national marketing team establish their own regular e-newsletter to a database which includes all museums in Wales, relevant stakeholder bodies and partners. The team should use this to provide regular updates as implementation of the strategy progresses and to obtain feedback from the sector.

### **8.3 Evaluation of the Strategy**

It will be important to both 'prove' and 'improve' the work undertaken by the national marketing team. The team will need to ensure that monitoring takes place of all the programme activities outlined in the Implementation Plan. The evidence and data collected will be used for interim evaluation of each programme and the results will be shared with key stakeholders so that changes can be made as necessary.

It is suggested that the collected data and interim evaluation reports should form the basis for an overall evaluation of this audience development and marketing strategy, to be commissioned not later than six months before the end of the strategy period in 2015-2016, to inform the development of any successor strategy.

### **8.4 Implementation Plan**

A separate Implementation Plan has been prepared and will be used as the basis for the initial work plan of the Wrexham based team. It will be reviewed each year and revised plans set for subsequent years.

## Appendices

### (As separate document)

- A. Commission Brief
- B. Interviewees and staff at Wrexham CBC
- C. National Museum Strategy Steering Group members
- D. Selected list of published documents consulted
- E. List of potential partner organisations
- F. National initiatives, programmes and events
- G. Sources and Resources