**CIfA draft response:**

**Questions:**

1. **Over and above core funding, what do you think are the top three challenges for museums and galleries in England over the next decade and how could these be addressed? Please write in a challenge in each box on the left and on the right indicate how it could be addressed.**

Answer: 3 challenges & ways they can be addressed

1. Addressing the crisis in archaeological archives storage

* Experience in the sector shows that there is a lack of capacity in museums stores that many counties are incapable of receiving archaeological archives, leading to a huge backlog held by archaeological contractors. This leads to problems with degradation of the condition of artefacts as well as to a lack of access, which restricts the public benefit of archives. We commend the recent research undertaken by the Society of Museum Archaeologists to the Review in support of this claim.
* This is a complex issue which will involve national and local government and the sector committing to tackling current problems by: (1) investigating new models for, among other things, regional storage centres, possibly connected to the Major Partner Museums (MPM) scheme, (2) ensuring that planning policy is sufficient to ensure developer funding for archaeological work includes sustainable storage costs, and (3) seriously considering the extent to which selection and retention strategies for archives can be updated to take advantage of better digital recording, and greater selectivity. Work is currently being undertaken within the sector, supported by Arts Council England, to research these issues, but collective will among all government and sector partners to enable solutions to be successful will be necessary.

In a maritime context archiving is a particularly pressing problem. There are no receiving museums for large areas of the marine zone and there is generally a lack of clear responsibility for maritime material. Establishing a national network of receiving museums would be the most sensible route to overcoming this issue, with the potential to use new schemes such as the Marine Antiquities Scheme to establish a network of receiving museums.

1. Lack of specialist expertise to curate collections and facilitate access

* In addition to physical storage, a large and growing proportion of museums which curate archaeological archives do not have staff with the specialist knowledge required to curate archaeological archives. This issue could be addressed through greater cooperation and skills sharing across museums networks, possibly facilitated by national funding schemes for MPMs. Other solutions associated with regional storage centres may also bring benefits in this area.

1. Funding cuts causing threat of closure of museums, most prominently local authority museums

* A national response is required to address the issue of the value of local and regional museums in the context of the current trend towards the closure of valued local institutions, particularly those affected by cuts to local authority budgets. A joined-up approach between the sector and government to consider whether the role of local authority funded museums is necessarily changing, in the light of new economic conditions, is needed. This could see the production of support systems to guide local authorities through the process of effectively protecting the public value created by museums by, for example, advising on building shared services, or providing guidelines for the sustainable transfer of local authority museums to independent Trusts or other sustainable operational models can be achieved, without damaging public benefit in the long term.

1. **Over and above core funding, what do you think are the top three opportunities for museums and galleries in England over the next decade and how could these be best exploited? Please write in an opportunity in each box on the left and on the right indicate how it could be exploited.**

Answer: top 3 opportunities & ways they could be exploited

1. Research and develop Shared service models for libraries, archives, and museums

* Research is already underway into issues relating to planning archaeology and museums and public engagement. An example of this is the ‘Seeing the light of day’ project being undertaken by Wiltshire Museum. This project seeks to produce guidance and investigate options, such as remote storage, for areas where archives cannot be deposited.

1. Develop better support for local authorities to enable transformation to sustainable service models
   * There is a worrying trend towards the closure of local authority museums, as councils seek to meet difficult budgetary demands. There is an urgent need for stronger guidance to ensure that any necessary process of transformation can be made with the long term interest of the public assets in mind. For example, to ensure that potential options are explored and any transfer of management or short-term closures is planned effectively and that other obligations – for example, those relating to recent lottery funding – are understood.
2. Greater cooperation between museums and wider partners

* Museums are institutions which are well disposed to working with wider partners due to their unique civic and educational position. An example of a fruitful area for partnerships may be with universities, where museums offer the chance to achieve and demonstrate impact in a variety of ways, including through outreach and education. University involvement also brings the potential for diversified funding for museums. A strong historic example is the Pitt Rivers museum, which has been a part of Oxford University since its creation, with museum staff closely involved with teaching. Other institutions, such as the Museum of London regularly work with research students to undertake work within the museum collections.

1. **What do you think needs to be done to ensure the financial sustainability of the museums and galleries sector in England over the next decade?**

* National government must champion the value of local museums and seek to relieve local authority budgets through reforms for greater tax relief and support for philanthropy, and corporate giving for non-national museums. The sector must continue to work to produce the necessary evidence to guide changes (see for example, current research undertaken by Wilshire Museums (http://www.wiltshiremuseum.org.uk/news/index.php?Action=8&id=186&page=0). Government and the sector (supported by government advisors such as English Heritage and national lottery distributors) must work together to encourage and enable (through seed funding, if necessary) ever greater models for organisational resilience developed at local government level.

1. **Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statement: “Government should fund museums and galleries”:**

Answer: Agree strongly

1. **We know that a lot of excellent work is already going on throughout the museums and galleries sector in England. We would welcome examples of recent best practice in the following areas:**

Areas:

***a. Partnership working, including with museums, cultural, education and business sectors***

The museum development network has been an important approach to partnership working across the country since Renaissance in the Regions (funded by the Museums Libraries and Archives Council) 2002. Although the Renaissance programme no longer runs and coverage across the UK is no longer comprehensive, where museum development teams remain, funded by Arts Council England, they form a vital support for local museums seeking accreditation, wider capacity-building, skills and knowledge-sharing, and funding possibilities and, where MDOs are part of MPMs, create a tangible link between larger institutions and more local communities. This is an important scheme to highlight given this consultation’s arbitrary focus on accredited museums. Many unaccredited museums, including those in the process of seeking accreditation, are extremely innovative and make valuable contributions to local communities and economies. There is a responsibility on national institutions to support these institutions in order to encourage excellence and sustainability.

***b. Shared services, including storage and conservation***

There are a variety of ways which museums can share services – whether operating within trusts or museums services which streamline management and infrastructure across different sites,

However, a key area where sharing resources is necessary is in the area of storage of archaeological archives. The use of shared ‘outstores’ by museums is one likely way to find a solution to this problem. An exemplar is the DeepStore facility within a former salt mine in Winsford, Cheshire which although a private business and not a shared service, is used by a number of museums across the country and provides a long term solution to storage space issues. This is not *best* practice, in itself, but is a potential indicator of where future potential lies for more sustainable storage. The Deepstore facility has a huge potential capacity. A multilateral approach to the exploration of the use of similar regional storage facilities, possibly operated through shared responsibility of local authorities or independent museums and trusts, could provide a solution to the storage crisis, if funding models are secured through the planning process which would be sufficient to maintain centres, and seed funding for the establishment of such sites was delivered through national or local budgets.

***c. Diversifying income, including from commercial activities, fundraising and sponsorship***

Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives are an excellent example of a service which produces significant earned income through external project work, sufficient to enable the maintenance of a range of skills within the service. The result of this type of diversification is that the cost of the cultural programme in Bristol is equivalent to £10.36 per head of the population (DCLG – Local authority revenue expenditure and financing figures) – significantly less than other major cities in the UK.

Bristol Council was also the first local authority to sign a public memorandum of understanding with Arts Council England in an effort to improve knowledge sharing, efficiency measures, and access to funding.

It is deeply concerning, therefore, that cuts to local authorities are driving decisions to cut even this exemplary service and undo much good work to build a largely sustainable and high quality service.

***d. Digital including collections management, digital services and programming***

No comment

***e. Programming including exhibitions, education and outreach***

No comment

***f. Diversifying workforce and/or audiences***

The HLF’s Skills for the Future programme has delivered huge benefits to the sector in terms of providing the structures and the funding necessary to expand in-work training across the sector and, particularly, to open up opportunities to a more diverse workforce.

1. **Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the wider museums and galleries sector in England and how it could be better supported by government or other statutory bodies, including the Arts Council England, Heritage Lottery Fund and Local Authorities?**

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Given the unique nature of archaeological issues in the museums sector, we strongly recommend that representatives of the sector are selected to be added to the register of interested parties. It would be extremely valuable to have the opportunity to present oral evidence to the Review in future stages. In addition to our own perspective, we commend the research and expertise of the Society of Museum Archaeologists, Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers, and the government’s lead advisor, Historic England.

1. **We would like to know a bit more about the museum, gallery or sector body you work for or volunteer with. Do you represent a:**

* Other (please specify) 🡪 Professional Institute

1. **We would really like to know which organisation, museum or sector body you work with.  Please write in below, but if you would rather respond anonymously do leave blank.**

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

1. **If you would be willing to be recontacted to discuss your responses to this survey please provide your contact details below.**

Rob Lennox