

24 October 2016

Bethan Jenkins, MA
Chair
Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee
The National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Dear Ms Jenkins

Randerson Report

Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS) is aware of the recommendations of the Randerson Report by PricewaterhouseCoopers and the proposed options, including Option 4, to merge several heritage bodies.

MGS is the national development body for the sector in Scotland, representing the interests of some 450 museums and galleries across the country. Our role is to support and enable the sector to meet their objectives through strategic investment, advice, advocacy and skills development opportunities. With this in mind, while we welcome the sentiment of greater collaboration expressed in Option 1, we feel the proposals from the Welsh Government could set an alarming precedent for the management and administration of heritage in Wales in the context of Option 4.

A particular barrier to the Option 4 model of merger is the contrasting purpose and functions of the four institutions. The National Library of Wales in particular is a very different function to that of the National Museum of Wales as the main custodians of cultural identity. MGS considers that due to these very different purposes, the legal merger of these distinct entities would, in practice, be far more disruptive, complex, time-consuming and costly than the economics of scale sought by this merger. We feel such a process would be unduly expensive when alternative options exist around achieving greater efficiencies through collaboration and partnership.

MGS is not aware that public consultation on the proposals has been undertaken or, indeed, in depth and specific engagement with the sector. Evaluating outcomes and risk assessment of the likely impact of the proposals would be best served through consideration by those professionals directly involved in the sector and with both the knowledge and first-hand experience of the unique circumstances and environment in which museums and galleries operate.

For these reasons, MGS encourages the Committee to examine the Welsh Government's proposals and alternative models available to preserve the functions of these institutions which does not serve to compromise their objectives and independence from government.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joanne Orr". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial 'J'.

Joanne Orr
Chief Executive