

Museums Galleries Scotland and Museums Association response to the Scottish Government's National Adaptation Plan consultation

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Section 1: Lived and Local Experience

1. What do you think the current effects of climate change are on people in Scotland?

Extreme weather events have already led to temporary museum closures and cancelled events. The Highland Folk Museum has detailed to us the destruction of the newly restored Woodsman's Wagon in 2022 with Storm Arwen when over 300 trees came down within their pinewood. This also led to a drop in visitor numbers as their township area, popular with overseas tourists, had to remain closed for safety for half the season. The increase in extreme weather events and warnings reduce safety of travel and reliability of public transport to reach cultural venues. Museums and galleries are increasingly being used as cool and warm spaces for community members to shelter from extreme weather.



2. What effects, if any, do you expect climate change will have on people in Scotland over the next five years?

Extreme weather and flooding are likely to increase. Climate anxiety is likely to continue rising and government, public bodies, and the culture sector must respond in a way that inspires action and supports Scotland's people through the ensuing mental health implications.

The medium to long-term consequences of climate change on the people in Scotland are likely to be devastating – from rising sea levels to food and water insecurity and economic disruption.

Climate change is not just an ecological and scientific issue, it's social, political, and ethical. Climate change will affect different people and places unevenly, leading to new and further inequalities and social injustice. When taking climate action, we must meaningfully centre climate justice to address these inequalities.

3. What actions, if any, would you be willing and able to take to adapt to climate change?

Many museums are keen to install renewable energy sources, improve insulation, reduce energy usage through newer systems, and use only local producers and suppliers for materials, cafe food, and products in the shop.

We are encouraging museums to embed climate action across all decision-making and processes. Many museums are already focusing on having a net positive impact and making sure their organisation's footprint is as low as it can go. We encourage museums to commit to targets for reducing energy and water consumption, waste, and carbon emissions. Museums can look at their supply chains and reduce their scope 2 and 3 emissions.

Museums can raise awareness about climate change to encourage their audiences as communities to take action. For example, in 2023 St Andrews University Museum's exhibition, *For Peatlands' Sake*, explored how important the peatlands are to tackling the climate crisis and encouraged visitors to make lifestyle decisions that help protect the peatlands.



Museums can also work with partners to implement regenerative policies in their local area. The Scottish Crannog Centre can be seen as a strong example of this, working with Forestry and Land Scotland to plant and coppice hazel for traditional buildings. High Life Highland has also been using the storm damage to the closely planted shallow root plantation pine on their land to enable the planting of more stable native trees such as rowan and birch.

4. What factor(s), if any, would prevent you from taking action to adapt to climate change and become more climate-resilient?

Museums and galleries are unable to do much of the above due to limited funding and staff capacity. The Capital Resilience funds with Museums Galleries Scotland are always over-subscribed and as there is no dedicated funding available for capital work and maintenance, it is difficult to ensure the sector can take strategic action on becoming climate resilient, despite the fact that the majority of museums and galleries are housed in historic and vitally important listed buildings. Strategic investment in de-carbonising, retrofitting, and future-proofing museums and galleries is urgently needed. Many museums now face daily battles against leaks, crumbling buildings, and creaking infrastructure. There is a huge backlog in repairs and maintenance and urgent investment is needed to resolve these issues as museums do not have the budget to fund this essential work. Museums Galleries Scotland data shows that organisations are experiencing an increase between 1% and 20% in capital costs, with some experiencing costs over 50% for urgent capital works.

Planning permissions restrictions have also stopped many museums from putting in the renewable energy sources they wish (the Museum of Abernethy was unable to install solar panels as they are in a conservation area).

An additional £1m of capital funding from the Scottish Government over the last two financial years has enabled Museums Galleries Scotland to support 36 Accredited museums to improve their energy efficiency. However, there is much more work to be done to support the sector to achieve net zero as there are increasing maintenance concerns for many museums due to many years of underfunding.



The MEND (Museum Estate and Development) Fund delivered by Arts Council England has been a welcomed initiative in England to address some of these issues but there is no equivalent scheme available in Scotland. One flaw with the MEND Fund is that it does not focus on the climate crisis so if there were to be an equivalent fund in Scotland, we would welcome this distinction. So far, 26 projects across England will share £22.6m in the third round of funding from the UK Government's Museum Estate and Development fund. The latest round of Mend funding brings the total amount of investment so far to more than £62m for 93 museums. The fourth round of Mend funding, worth £23.8m, was announced in February this year. The stream is part of the wider Cultural Investment Fund, which also includes libraries. Including the fourth round, the total available funding provided through MEND totals £133m.

Addressing urgent repairs and maintenance is important to support museums with their transition to net zero. Financial support to adapt old historic buildings to make them more energy efficient is a necessary step to tackle the climate crisis and would in turn support museums with their running costs. There is a need for a capital fund for independent and civic museums that supports urgent infrastructure and maintenance backlogs which are beyond the scope of day-to-day maintenance budgets, to ensure that museums remain fit to house collections and welcome visitors.

5. What action(s) do you think the Scottish Government should prioritise in order to build greater resilience to the impacts of climate change?

Prioritisation of funding and planning regulations for adapting buildings to make them more energy efficient and able to withstand damage due to changing weather.

Cross-portfolio policy work and action are key to climate resilience and adaptation within the culture sector. Government policies addressing climate needs to be streamlined with their culture policy outcomes. For example, many museums can be in quite rural and remote areas, public transport planning needs to ensure that access to culture is sustainable across the country and in more remote areas – however, it is not clear whether this planning considers culture needs and accessibility across Scotland.



Section 2: Outcome One: Nature Connects

6. The draft Adaptation Plan sets out actions which will be taken to protect and restore nature. Which of the following actions proposed around protecting and restoring nature should the Scottish Government prioritise for a better adapted Scotland?

Please check all that apply.

- ✓ More trees and green spaces in built-up places for flood resilience and cooling
- ✓ More joined up natural habitats ("nature networks")
- ✓ Managing pests and diseases which will be more prevalent with climate change
- ✓ Restoring forests and peatland
- ✓ Reinforcing natural coastal barriers such as dunes
- ✓ Other

If you selected 'other', please share detail below:

- ✓ All of the above.

Many museums are used as 'cool spaces' as people struggle with urban island effect of heating due to a lack of urban greenspace. Museums are also increasingly at risk of flood damage and river re-wiggling, and trees for riverbank stabilisation would ease this pressure.

Natural history collections in museums provide valuable insight into shifting baselines in nature with fragmentation of habitats being a huge issue. To protect what remains and continue research, sharing nature with the public linking habitats is key.

Pests and diseases are an increasing risk to museum collections. MA has recently run an article about this with regards to silverfish and woollybears increasing with wetter winters. <https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2024/03/wet-winter-causes-rise-in-silverfish-and-woolly-bears/>

As with reconnecting habitats – reforestation and restoring peat beds would protect the remaining biodiversity. They would also act as much-needed carbon sinks. Forestry and



peatland are also key to Scotland's cultural heritage and protection of them is key to a thriving living heritage.

Many coastal museums are at increased risk of flooding and storm damage. Rising sea levels puts our coastal, especially island, cultural sites at real risk. Reinforcing natural sea defences would help to protect them.

7. When you consider your local natural space e.g. park, canal, woodland or beach, what would you like to see improved in terms of blue and green space in your local area?

Funding for community biodiversity gardens and crofts allowing people more time in nature and a better understanding of growing food. Museums and galleries can make great community venues for these. The Stirling Smith 'Ailie's garden' is a great example of a museum biodiversity garden that continued to be used by community groups even when the building had to close with Covid-19 restrictions.

Section 3: Outcome Two: Communities

8. For Scotland to adapt to the impacts of climate change, lots of different groups, such as individuals, communities, businesses and public bodies, will need to work together and support each other. How could others support you (or your organisation) to adapt to climate change over the next five years?

More intersectionality of planning – improved public transport and active travel networks (especially in rural areas) to allow people to access cultural venues with lower carbon emissions, NHS/nature organisations and culture sector working together on food waste/healthy eating/food poverty and eating local. There is also a need for stringer links between business and culture sectors in Scotland here there are public funding gaps, but it is vital the culture sector is not used as greenwashing as great reputational damage can be done.

We encourage partnerships between museums and communities as they can bring fresh perspectives and insight to all areas of museum work including climate justice work. However,



as set out in the Code of Ethics for Museums, museums should seek support from organisations whose ethical values are consistent with those of the museum.

A good example of partnership working is from Dynamic Earth who received funding from the MA's Mindsets + Missions programme. Dynamic Earth have started partnership working with seven different organisations, including the mental health support charity SEASONS, LGBT Health and Wellbeing, a local primary school, a charity supporting young people of colour, and others. They aim to generate a step-change in how typically unheard voices and plural perspectives are represented within their permanent exhibition and programming.

Activities so far have seen one group choosing to work on a project to create climate change superheroes that they'll design, animate, and code into a planetarium show focusing on the climate emergency.

9. In what way(s) could the plan help different groups across Scotland and/or its regions to collaborate on climate adaptation?

There are some great collaboration projects currently happening in the museums sector that could be replicated in other parts of society aligning with the Plan.

- The Geographical Forums established by Museums Galleries Scotland allow museums and heritage organisations in similar geographic areas to collaborate and better understand each other's ways of working. Forums have come together to help with the safe storage of museum objects after one museum's storage facility was damaged in a storm, another has been able to share exhibition materials and resources reducing both cost and waste.
- Scottish Communities Climate Action Network is now working with museums across Scotland to host Climate Conversations for their communities, helping local people come to terms with climate anxiety, and climate science and involving the museum as part of that community as well as a source of research and knowledge.
- Restoration projects and the culture sector – Edinburgh Shoreline Project and Restoration Forth have had a few community-made installations that have gone into



museums helping to connect museums, tourists, and locals with hyper-local climate issues and actions.

- There are some great community-led climate tracking initiatives such as the Climate Hebrides map which allow locals to record extreme weather events and climate damage on a map. Pairing something like this with research similar to that of Cardiff University on Intangible Cultural Heritage and Heritage sites at immediate risk from climate would be hugely beneficial to Scotland's heritage sector.

Section 4: Outcome Three: Public Services and Infrastructure

10. Advice from the Climate Change Committee (the Scottish Government's independent advisors on Climate) is to adapt to 2°C of warming and assess the risk for 4°C. To what extent do you agree with this advice?

Strongly agree. Museums and galleries need to be able to plan to future-proof and protect collections, buildings, and jobs.

11. Would further guidance on future climate scenario(s) be useful when making plans and investment decisions?

Yes. Further guidance would allow for suitable and cost-effective retrofitting, flood defences, building repair funds and if needed movement of collections to protect Scotland's material heritage. Many museums and galleries have extremely limited funds so knowing how to plan for future climate is essential for their budgeting and survival.

12. Would an assessment of "cascading" risks from weather-related disruptions to infrastructure help you or your organisation to adapt?

Yes (same answer as 11)



Section 5: Outcome Four: Economy, Business and Industry

13. What, if any, are the barriers to businesses accessing advice and support on climate risks?

Much of the current data on climate risks are either too broad (global not local) or are in complicated scientific papers. Many museums are run by volunteers or staff who are already at capacity – having advice and support on risks in an easily digestible format (ideally with simple graphics) would make risk management and presentation to boards and the public much easier. Sharing with support bodies such as Creative Carbon Scotland, Museums Galleries Scotland and the Museums Association would also mean we could share that information without museums having to spend a long time searching for the relevant information.

14. How should farming, fishing and forestry businesses be supported to adapt to climate change?

There is a need for a Just Transition. Lessons can be learned from the Industrial Museums (including Maritime and Fisheries) on how previous economic shifts have impacted communities. An understanding, and support of, the intangible cultural heritage that comes with farming, fishing and forestry is also required.

15. How do you anticipate disruption to domestic and/or international supply chains caused by climate change will affect Scottish business, industry and consumers?

Museums rely on domestic and international supply chains to operate and have already experienced disruption to supply chains from the impacts of Brexit and rising inflation. Many museums already aim to use local materials and share resources. However, disruptions to supply chains will inevitably affect museums' ability to create exhibitions, run their programmes, loan objects, and provide food and drink to visitors.



16. What, if any, should the role of government be in supporting more resilient supply chains?

Improving infrastructure so goods to be transported via freight as opposed to air transport. Ensure food supply chains are affordable and sustainable. Working with the UK Government to ensure essential materials for museum practice are protected and resilient enough to continue if future climate scenarios become reality. Supporting museums and galleries to make good choices in relation to their supply chains.

17. What, if any, do you think are the business and innovation opportunities arising from climate change in Scotland?

No answer given.

18. What, if any, support would be required to encourage businesses in Scotland to take advantage of innovation opportunities arising from climate change?

Working with MA and Museums Galleries Scotland to communicate to the sector what opportunities are available to museums and galleries.

Section 6: Outcome Five: International Action

19. How could the Scottish Government support communities impacted by climate change across the world?

Many communities will be forced to relocate and climate refugees will become a larger part of the Scottish population. The museum sector can support these new Scots through object collection and exhibitions allowing a diverse range of voices and experiences to be shared, represented and protected. Funding for such collecting and sharing will be required. The cultural space can help communities feel heard, represented and part of the larger community. Many museums in Scotland already have experience working with refugees and providing spaces where they can participate in their cultural heritage.



20. Scotland is known for its excellence in climate change research. Are there international adaptation focused research opportunities which Scottish-based academic work should focus on?

Scotland's museums are important centres of research and a key part of many of our universities. Natural history collections date back hundreds of years allowing for continued studies of baselines and extinction events as well as nature-based solutions. Traditional knowledge around nature and food harvesting practices can also add great insight here.

The social history data and research held by many museums, especially those with industrial heritage, can assist with research into Just Transition and lessons learned from the closing of industries in the past and shifting social values, priorities and cultures. These can all be used to ensure the smoothest possible transition.

Many museums in Scotland already have established connections with researchers and universities internationally. Museums play a key role in disseminating this knowledge to the public in an accessible and easily understood way.

Section 7: Enabling Factors

21. What do you see as the main barrier to private investment for adaptation action?

No answer given.

22. How can the Scottish Government support or incentivise more private investment in adaptation action?

It is important to make sure any private investment is not used simply as greenwashing. 3.6 of the Code of Ethics for Museums says that museums and governing bodies should:

"Carefully consider offers of financial support from commercial organisations and other sources in the UK and internationally and seek support from organisations whose ethical values are consistent with those of the museum. Exercise due diligence in understanding the



ethical standards of commercial partners with a view to maintaining public trust and integrity in all museum activities.”

23. The proposed approach to monitoring and evaluating progress of the Adaptation Plan is set out below. Do you agree with the proposed approach to monitoring adaptation?

Agree

24. Do you have suggestions of data or indicators that could be used to track adaptation outcomes in Scotland?

It is important to note that many organisations in the culture sector, in particular museums and heritage, are already stretched to capacity and under-resourced so any monitoring needs to be light touch and in-line with existing monitoring practices.

Section 8: Impact Assessments

25. What, if any, impacts do you think this Adaptation Plan will have on groups/individuals who share protected characteristics?

We know that climate change is likely to most strongly impact those already at risk.

26. In respect to protected characteristics, what, if any, measures could be taken to strengthen any positive impacts or lessen any negative impacts of the draft Adaptation Plan?

Ensuring that communities already at risk, particularly those with protected characteristics, have a voice in the process of adaptation. Museums and galleries can support this through the co-creation of content and development of links to ensure safe and inclusive spaces – both in terms of climate communication and the building as a warm/cool space to shelter. Ensuring strong public transport networks will further strengthen this.



27. What, if any, impacts do you think the proposed Adaptation Plan will have on inequality caused by socio-economic disadvantage?

If organisations, such as museums, have to pay to adapt buildings this cost may end up being passed on to visitors through introductions/increases of admission charges or paid for add-on activities. This could in turn increase inequality by creating financial barriers to accessing museums.

28. In respect to inequality caused by socio-economic disadvantage, what, if any, measures could be taken to strengthen any positive impacts or lessen any negative impacts of the draft Adaptation Plan?

Ensuring communities which will face changing industry as a result of adaptation are supported. Scotland's industrial museums can give valuable insight into changing industries of the past and lessons to be learned. Ensuring climate and carbon education for all, including through cultural activities, can also contribute to just transition.

29. What, if any, impact do you think the Adaptation Plan will have on children's rights and wellbeing?

The rights of the child are strongly linked to a clean environment – both for mental and physical wellbeing. Ensuring Scotland is prepared to adapt and that economy, wellbeing and space are taken into account will better secure a future for Scotland's young people.

30. What, if any, measures could be taken to strengthen any positive impacts or lessen any negative impacts of the draft Adaptation Plan on children's rights and wellbeing?

Support for the culture sector in delivering climate engagement activities and support in discussing these issues – with particular attention to climate anxiety and mental health as well as food sustainability. Museums and galleries can be a safe space for families and educational groups to approach these topics.



31. What, if any, impacts do you think the Adaptation Plan will have on Island communities?

Rising sea levels and increases in extreme weather events will most directly impact our island communities. Ensuring their voices are reflected within the final Adaptation plan is key to ensuring support and positive impact. It is reassuring to see island communities centred within the plan.

32. What, if any, measures could be taken to strengthen any positive impacts or lessen any negative impacts of the draft Adaptation Plan on Island communities?

Ensuring their voices are reflected within the final Adaptation plan is key to ensuring support and positive impact. Working with island heritage groups and museums who can ensure local culture, tradition and needs are taken into consideration can aid in this. There are also pre-existing resources which can support monitoring of climate impacts, and therefore assist adaptation such as the Climate Hebrides resource.

End of response

