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6th October 2022

RE: Local Museums and the Independent Review of Education in Northern Ireland

Dear panel members,

I am writing in my role as Director of Northern Ireland Museums Council (NIMC), which is an Arm's Length Body sponsored by the Department for Communities, and lead development agency for the local museum sector in Northern Ireland. The local museum sector is diverse, comprising 41 accredited museums that span each of the six counties of Northern Ireland. To clarify briefly, 'Local museums' refer to all museums beyond the remit of National Museums Northern Ireland (Ulster Museum, Ulster Folk Museum, Ulster Transport Museum, Ulster American Folk Park), including museums operated by local councils, the National Trust, and other independent museums (see appendix 1 for a list of accredited local museums in Northern Ireland).

Museums are uniquely equipped to promote authentic learning experiences, which are learner-led, and inclusive. Whilst much good work is already being done by our local museums, there is undoubtedly a need to develop a coherent educational strategy for the sector, and to ensure that local museums are represented as important stakeholders within future education policy.

NIMC is prioritising the development of education and learning provision throughout the local museum sector by improving sectoral capacity through professional training opportunities, grant provision, and developing strategic partnerships with local teacher training colleges and educational organisations. We also plan to undertake an education and learning survey of the sector, to map the current museum learning offer against the formal curriculum, and to develop a sectoral educational strategy that speaks to both formal education, and the life-long learning agenda.

I appreciate that my correspondence is finding you at a very late stage in your deliberations. However, I would like to suggest that local museums should be included in your "analysis of the current network of education settings", as

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important educational providers, with the capacity to develop further and add value to the Northern Ireland education and learning ecosystem. I would be pleased to liaise with the independent review committee on behalf of the local museum sector, and to provide whatever assistance you require.



Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Dalzell', written in a cursive style.

Dr Johnathan Dalzell
Director
Northern Ireland Museums Council

Appendix 1. Accredited local museums in Northern Ireland

- Antrim and Newtownabbey District Council (Museum at the Mill and Sentry Hill)
- Ards and North Down District Council (North Down Museum)
- Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council (Armagh County Museum, Barn Museum, Craigavon Museum Services and F. E. McWilliam Gallery and Studio)
- Armagh Observatory and Planetarium
- Armagh Robinson Library and No. 5 Vicar's Hill
- Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council (Ballycastle Museum, Ballymoney Museum, Coleraine Museum, Green Lane Museum, Limavady Museum)
- Derry City and Strabane District Council (Tower Museum)
- Downpatrick and County Down Railway
- Fermanagh and Omagh District Council (Fermanagh County Museum)
- Flame: The Gasworks Museum
- Garvagh Museum
- Inniskillings Museum
- Linen Hall Library
- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (Irish Linen Centre & Lisburn Museum)
- Mid and East Antrim Borough Council (Andrew Jackson Cottage and US Rangers Museum, Carrickfergus Museum and Mid-Antrim Museum)

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- Milford House Collection
- Newry, Mourne and Down District Council (Down County Museum and Newry and Mourne Museum)
- Northern Ireland War Memorial Museum
- Police Museum
- Whitehead Railway Museum of Railway Preservation Society of Ireland
- Royal Irish Fusiliers Museum
- Royal Ulster Rifles Museum
- The National Trust (Ards House, The Argory, Castle Ward, Florence Court, Hezlett House, Mount Stewart, Springhill)
- The Somme Association (Somme Museum)

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