

**Empire, Slavery & Scotland's Museums:
Addressing our Colonial Legacy
*Review Remit and Project Overview***

Contents

What is the review? / Aim	2
Why was the review setup? / Background context	2
Who are the recommendations aimed at? / Project Outcome	3
What will this review do? / Remit	3
The wider questions that inform our remit.....	3
What are the key areas of focus for the Remit?	4
Research	4
Collections.....	5
Interpretation	6
Human Resource.....	7
Education/Learning.....	7
Proposal for the establishment of a museum of empire and slavery	8
A Human Rights-Based Approach	8
How will the review do its work (evaluate the evidence)? /Methodology	8
The Stages of the Review	8
Stage 1: Discovery.....	8
Stage 2: Development	9
Stage 3: Feedback.....	10
Stage 4: Final Report	10
Appendix 1: Glossary	11
Appendix 2: Human Rights-Based Approach.....	12

What is the review? / Aim

This is a review on how Scottish museums and galleries can better address the legacies of slavery, empire and colonialism at every level.

The review is independent. This means that no group of people can say how the review should happen or what it should say. The review is headed by an independent Steering Group which is representative of relevant interests, and diverse in its membership. The Steering Group will take an investigative/inquisitorial approach. This means the consultation will be a fact-finding mission rather than one which is required to apportion blame for any past faults or omissions.

The Steering Group will make concrete and sustainable recommendations to Scottish Government on how the Scottish museums and galleries sector can better address the legacies of slavery, empire and colonialism at every level. The recommendations will also investigate how to ensure people in Scotland are aware of the role Scotland played and how that manifests itself in our society today. This will include how to reflect, interpret and celebrate the wide ranging and positive contributions that the full diversity of the Scottish population have made and continue to make to Scotland. These recommendations will investigate the best mechanism of delivery of our shared past.

This nationwide project will build on existing work from within the equalities sector and from across Scotland's museums, to explore the mechanisms of how Scotland can confront challenging histories within museum spaces.

The first stage of the review will finish in November 2021.

Why was the review setup? / Background context

On 10 June 2020 a motion was passed in the Scottish Parliament showing solidarity with anti-racism, with an amendment that Scotland should 'establish a slavery museum to address our historic links to the slave trade.'

During July and August there were early discussions between Scottish Government Culture and Equalities teams with MGS, Glasgow Life, and others to consider how this might be taken forward.

In September 2020 the Scottish Government put forward their Programme for Government in which they agreed:

'Partnering with Museums Galleries Scotland, in collaboration with race equality and museums sector stakeholders, we will sponsor an independent expert group to make recommendations on how Scotland's existing and future museum collections we can better recognise and represent a more accurate portrayal of Scotland's colonial and slavery history and what further steps should be taken to ensure people in Scotland are aware of the role Scotland played and how that manifests itself in our society today. This will include how to reflect, interpret and celebrate the wide ranging and positive

contributions that ethnic minority communities have made and continue to make to Scotland.¹

Who are the recommendations aimed at? / Project Outcome

Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS) have been commissioned to manage this independent review.

MGS is a National Development Body for the Scottish museums sector. MGS support 419 museums and galleries, through strategic investment, advice, advocacy, skills development and other means. MGS is an independent charity and receive core funding from Scottish Government, which also provides funding to distribute via grants directly to the museums and galleries sector. MGS is governed by a Board of Trustees.

This review will aim to cover the full diversity of the Scottish population without racial, gender-based, or geographical bias. We will consult with museums and galleries across Scotland and the recommendations from this consultation will be directed at Scottish Government and be applied to the whole Scottish museums and galleries sector.

What will this review do? / Remit

The remit is the list of things that we will think about and report on in the review. The remit requires us to get evidence from a wide range of sources, engage widely with people who have a personal or professional interest, and reflect this evidence in our final analysis and recommendations.

In order to properly define the remit, we need to be aware of the context and the wider issues relating to the legacies of slavery, empire and colonialism in Scotland's museums and gallery spaces.

The wider questions that inform our remit –

- What does racial equity look like?
- How do museums listen to the demands that have been made: to ensure the work museums do goes beyond the statements made in reaction to the BLM movement in 2020? What does that look like?
- How do museums include people in the conversation as to how action and change can happen?
- What is the role of museums in making the connection between the racism of yesterday and the racism of today?

¹ Scottish Government Programme for Government, *Protecting Scotland, Renewing Scotland* (September 2020), p.110. This is the exact wording taken from the Programme for Government and refers to their decision to set up the ESSM Project and budget.

- How can museums make anti-racism part of their core organisational values?
- How do museums educate ALL of their audiences to recognise and acknowledge the imbedded colonial structures?

The Steering Group is aware that these questions cannot be answered fully in the timescale of this review and will instead inform the discussions that the Steering Group and Advisory Panels will have when evaluating the evidence.

What are the key areas of focus for the Remit?

The recommendations to the Scottish Government will concentrate on these key subject areas:

- Research
- Collections
- Interpretation
- Human Resource
- Education/Learning
- Proposal for the establishment of a museum of empire and slavery

These 6 areas will be the focus for the review. For each area we will create a sub-group consisting of Steering Group members, Advisory Panel members, community representatives and a member of the project team. Sub-group members will be chosen for their knowledge and experience in relation to the subject matter concerned. These sub-groups will:

1. Define the remit for each subject in relation to the consultation namely, what are the legacies that need to be addressed. This will ensure that we have sufficient focus (taking into consideration the limited timescale) but retain a flexibility.
2. Define the questions to be asked in the public consultation for this subject area.
3. Analyse the evidence from public consultation for this subject area and produce the specific Government recommendations for each specialist area, to be approved by the Steering Group.

Within the 6 subject areas we will look at the mechanisms of how Scotland can confront challenging histories within museum spaces. To do this we will build on existing work from within the equalities sector and from across Scotland's museums. Part of this will be to capture the learning from any failed projects to produce recommendations that are sustainable.

The sub-groups will explore:

Research

By research we mean the academic research being produced in relation to Scotland's links with slavery, empire and colonialism, including:

- Historiography
- Museology

- Sociology

[Note: This consultation agrees that there is a vast body of research that has been and is being produced.]

This WILL include:

- How the research into Scotland's links with slavery, empire and colonialism is being shared with museums.
- The mechanisms for historians/universities/researchers to share their research with museums.
- Closing the gap between the research coming out and putting that into the museum's spaces.

This WILL NOT include:

- Producing an historic overview of Scotland's involvement in slavery and/or empire.

Collections

By Collections we mean collections management, and the related systems which museum use to care for their holdings. Cultural heritage collections require in-depth documentation to assist in tracking the life of the object within the holding institution. Put simply, collections management in cultural heritage is the 'strategies, policies, processes and procedures related to collections development, information, access and care.'² It relates to collecting new items, research and reviewing the existing collection and removing items in accordance with the collecting organisation's particular policies and priorities.

This WILL include:

- A need to investigate the subject in all museums – provenance of colonial artefacts etc. and maybe the creation of KPIs.
- Cataloguing systems and practices – how do we layer the information so the provenance and issues there are retained while also making more anti-colonial texts/information – embed transparency on systems.
- Repatriation – Do we have to own it vs how many beneficial partnerships do we have around the world to help us tell the kinds of stories we need to tell on a consistent basis. Issues with returning objects to a group of people who are not homogeneous and have their own power relations – and government. Very powerful, less powerful, least powerful. Why were they taken and when returned a new set of power relations now exists? Could return things reinscribe old gender and power relationships.

² <https://significanceinternational.com/AboutUs/Whatiscollectionsmanagement.aspx#1>

- Involving originating communities – How do we build the alliances with these communities. Working with originating communities on their own terms rather than museum's. How to cede power and give credit to the originating source.
- Accreditation – Examine including decolonial practice in the standards.
- Collecting practices – looking at what is being collected and how museums should be collecting objects that address the legacies.

This WILL NOT include:

- Looking in detail at any museum or heritage collection and listing their related objects
- An overview of the objects that would be exhibited within any potential new display exploring the legacies of slavery and empire (this would need to be conducted as a separate exercise following the result of the consultation)
- Recommendations to purchase specific collections

Interpretation

By interpretation we mean how museums and galleries communicate their collections to their users. Museums and galleries should use their collections to tell stories and to convey identifiable meaning. Forms of interpretation include labels, guided tours, interpretative and digital media.

This WILL include:

- Involving originating communities – How do we build the alliances with these communities. Working with originating communities on their own terms rather than museum's. How to cede power and give credit to the originating source.
- Acknowledging the colonial structures – how do museums layer the information so the provenance and issues there are retained while also making more anti-colonial texts/information.
- Exploring the mechanisms of how to interpret challenging histories within museum spaces to ensure that the communities affected are accurately represented.
- Co-curation – exploring co-curation models and how they cede power to those who the museums are there to serve rather than maintaining existing power structures.

This WILL NOT include:

- Looking in detail at any museum or heritage institution and their individual museum displays.
- An overview of the objects that would be exhibited within any potential new display exploring the legacies of slavery and empire (this would need to be conducted as a separate exercise following the result of the consultation)

Human Resource

By Human Resource we mean, looking in detail and the heritage sector workforce at every level including, recruitment, representation, boards, management, volunteers etc.

This WILL include:

- Looking at the learning from the Scottish Government Minority Ethnic Toolkit
- Leadership Support – Courage of leadership to openly support those at frontline of decolonial/anti-racist practice.
- Training – Thinking about risk assessment and resilience training in relation to those working on the frontline who might be subject to abuse
- Training – which allows for critical self-reflection of those working in museums and their own colonial bias
- Recruitment – Diversifying recruitment practices at every level. However, always being aware of retraumatising individuals from communities affected by the legacies by bringing them into the workforce.
- Access to the sector – Looking at pathways into the sector and opening up the closed world of museums

This WILL NOT include:

- Reporting of previous institutions or people that failed to consider these issues previously

Education/Learning

By Education/Learning we mean how museums and galleries engage visitors in learning experiences to enhance their curiosity and interest in their objects and collections. The activities of a museum educator may include: talks, guided tours or workshops and creating resources.

This WILL include:

- Working with education stakeholders – Suggestions of methods to drive engagement with educational stakeholders with relation to how museums can help them in addressing legacies.
- National Standards – How to maximise the extent of links to the curriculum.
- Acknowledging the colonial structures – how do museums layer the information to allow for learning on the museum's colonial bias.
- Closing the gap between the research coming out and putting that into the museum's learning resources.

This WILL NOT include:

- An extensive resource that can be used by schools or home learning practitioners to understand slavery through a museums context;
- guidance for learning practitioners on how to use their individual collections to explore slavery;
- learning packs.

Proposal for the establishment of a museum of empire and slavery

This WILL include:

- The delivery model most appropriate to ensure the Scottish Government's commitment to anti-racism is clearly communicated and has a presence in Scotland's museums.
- The best mechanism of delivery of our shared past to the full diversity of the Scottish population without racial, gender-based, or geographical bias.

This WILL NOT include:

- Recommendations to purchase specific collections.
- Costings or specific locations of a potential building.

A Human Rights-Based Approach

It is important that this consultation take a human rights-based approach because "everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits" - cultural rights are inseparable from human rights, Under the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

A further sub-group will be established to look at how the review should take a human rights-based approach and human rights framework. This will help us with the consultation's governance and with our processes of engagement. They also give us a basis for our evidence gathering and reporting. More detail on initially how this approach will affect the consultation are set out in Appendix 2.

How will the review do its work (evaluate the evidence)?

/Methodology

The Stages of the Review

It is planned that this initial phase of the review will take 1 year. However, we do have to take into consideration that we need time to fully involve people with lived experience in the consultation.

Stage 1: Discovery

This is about finding out about what museums, galleries and heritage institutions across Scotland are currently doing in the fields of equalities and addressing the legacies of slavery and colonialism in Scotland.

We will establish the Advisory Panel members. It is important that they are representative of relevant interests and expertise, and diverse in membership. All advisors were expected to advise as individuals, not as representatives of organisations.

The Advisory Panel may include museum professionals, experts in anti-racism, experts in decolonising museum history and museum spaces, experts in working in equalities and community consultation etc. We plan to speak to experts from Scotland and further afield.

We will establish the sub-groups that will inform each stage of the review and develop the questions for the consultation.

The consultation will take the form of surveys for both the public and professionals. In line with an HR-based approach, the surveys will bring together the evidence, giving equal weight to evidence from all participants. For example, we can analyse responses from people directly affected by the legacies, alongside responses from museum professionals.

We will put out a tender for the External Contractor who will facilitate the surveys. The survey questions and the participants to be involved in the consultation will be agreed in discussion with the Steering Group and will be informed by the work already done in the equalities sector.

Once we have appointed the External Contractor, we will hold the first round of the public consultation.

Stage 2: Development

In stage 2, we will develop the evidence gathered from stage 1. It would involve in-depth discussions within the sub-groups to allow all the partners to understand the narratives and sentiment behind the survey data.

The sub-groups will put together the evidence gathered which will inform the Steering Group's draft recommendations. As mentioned above, these recommendations will relate to the six key subject sub-group subject areas:

- Research
- Collections
- Interpretation
- Human Resource
- Education/Learning
- Proposal for the establishment of a museum of empire and slavery

Stage 3: Feedback

In stage 3 we will return to the respondents for their feedback about the Steering Group's draft recommendations for the future of how Scottish museums and galleries can better address the legacies of slavery, empire and colonialism at every level.

This will involve consulting again with the participants from stage 1, both public and professional, in collaborative focus groups. We would discuss their opinions of the recommendations so that they can advise on any revisions they believe are needed. These discussions will be facilitated by an external contractor.

Stage 4: Final Report

At this stage we would revise the draft recommendations based on the feedback and based on all the evidence gathered, the Steering Group will make a set of recommendations to Scottish Government in November 2021. The report will be authored by the Chair and the Steering Group but written by the Project Manager, in order to maintain a consistent voice throughout.

We will hold a public event (socially distanced if needed) to make sure the participants are involved in the final report.

Appendix 1: Glossary

The final public version of this document will include a glossary of relevant terms.

e.g.

Scotland's Museums = All museums, galleries and other heritage institutions

Appendix 2: Human Rights-Based Approach

An HR approach would include 4 main areas for consideration throughout the consultation:

Participation - Participation must be active, free and meaningful and give attention to issues of accessibility, including access to information in a form and a language which can be understood.

Accountability - how would we hold ourselves accountable to the participants. What would be the review/reporting mechanisms to go back to people.

Non-discrimination - prioritisation of those in the most vulnerable situations who face the biggest barriers to realising their rights.

Empowerment - participants should understand their rights and be fully supported to participate in the development of policy and practices

See here to know more about this approach:

http://www.scottishhumanrights.com/media/1409/shrc_hrba_leaflet.pdf

This approach also uses the **FAIR** process. We need to think in this way:

Facts

- What is the experience of the individual?
- Is the individual being heard and if not, do they require support to do so?
- What are the important facts to understand?

Analysis of right(s) at stake

- What are the human rights or issues at stake?
- Is the right to life or the right not to be subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment at stake? If so, these rights are absolute and cannot be restricted.
- Can the right be restricted? What is the justification for restricting the right?

- Is the restriction on the right 'proportionate'? This means - is it the minimum necessary restriction to meet the aim or is a "sledgehammer being used to crack a nut"?

Identification of shared responsibilities

- What changes are necessary?
- Who has responsibilities for helping to make the necessary changes?

Review actions

- Have the actions taken been recorded and reviewed and has the individual affected been involved?

See here for more about what it means to restrict human rights:

Can human rights ever be restricted? EHRC

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/what-are-human-rights/how-are-your-rights-protected>