



# Inspiring creativity, celebrating identity

## MLA Partnership strategic statement 2007-2010

## Our Partnership

The MLA Partnership leads England's museums, libraries and archives to ensure they:

- meet the needs of both the individual and the community;
- deliver sustained improvement, innovation and excellence.

### **Our vision**

Connecting people to knowledge and inspiration

**Our purpose** is to improve people's lives through access to collections and resources – building knowledge, supporting learning, inspiring creativity and celebrating identity.

## Our aims for 2007-2010

The MLA Partnership's three-year corporate plan aims to uphold both the intrinsic and instrumental value of museums, libraries and archives and support their sustainable development. We will focus on two strategic areas:

### **People and communities**

Museums, libraries and archives are for everyone. They bring communities together, enabling them to explore their identity and shared histories. Through providing a trusted place for learning, engagement and debate they drive social and economic change.

Each year two-thirds of the population visit museums, libraries and archives making them perfect places to build and sustain communities where people can live, learn, work and thrive.

The MLA Partnership wants to see museums, libraries and archives recognised and funded by government, locally and nationally, as essential to community development. We will ensure that museums, libraries and archives deliver quality services that people want and need.

### **Improvement and innovation**

Through our programmes, including Renaissance and Framework for the Future, museums, libraries and archives are reinventing themselves. Our cultural institutions are not passive repositories of the past but catalysts for a new economic and creative age.

The relationship between cultural institutions and the public is changing. Museums, libraries and archives now actively include their visitors in the development of collections, resources and services. The MLA Partnership will work to continue this engagement, particularly through the action plan for Understanding the Future – the government 10 year strategy for museums, and improve the infrastructure, buildings and services to benefit all users as well as the cultural sector itself.

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## Why our Partnership works

The MLA Partnership comprises the MLA Council and the nine regional agencies. Our structure and programmes join up national and local government to ensure best practice and added public value. We deliver results in key areas to meet government priorities and Public Service Agreements (PSAs):

- **Participation** – over two thirds of the population regularly use museums, libraries and archives. The sector is a core part of the nation's cultural life, supporting exploration and debate about identity, knowledge and place. Our museums prove they attract visitors from all groups of people. Our libraries serve a wide range of people from families to business start-ups. More and more people visit archives with two million people using them in 2006 and there are opportunities to increase attendance levels even more.
- **The London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games** – using our existing programmes we will work with the sector to support the Cultural Olympiad from August 2008 and deliver a cultural legacy after 2012. Ongoing investment in Renaissance will ensure our museums use their internationally significant collections to present the nation to the world and the world to the nation. We will extend the benefits of this one-off event to the whole of the country.
- **Economic Impact** – museums, libraries and archives are integral in attracting visitors to Britain and contribute to a positive promotion of the country overseas. Our sector supports the creative economy with inspiring collections and access to knowledge, research, learning and skills development. Goods, services and industries driven by knowledge and creativity will define Britain's competitive edge in the future. Our sector has been at the forefront of significant urban and social regeneration over the past ten years.

Since MLA was created in 2000 we have effectively:

- Raised £450 million funding for the sector over and above our grant in aid. This includes £150 million for Renaissance between 2002 and 2008. This funding is transforming museum services and has directly increased visitor numbers with over 13 million visitors going to Renaissance museums in 2006.
- Successfully delivered a £170 million project, the People's Network. We completed this massive IT project on time and on budget. There are now over 30,000 terminals providing access to broadband in over 3,000 libraries.
- Brought £80 million lottery funding into the library sector to strengthen the relationship between communities and libraries.
- Working with libraries through Framework for the Future has led to more than 342 million visits to libraries across the UK in 2006, a 7.5 per cent rise in visitor numbers over the past five years.
- Our learning programmes have put museums, libraries and archives at the heart of lifelong learning using inspiring collections, venues and knowledgeable staff. Fifty per cent more school-children have been learning in hub museums since 2003.
- Created Inspiring Learning For All to help museums, libraries and archives evaluate the impact of their learning programmes.
- Implemented the first ever review of archives which set out a comprehensive development programme.
- Acquired over £250 million worth of works for the UK since 1997 through the Acceptance in Lieu scheme.

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## What will we do?

Achieve our targets. In 2007/08 these are:

- A PSA target of 2 per cent increase in museum visits.
- 350,000 increase in visits from target groups.
- 25 per cent increase in school children visits to museums.

In addition, we will:

- Increase the number of people enjoying and participating in museums, libraries and archives.
- Deliver a new blueprint for museums, libraries and archives so that everyone benefits from excellent and efficient services. This includes:
  - An action plan for Understanding the Future, the government's ten-year strategy for museums through Renaissance, our transformational programme for museums.
  - Reviewing Framework for the Future to devise and deliver a new vision for public libraries.
  - Launching Action for Archives – a programme of practical support and development for archives.
- Set out what museums, libraries and archives can do for the Cultural Olympiad from 2008 and the Olympic Legacy after 2012 – delivering high quality programmes that include everyone.
- Champion the consumer to ensure that the sector delivers services that meet people's needs.
- Continue to build a strong evidence base to support and promote the sector.
- Continue to support museums, libraries and archives in delivering learning and skills throughout people's lives and demonstrate our sector's contribution to increased levels of educational attainment.
- Set targets for equality and diversity and attract under-represented groups into the sector's workforce. Establish best practice for museums, libraries and archives in supporting people exploring cultural identity.
- Support the sector in demonstrating its economic impact through tourism, the knowledge economy, skills development and the creative industries.
- Identify and promote sustainable business models and new ideas for increased investment. Support collections through sustainable methods for acquisitions including direct funding and tax incentives.
- Ensure common standards for digital collections to harness the potential for learning and long-term public access of these resources.
- Develop, implement and evaluate standards and new performance frameworks for museums, libraries and archives.
- Advocate and demonstrate successes to local government so that they use cultural resources to develop better-skilled, healthier and more cohesive communities.

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## How will we know we have succeeded?

Our strength is in our national overview, regional infrastructures and local delivery. Our programmes can, very quickly, have massive impact. Over the next three years, for example, museums in Renaissance will be working to:

- Commemorate in 2007 the Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade in the British Empire. All Renaissance hub museums are marking the anniversary with new displays and debates. Among them the Wilberforce House Museum in Hull and Bristol City Museum and Art Galleries are undergoing large lottery-funded refurbishments kick-started with Renaissance funds.
- Celebrate China 2008. From exhibitions of Chinese textiles, art and objects, some never previously seen, to community projects across England, museums will be engaging everyone in a celebration of Chinese culture.
- Support other nationally significant initiatives such as Darwin200 and Liverpool European Capital of Culture.
- More people are using museums, libraries and archives.
- Strong and robust evidence base demonstrating the 'added value' of the Partnership and the Sector.
- Museums, libraries and archives are prioritised by local government as essential contributors to local improvement and community development.
- A sector charter is in place to champion the consumer and individuals and communities are directly involved in decisions affecting their cultural services.
- Funding secured and plans implemented to deliver the Cultural Olympiad and the Olympic legacy.
- Museums, libraries and archives are sustainable, with secure and diverse income, sound business planning and fit-for-purpose buildings.
- Museums, libraries and archives are working in partnership to fully exploit the collections and services they deliver including trusted and networked digital resources for all.
- Museums, libraries and archives are recognised as key contributors to the delivery of learning and the development of skills for individuals and society.
- There exist strong sector partnerships with tourism, the creative industries and social enterprise networks across the whole of the country.
- Through positive action programmes collections, workforce and audience profiles reflect the communities they serve.
- We have sustainable mechanisms for acquisition and collection development including the Portable Antiquities Scheme, direct funding and tax incentives.

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For more information on the MLA Partnership and what we are doing, please go to [www.mla.gov.uk](http://www.mla.gov.uk) or email [info@mla.gov.uk](mailto:info@mla.gov.uk) or telephone 020 7273 1444.

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