

## Museum Resilience

Mary Godwin  
Relationship Manager Museums  
Arts Council England

## About this session

- This session is designed to help you shape your organisational plans for resilience.
- This may lead to a bid to our Museum Resilience Fund, but hopefully it should also help you to identify the resilience needs of your museum more generally.
- Please note that the priorities and timing for the next round are not yet confirmed.

## I've divided it into 2 main Parts

1. Exploring what Resilience means for your museum
2. Looking at the outline details of the Museum Resilience Fund

## So what is resilience?

- **Dictionary Definitions**
- The ability of a substance or object to spring back into shape; elasticity
- The capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness

## Arts Council Definition of Resilience

- Resilience is the vision and capacity of organisations to anticipate and adapt to economic, environmental and social change by seizing opportunities, identifying and mitigating risks, and deploying resources effectively in order to continue delivering quality work in line with their mission.
- This includes thinking about and planning for your own organisational performance, your financial and environmental sustainability, the skills of your workforce, as well as equality and diversity.

## In other words. . . .

- Being resilient is a proactive and determined attitude to remain a thriving organisation despite the anticipated and unanticipated challenges and changes that will inevitably emerge;
- Resilience isn't about being defensive and protective of the status quo – this is quite often an issue in museums
- Resilience is about being aware of your situation, your risks, vulnerabilities and current capabilities, so that you can deal with them effectively and be able to make informed tactical and strategic decisions

So. . . .

- *What might being resilient mean for your museum?*
- *What things threaten your ability to 'spring back into shape' when things change?*
- *How do you address 'challenges'?*
- *What things threaten your ability to recover quickly from difficulties?*

Are you a meerkat or an ostrich?  
Is there an elephant in the room?

- Are you actively scanning the horizon for threats and updating your Forward Plan regularly to respond to these?
- Are there 'big' things that you can see looming on the horizon but haven't faced up to?
- Is there an elephant in the room? Are there major things that aren't being discussed that are real barriers to becoming more resilient?
- For example: a board that needs refreshing/new skills; too few 'customers'; lack of support from people who fund you; unsuitable buildings; out of control collections; poor visitor experience; retirement or departure of key people; wrong staffing/volunteer structure; not balancing your budget each year and eating into finite reserves?

Questions to answer and feed back

- Please think about the following questions:
- What are your museum's top 3 resilience 'issues'?
- Have you got any thoughts about how to address these?
- If you already had an idea for a funded project, is this still your priority?

Who can apply?

- An Accredited museum or a museum that is formally working towards Accreditation
- Partnerships are eligible to apply for funding if the partnership includes an Accredited museum or a museum that is formally working towards Accreditation, or organisations that have a track record in delivering services to the museum sector.

What You Can't apply for

The previous round's guidance:

In general, we will not support the following expenditure:

- collection purchase or acquisition
- collections work with no explicit public benefit in the longer term
- activities that will not benefit the regional museums sector in England
- collections care, cataloguing or capital expenditure unless you can demonstrate it will improve the resilience of the organisation in the longer term and deliver public benefit
- activities, including buying goods or services, which take place or start before we have reached a decision on your full application
- activities that duplicate work that already exists
- costs that are already covered by other funding
- general running costs and overheads that are already paid for by other income, including your own funds
- ongoing overheads relating to equipment or buildings, such as insurance and maintenance costs

How Much Can you Apply For?

- The lower limit for the previous round was £20,000 and the upper limit £300,000
- We do not yet know what the limits will be for the forthcoming round
- Be realistic – a strong application clearly demonstrates that the amount being asked for is strongly justified and will offer 'value for money'.

### Not Core Funding

- The fund will only support activities carried out over a set period. These must support the Arts Council priority areas for the next round of the Museum Resilience Fund
- We don't know what these are yet but activities should have clearly defined 'stand-alone' outputs, and be clearly time-limited.

### How we assess applications

- We assess applications to many of our funding programmes, including MRF, against 4 areas

### Assessment: **Quality**

- The quality of the activity or ideas you are proposing:
- the research you have done in planning and developing your activity
- how this activity fits in with your current work and its future development
- how any collaborations or partnerships will help to realise the idea
- how the activity will affect the museum sector more widely
- how the activity relates to best practice

### Assessment: **Shared Learning**

- How the activity will generate shared learning for the wider sector:
- the people who will benefit, such as visitors or how it will enable more people to experience museums
- how you will evaluate the outcomes outlined in your application
- how you will share the results of the activity with others and the wider sector (including things you have learned from the activity and good practice)

### Assessment: **Finance**

- How realistic the activity is financially, and its future effect:
- how you have worked out the figures in your budget
- the other sources of funding you have applied for, and the progress of any other applications you have made for funding
- any effect the activity will have on your long-term financial position
- how you will manage the finances for the activity, including the financial controls that are in place

### Assessment: **Management**

- the activity will be managed and its ongoing effect:
- how you will manage the main stages of your activity, and what each stage contains
- your past experience of successfully managing a similar activity
- how you have considered access and diversity as part of your activity
- how your management committee or board will be involved in the activity at an appropriate level
- what risks you have identified and how you will manage them
- the long-term implications of the activity on your organisation

### Assessment: Further Considerations

- **Resilience:** We will give added consideration to applications that show that you are an imaginative, innovative and adaptable organisation – particularly where there is evidence of the potential for a step change in this area.

### Assessment: Geographical Spread

- **Geographical spread:** we will take into account the need to support work across the whole of England. However, we will consider how some organisations work intensively within their home region and some have a reach and impact far beyond their home region. We will take into account the potential reach of the portfolio of applications as a whole and we are particularly interested in how organisations plan to reach places of current low cultural engagement.

### Assessment: Diversity

- **Diversity:** overall, we want our investment in the arts and culture to create the conditions in which there is a diversity of leaders, producers and creators of culture and audiences, reflecting the diversity of contemporary England and our commitment to advance members from the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010.
- By diversity we mean the multitude of ethnicities, faiths and socio-economic classes that make up modern England. Our concept of diversity includes disabled people, older people and people of all sexual orientations. The geography of diversity spans England's regions, from the most rural to the inner city.

### We also assess against our 5 Goals

- Goal 1: Excellence is thriving and celebrated in museums and libraries
- Goal 2: More people experience and are inspired by museums and libraries
- **Goal 3: Museums and libraries are sustainable, resilient and innovative**
- **Goal 4: The leadership and workforce are diverse and highly skilled**
- Goal 5: Every child and young person has opportunity to experience the richness of museums and libraries

### Arts Council Goal 3

**Goal 3: Museums and libraries are sustainable, resilient and innovative**  
We are encouraging and supporting the best possible business models and the most effective and efficient ways of working to ensure museums are sustainable, resilient and innovative.

**Previous Round Priority areas for funding:**

- new business models (activities that explore, develop or deliver new and more effective models for delivering museums services)
- commercial activity (activities that improve the capacity of museums to raise commercial funds)
- sharing of resource and expertise (networks that support the development and sharing of resources, knowledge and expertise between museums)
- developing appropriate governance models (changed models that reflect your organisation's purpose in a changing environment and in the diversity of contemporary England)
- change and risk (activities that encourage organisations to adapt and innovate in new ways)
- fundraising/philanthropy (activities that improve the capability of museums to fundraise)

### Arts Council Goal 4

**Goal 4: The leadership and workforce are diverse and highly skilled**

- We are building the leadership, skills and competencies of those working in the sector (in all cases including paid employees, volunteers and governors).

**Previous Round Priority areas for funding:**

- workforce development (activities that improve the skills and competencies of museum sector workers)
- leadership development (activities that improve the leadership skills within the museums sector)
- equality and diversity (activities that improve the diversity of people working in the museums sector)

## Arts Council Goal 1

### Goal 1: Excellence is thriving and celebrated in museums and libraries

- We are supporting museums doing excellent work, trying new innovative approaches, making best use of expertise and collections for impact with a diverse public and sharing best practice.

#### Previous Round Priority areas for funding:

- social impact (activities that lead to a greater social impact with diverse communities for museums and their collections)
- innovation (activities that trial innovative approaches to museum practice)
- new partnerships (activities that lead to improved museum practice through forming new partnerships with those outside the sector)

## Arts Council Goal 2

### Goal 2: More people experience and are inspired by museums and libraries

- We are making sure all people have access to great museums, we are extending the reach of museums and deepening the nature of engagement.

#### Previous Round Priority areas for funding:

- community engagement (activities that innovate and embed best practice in engaging with diverse communities)
- digital innovation (activities using Arts Council priorities and supplementing work by major partner museums and national activities that spread best practice in the use of digital resources)
- touring/loans (activities that see more and better quality collections/exhibition/programmes reaching new/different audiences)
- volunteering (activities that extend the best use of diverse volunteers in museums)

## Arts Council Goal 5

### Goal 5: Every child and young person has opportunity to experience the richness of museums and libraries

- We are ensuring the museum sector is engaging children in an effective way.

#### Previous Round Priority areas for funding:

- engagement (activities that embed museum engagement with diverse young people)
- Arts Award and Artsmark (activities that embed these initiatives in museums sector practice)
- capacity (activities that build the capacity of museums to deliver services to children and young people)

## Top Tips

- And to end, here are some top tips which may help you to put together a stronger application

## Key Point: Forward Plan

- When you get back to your museum, it's worth looking at how what you've thought about and written down today connects with your museum's Forward Plan. Does it?
- In an application to the Museum Resilience Fund, your proposal should demonstrate that the work you want funded is a priority that's already clearly identified in your Forward Plan.
- If it's not in your Forward Plan then it begs the question whether it's actually a strategic priority or not and that doesn't help your chances!

## Key Point:

### **Evidence** to back up your proposal

- Whatever your ideas for a funding application to increase your resilience you will need to provide evidence to back them up
- For example, you will need to provide market research and figures if you are making assumptions about how an activity will generate new income
- This evidence can take some time to gather.

### Key Point: **Lasting Impact and Exit Strategy**

- If you are asking for funding for resources and activity to make a step change in your resilience it's vital to state clearly about what will happen when the project ends.
- Will everything 'drop off a cliff'?
- How will the work be sustained and taken forward?
- How will it be funded?

### Key point: Appropriate level of **cash match**

- We want to make our funding go further, and we expect you to make the most of other sources of income available to you.
- In the previous round we said we may choose to fund 100 per cent of the activity but that we would strongly prioritise applications that included other sources of funding.

### Key Point: Do you really want to **change?**

- Running a project like this is a lot of work and takes up a lot of time and energy
- Do you have the support and motivation to make the most of it?
- Is your Board behind it and activity involved? Can you provide evidence of this? (If your application is successful, you will be asked to confirm that your full application is supported by the governing body of your organisation.)
- Do you really want to change the way your museum works to make it more resilient?

### Key Point: **Equality and Diversity**

- No museum can be excellent if it is not diverse.
- Diversity starts at the top with your governing body – it should reflect the diversity of your 'community'
- The museum sector in the SW is still nowhere near as diverse as it should be in terms of the people on boards, staff and volunteers, and the audiences they attract
- Diversity is key to resilience and is something we look at specifically when assessing applications
- To find out more: <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/our-priorities-2011-15/diversity-and-creative-case/>

### Key Point: **Measurable Results**

- What will you achieve as the result of the funded project?
- How will you know if you have succeeded?
- How can you measure where you are now so you know what has changed?
- How will you actively respond to the information and evaluation generated by your project?

### Key Point: **Critical Friends**

- I recommend asking a critical friend to look at your proposal – someone who isn't afraid to ask you awkward questions or play devil's advocate.
- Preferably this should be someone who knows something about the museum, with business acumen and/or experience of applying for public funds

**Key Point:**

**Sharing** what you have learnt

- Sharing learning doesn't just mean putting a report on your website, it means extending the benefits of what you've done to other museums in a real and tangible way.
- And sharing things that haven't been successful if as important as those that have been successful.

**Key Point: Partnerships**

- In the past we have actively encouraged partnerships and this has led to some major funding successes
- Think about whether a partnership might work for you
- Partnership is very hard work and time-consuming – how will you ensure your project has enough resources to work in partnership and successfully coordinate and deliver the project?
- Partnerships are essentially about being friends with other organisations and having shared aims
- We will expect to see robust partnership agreements clearly setting out the commitment, roles and responsibilities of all partners.

**The End**

[mary.godwin@artscouncil.org.uk](mailto:mary.godwin@artscouncil.org.uk)

07712 854914