

For information
on 5 February 2010

Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs

Future Development of Museum Services

Purpose

This paper sets out the Administration's decision on the governance of the public museums managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD). We consider that these public museums should continue to be managed by LCSD with their public missions strengthened and their identity and focus sharpened. We will also set out in the last section of this paper our stance on the development of private museums.

Background

2. On 13 November 2009, we informed the Home Affairs (HA) Panel vide LC Paper No. CB(2)232/09-10(01) of the improvement measures to further enhance the operation and services of the public museums under LCSD with reference to the recommendations made by the Committee on Museums (CoM) in May 2007.

3. As regards the governance of LCSD museums, we undertook at the meeting to report to the HA Panel in three months on whether a statutory Museums Board (MB) would be established as recommended by the CoM.

CoM's Recommendations

4. Recognising the complexity of the governance issue, the CoM recommended that the proposed statutory MB “*should be set up in three years’ time as far as practicable, having regard to the time required for introducing new legislation for the new governance structure, conducting staff consultation and handling staff-related matters*”¹. At the same time, it recommended that the Government should “*promptly take actions to recruit new staff and retain those experienced while planning for the institutional changes*”², and “*carefully deliberate on the necessary interfacing arrangements between the public museums and the proposed M+ in the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD), in terms of allocation of collections and possible consequential adjustments to the missions and governance structure*”³. As an advisory body tasked to make recommendations on the general direction as to how the provision of public museums services should be improved in various aspects, we reckon that the CoM was not expected to spell out the relative priority of and the intrinsic relationship among the various recommendations, which should be analysed and assessed in detail by the Administration.

5. We also note that in making its recommendation for the setting up of a statutory MB for public museums, the CoM considers the existing mode of governance of LCSD museums has the following shortcomings :

- *There should be clearer identity and greater public accountability and transparency for each individual museum;*
- *There should be more flexibilities in applying Government regulations and procedures to the operation of museums with regard to outsourcing, procurement, accounting management and financial planning;*
- *There should be more community involvement in the management and operation of museums; and*
- *There should be pro-active publicity and entrepreneurial*

¹ CoM Report, pp. 41-42

² CoM Report, p.8

³ CoM Report, pp.17-18

*marketing approach*⁴.

6. The Administration has carefully examined the relevant factors set out in paragraph 4 above and agrees that the services of public museums could be further improved along the lines as set out by the CoM in paragraph 5 above but this could be done under the existing mode of governance. The museum staff also strongly requested the resumption of recruitment of personnel on civil service terms to fill museum posts. With the launching of the WKCD project, there will be added demand for expertise to run the M+. As outlined in the following paragraphs, various actions and initiatives will be taken to achieve the objectives identified by the CoM. Corporatisation is therefore not the only option in fulfilling the public's expectation for our public museums.

Considerations

(a) Modes of governance of overseas museums

7. Overseas examples show that the modes of governance of museums can be generally divided into four main categories – government-run museums, statutory body-run museums, non-profit corporations and private enterprises.

(i) Government-run museums

In the government-run model, the museums are directly under a government department or within an arm's length of the government ministry responsible for cultural policies. Although these museums are heavily funded by the government, they are also encouraged to look beyond government funding for additional sources of income. Some government-run museums are given the power and flexibility to adopt the most appropriate business and financial management measures so that their operational efficiency could be enhanced. Examples of government-run models include the majority of museums run by the local authorities of the United Kingdom (UK), such as Leeds Museums and Galleries, public museums in Italy and the majority

⁴ CoM Report, p.40

of the museums run by local governments of Japan.

(ii) Statutory body-run museums

Another mode of governance is to operate museums through the formation of a statutory body which is “at arm’s length” from the government. The statutory board/trust/foundation is often set up by the government under an act or legislation with board members appointed by the government or the statutory body itself. The government provides substantial funding for projects/capital works for the museum concerned, while the statutory body is delegated the authority to manage the museum’s finance, physical and human resources. Examples of statutory body-run museums include Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, Musée du Louvre and Musée d’Orsay of France, national museums in Australia, and national level museums in the UK such as the British Museum and Tate Museums, and the Smithsonian museums in the United States (US).

(iii) Non-profit institutions

A third mode of governance is to operate a museum as a non-profit institution or corporation. These institutions are supported by either public or private foundations or trusts and governed by a board of trustees as registered charities. The primary source of funding comes from contributed and earned resources such as endowment, membership, retail outlets, investment and admissions. Other sources of income may include grants from the government/state/city. The board acts in accordance with the trust deed or other forms of legal instruments that govern the museum concerned. Examples include most of the major museums in the US such as the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation which runs the Guggenheim museums, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, and the Paul Getty Museum established and managed by the J. Paul Getty Trust.

(iv) Private enterprises

Many overseas private museums, in particular those in the US and Japan, are run on a self-sustaining basis with full autonomy as a commercial enterprise. These museums are established by the private sector and may have a Board appointed by the foundation/founder to oversee the funding, management and operation of the museum. Examples include the Ripley's Believe It or Not Museums in the US and Mori Art Museum in Tokyo, which are established by private enterprises and foundations.

8. Different modes of governance have their own advantages and disadvantages. We recognise that museums are not homogeneous entities in that each museum differs from the others in terms of its theme, mission, size, organisation, cultural, educational and historical significance, community support, and financial situation (including the ability to generate income and raise funds). The historical and cultural context of a country or city also have a bearing on the governance structure of its museums. It would therefore not be appropriate to advocate one single mode of governance that is universally applicable to and suitable for all museums. Different modes of governance could co-exist to suit the specific circumstances of the museums and local environment.

(b) Fulfilling missions and roles of public museums with clearer identity and transparency

9. The LCSD currently manages 14 public museums with different themes and characteristics which can be broadly categorised into the three streams, namely art, history and science, as set out in Annex A. We agree with the CoM that, collectively, their mission should be as follows :

- *As **cultural institutions**, museums have the role of enriching the cultural life of the community by safeguarding and presenting the natural, cultural and scientific heritage of mankind. They have the duty to acquire, conserve, research and exhibit collections to meet the multifarious and changing needs of the community. Museums hold their collections in trust for the benefit of society; and*

- *As educational institutions, museums have the role of nurturing and promoting the awareness, appreciation and understanding of natural, cultural and scientific heritage in the community, especially amongst the younger generations. They have the duty to reach out to the public to forge a closer relationship with the education sector and the general community in drawing up appropriate educational museum programmes.*⁵

10. We are striving to achieve clearer identity and character for each public museum whilst strengthening their educational role. The respective visions, missions and values of major public museums are published and made available through their websites. They are reproduced at Annex B. The efforts and plans by the flagship museums to better position themselves to achieve clarity of identity are set out below.

(i) Art museums

11. The Hong Kong Museum of Art has a broad collection covering various art disciplines including traditional Chinese art and antiquities, and contemporary Hong Kong art. In terms of programming, it pursues a dynamic and balanced mix of exhibition programmes covering arts of the world, ranging from classical to contemporary.

12. To present individualistic and creative programmes and to increase artistic collaborations with outside curators, the Museum of Art has introduced a successful **guest-curatorship scheme** in its exhibition programme. 45 local independent curators and six overseas curators were invited to submit exhibition proposals in the “Hong Kong Art: Open Dialogue” project launched in 2006. The four thematic exhibitions by four guest curators staged from 2007 to 2009 were well received by the public and the art community with an attendance of over 140 000 visitors. In addition, seven “emerging” local artists were invited to take part in “Louis Vuitton: A Passion for Creation”, a blockbuster contemporary art exhibition in 2009 which had attracted a record breaking attendance of 120 000.

⁵ CoM Report, p. 64

13. Looking ahead, the Museum will continue to strengthen its collaboration with guest curators as well as renowned museums in the world (blockbuster exhibitions have been held in collaboration with Centre Pompidou, Palace Museum, British Museum, etc.). The Museum is also working to promote and position itself as a museum of regional/international significance with its invaluable and unique collection of ink art including the world-class Xubaizhai (虛白齋) collection of Chinese painting and calligraphy, and representative works of modern and contemporary Hong Kong and Chinese masters, such as Lu Shoukun (呂壽琨), the Lingnan School Masters Gao Jianfu (高劍父), Zhao Shaoang (趙少昂), Lin Fengmian (林風眠) and other prominent masters. Master Wu Guanzhong (吳冠中) has recently donated 33 pieces of his works worth over \$150 million to the Museum of Art which have significantly enhanced the Museum's collection of Chinese paintings together with a number of other important donations of ink art received by the Museum in recent years including those by Liu Guosong (劉國松), Huang Boye (黃般若), Ding Yanrong (丁衍庸), He Qiyuan (何漆園), Liu Bingheng (劉秉衡), and Johnson Chow (周士心). The continued support of artists and the involvement of the local and professional communities will be imperative to achieving this long-term objective.

14. To showcase its spectacular collections of ink art, the Museum is planning a series of thematic exhibitions, including the one on Wu Guanzhong's works in March 2010 and a major contemporary ink art exhibition to be curated by an internationally renowned art curator later in the year.

(ii) History museums

15. As the only history museum in Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Museum of History has a public mission to promote public interest in and understanding of Hong Kong history, Chinese history and world history with a view to fostering our cultural identity and expanding our global cultural vision. The presentation of the permanent exhibition "Hong Kong Story" and various special exhibitions, as well as educational and extension activities were in keeping with this mission. In recent years,

the Hong Kong community attaches great importance to beliefs and values on historical preservation and collective memory. The Hong Kong Museum of History has an important role in the promotion of **public history** which should be of good interest and educational value to the local community, particularly the younger generation. Amongst its rich programme of exhibitions, the Museum will launch the “*Public History*” *exhibition series* in collaboration with various community organisations in staging exhibitions on the history of Hong Kong, its people and that of the organisations concerned. Planned exhibitions include “*Hong Kong in the Sixties and Seventies*”, “*Children’s life in Hong Kong*” and a series of exhibitions on themes related to Japanese Occupation of Hong Kong. These projects will involve not only the academics and professionals, but also the general public so as to leverage on their creativity and collections. The exhibition series will also provide useful and relevant information/materials for academic research and educational programmes.

(iii) Science museums

16. The Hong Kong Science Museum and Space Museum organise thematic exhibitions in an enjoyable environment to cultivate interest in science and space in the community. In addition, they provide students with knowledge and hands-on experience which supplements the school curricula in **science education**, thereby, inspiring and motivating students to achieve their potential in the fields of science, technology, engineering and space. Notably, the Hong Kong Space Museum jointly organised with the China Astronaut Research and Training Centre a seven-day Young Astronaut Training Camp in August 2009. It was the first official training programme of its kind organised by the China Astronaut Research and Training Centre for teenage students in Hong Kong. It aims to enrich students’ knowledge and experience of Chinese astronaut training, enabling them to learn more about the achievements of Chinese space technology and fostering an interest in astronomy and space science. During the training, 30 young astronauts visited major space facilities in Beijing, including the China Academy of Space Technology, Mission Control Hall, China Astronaut Research and Training Centre, and the National Observatory, as well as the Xichang Satellite Launch Centre in Xichang. Programmes like this help elevate the profile of the museums

as well as increase general interests in advance science and technology.

(c) Education and promotion of art through better co-ordination

17. The fulfillment of the important mission of the public museums, namely promotion of art and culture and general education, often involves inter-departmental and inter-agency cooperation, for example in the provision of timely and relevant education/training programmes for students/teachers. LCSD has been working to forge a close working relationship with the Education Bureau (EDB), schools and tertiary/academic institutions in developing art promotion and other programmes. These include seminars, student workshops, teacher training and historical research programmes and production of teaching and learning materials in supporting the liberal studies, history and science curricula. For example:

- the Museum of Art and the Heritage Museum have recently contributed collection images and curatorial write-ups for the publication of the “Art Appreciation and Criticism” series to tie in with the introduction of the new curriculum on art education and to facilitate teachers in the teaching of visual art and national education; and
- the Museum of Art will also collaborate with EDB in organising an international students’ art exhibition in 2010, in addition to workshops and guided tours.

18. Overall, the number of educational activities and the total number of participants have increased significantly, from about 1 500 and about 500 000 respectively in 2000/01 to about 3 400 and about 1 million respectively in 2008/09, representing a respective 127% and 80% increase. Timely and effective co-ordination with different government agencies and other stakeholders plays an important role in fulfilling the public mission of modern museums. Public museums are well placed to achieve these goals.

(d) Community involvement through Panels of Museum Advisors, guest curators and nurturing young artists

19. To increase professional and community involvement in the operation of public museums, we will set up a **Panel of Museum Advisors** for each of the three streams of museums, viz. art, history and science. These Panels will comprise individuals of different background and expertise to advise LCSD on the strategies for the development, promotion and management of public museums, with a view to strengthening the current network and opportunities for community involvement.

20. On a professional level, we will continue to engage guest curators to curate museum programmes. For example, the Museum of Art is planning to invite an internationally renowned art curator to curate a major contemporary ink art exhibition. It will also invite prestigious local collectors and foundations to showcase their world-class collections of Chinese art.

21. Another important aspect of professional and community involvement is the **promotion of the work of local artists** to local and overseas audience. Recent efforts include :

- the Hong Kong Contemporary Art Biennial Art Awards exhibition and fringe programmes curated by museum staff and guest curators that give recognition to young artistic talents;
- the Heritage Museum's "Design Series" programmes aiming to promote young designers; and
- two major exhibitions, namely, "Legacy and Creations: the Power of Ink" and "Legacy and creations: Art vs Art" to be held at the Shanghai Art Museum and the Shanghai Museum of Contemporary Art respectively as Hong Kong's cultural highlights during the Shanghai World Expo 2010.

22. **Bringing arts into the community** is a direct way to expand the reach of museums and increase community involvement. LCSD's Art Promotion Office organises the "*Artists-in-Neighborhood*" Scheme which focuses on the promotion of the work of young artists in the local community setting. The recent "Arts in the Park" initiative and the display of public arts in Government buildings trial scheme to be rolled out later this year are notable examples of the museums' out-reach

activities.

(e) Strengthening cultural software and expertise

23. To support the Administration's initiative to promote the development of the cultural and creative industries as announced in the 2009-10 Policy Address, Hong Kong needs to expand both its pool of experienced professionals, including curators and technical staff. There is a general view in the community that priority should be given to capacity building and developing cultural software in the next ten years or so. Hitherto, LCSD museums are a fertile training ground for curatorial experts and professional staff by providing them with hands-on training in museum work. Having regard to the development of more visual arts venues and museums, there is an imminent need to expand the pool of museum curators and administrators to provide support to their planning and operation in the next five years or so.

24. Due to the general open recruitment freeze for the civil service and the review on the mode of governance of museums, the recruitment of civil servants to fill museum-related posts has been suspended since 1999. Non-civil service contract staff have been engaged to meet the operational needs. LCSD considers that there is an urgent need to resume open recruitment of civil service staff to undertake museum duties so as to expand/retain a pool of expertise in the relevant areas. The decision not to pursue corporatisation would allow the recruitment of museum staff on civil service terms to resume immediately to alleviate the situation. It would provide a more stable environment for nurturing museum professionals who will be in great demand in the near future, in particular with the opening of M+ at the WKCD.

(f) Financial implications and greater flexibility/entrepreneurial marketing

25. In spite of its recommendation for setting up a statutory MB, the CoM recommends that *“the Government should maintain its commitment to provide a stable and adequate funding source to public museums in the future..... so that their effective operation and delivery of museum*

services would not be adversely affected”⁶. It is envisaged that the level of funding required from the Government for the statutory MB would not be less than the recurrent costs incurred by LCSD at the moment. On top of this, depending on the arrangements proposed for the affected staff, we might need to provide exit pay for the civil servants now working in the public museums who could not be absorbed elsewhere in LCSD or other departments upon the transfer of the public museums to the statutory MB.

26. Under the existing mode of governance, it is possible for LCSD to adopt, and it has indeed adopted, a more dynamic approach in marketing and promoting exhibitions and activities through the use of commercial advertisements and electronic media as well as engaging marketing specialists. In addition, we will examine, in conjunction with the relevant bureaux and departments, relevant rules and procedures so as to enable the museums to operate with greater flexibility and creativity. These include, among others, the retention of cash sponsorship and donations for use by museums, the operation of museum shops and catering services, the production of merchandise. We will also re-engineer the core duties of the museum staff so as to support a more dynamic and community-oriented approach in the delivery of service. These measures are conducive to making our museums more flexible, dynamic and responsive to the needs of the community. In particular, we are drawing up creative marketing and publicity strategies in order to attract young and new audiences and widen the existing audience base.

Funding Support Mechanism for Private Museums

27. Some Members have asked us to provide more information on the Government’s efforts in promoting the development of private museums. From the cultural policy perspective, we welcome and encourage the establishment of private museums, which complement publicly-funded museums in maintaining a diverse museum presence in Hong Kong. Having regard to the unique nature and operational needs of individual private museums, we consider that requests for financial

⁶ CoM Report, p.43

support from private museums should be examined and processed on a case-by-case basis. In particular, we will assess such requests against the following five main parameters –

- (a) whether the development of the museum concerned will help maintain a diverse, pluralistic and vibrant cultural ecology in Hong Kong;
- (b) whether the theme and contents of the museum concerned will help preserve and promote Hong Kong’s art, culture and heritage with special reference to the key areas where Hong Kong’s unique and outstanding development is showcased;
- (c) whether the development of the museum concerned will help enhance Hong Kong’s positioning as a creative economy and regional cultural hub;
- (d) whether the activities and programmes of the museum concerned will help foster partnership between the Government and the community by complementing the public museums managed and operated by LCSD; and
- (e) whether the museum would be managed by professional staff adopting internationally accepted code of practice.

28. In addition, we will also assess carefully the museum’s “vision and mission”, “governance”, “community involvement” and “collections custodianship”. Reference will be made to the broad framework of the appraisal systems in overseas museums associations or boards (e.g. the American Association of Museums, the Museums Australia, and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council of UK).

29. Against the above criteria, we have been working closely with the Hong Kong Maritime Museum to map out how we should take forward its relocation and renovation project at the Central Pier 8. We also welcome collaboration between public and private museums.

Conclusion

30. As reported to the HA Panel in November 2009, LCSD museums will implement robust measures to support the development of Hong Kong's cultural software. We will continue to further enhance the operation of the public museums by deepening and broadening the extent of public engagement and community involvement through closer dialogue and collaboration with various stakeholders including guest curators, collectors, District Councils, non-government organisations, the business sector and education institutions. With a decision taken on the mode of governance of public museums, we will take proactive steps to strengthen their public missions and their ability to fulfill them, sharpen their respective focus and identity, and expand the pool of museum advisors and curators to support the development of cultural software in Hong Kong.

Home Affairs Bureau
January 2010

Public museums under LCSD^{Note 1}
(As of January 2010)

Art

1. Flagstaff House Museum of Teaware (1984)
2. Hong Kong Museum of Art (1991)

History

3. Lei Cheng Uk Han Tomb Museum (1957)
4. Sheung Yiu Folk Museum (1984)
5. Hong Kong Railway Museum (1985)
6. Sam Tung Uk Museum (1987)
7. Law Uk Folk Museum (1990)
8. Hong Kong Museum of History (1998)
9. Hong Kong Museum of Coastal Defence (2000)
10. Hong Kong Heritage Museum (2000)
11. Dr Sun Yat-sen Museum (2006)
12. Fireboat Alexander Grantham Exhibition Gallery (2007)

Science

13. Hong Kong Space Museum (1980)
14. Hong Kong Science Museum (1991)

^{Note 1} In addition to the 14 public museums listed above, the Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Centre, the Ping Shan Tang Clan Gallery cum Heritage Trail Visitors Centre and the Hong Kong Film Archive are also gazetted as museums under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132). However, the two Centres are actually exhibition centres concerned with heritage preservation and under the management of the Antiquities and Monuments Office while the Film Archive is to conserve Hong Kong films and related materials and facilitate research on such films.

**Vision, Mission and Values of the Major Museums of
Leisure and Cultural Services Department**

1. Hong Kong Museum of Art

Vision

- To make the museum service in Hong Kong an important component of the city's cultural asset and to serve the public through the collection, conservation, exhibition and interpretation of significant works of art by raising the visitors' level of artistic appreciation and stimulating creativity within the context of global development.

Mission

- To study, collect and exhibit works of art and antiquities, particularly those of Hong Kong, Guangdong and China to establish Hong Kong's cultural identity.
- To bring to Hong Kong a multi-cultural vision of the arts and culture of the world through an international programme of exhibitions.
- To promote international art exchange through a variety of programmes and activities.
- To promote and recognise local artistic talents and excellence in artistic pursuits.
- To enhance public knowledge and appreciation of art.
- To train docents and volunteers to work closely with schools to supplement art education in the school curricula.
- To form partnership with other art, cultural and community organisations in the planning and provision of art-related activities for all walks of life.
- To create an environment to turn museum visits into meaningful educational, aesthetic, intellectual, and cultural experiences.

2. Hong Kong Museum of History

Vision

- To provide quality museum services commensurate with Hong Kong's development as a world-class city and events capital.

Mission

- To preserve and promote Hong Kong's historical and cultural heritage through collecting, conserving, processing, studying and displaying cultural objects related to the archaeology, history, ethnography and natural history of Hong Kong and its hinterland.
- To enhance public awareness and understanding of the history and culture of Hong Kong with a view to enriching our cultural lives and strengthening social cohesion.
- To promote public awareness and understanding of world history and culture with a view to expanding our global cultural vision, which draws on the essence of other cultures to develop Hong Kong into an international cultural metropolis.
- To foster better awareness of greater interest in museum activities through a varied and balanced programme of exhibitions, educational activities and publications so as to encourage community support and involvement through sponsorship, joint presentations, local and overseas museum co-operation and docent activities, and to take appropriate measures to popularise museum activities and more importantly, to create value for today's society.
- To be a learning platform to support the notion of "life-long learning" through close co-operation and interaction with the community at large, the education and cultural sectors in particular.
- To promote cultural tourism among visitors from the mainland and overseas alike by introducing to them Hong Kong's historical and cultural heritage.
- To enhance interactive and participatory learning by putting digital technology into the hands of museum users, which is just a first step to interpret the role of digital artefacts in museums of the 21st century.

Values

- Professionalism
- Impartiality
- Customer-oriented

- Serving the community
- Quality programming
- Creativity
- Continuous improvement

3. Hong Kong Heritage Museum

Vision

- To promote Hong Kong as a cultural metropolis through the rich heritage created by Hong Kong people, their ancestors and descendents.

Mission

- To preserve, study, present and interpret the material culture of the peoples of Hong Kong for the education, inspiration and enjoyment of Hong Kong residents and visitors.

Values

- Customer focus
- Professionalism
- Excellence

4. Hong Kong Science Museum

Vision

- To provide quality museum services in promoting public interest in science and technology and develop the Museum as a science centre both locally and internationally.

Mission

- To encourage creativity and promote professionalism and excellence in Science Museum services.
- To provide activities to establish the museum as an event centre.
- To provide good quality educational exhibits and activities.
- To provide quality and safe museum services and achieve a high level of customer satisfaction.
- To establish a good collection on the heritage of science and technology in Hong Kong.

- To participate actively in relevant international activities.

Values

- Quality
- Creativity
- Professionalism
- Continuous improvement
- Active participation
- Encouragement
- Value

5. Hong Kong Space Museum

Vision

- To provide world-class museum facilities and services and develop the Museum into an astronomy and space science education centre of the region.

Mission

- To enrich life by providing quality museum services and lifelong learning environment for all.
- To promote professionalism and excellence in museum services.
- To provide highly educational and entertaining programmes and exhibitions in multi-languages to promote community interest in astronomy and space science and encourage cultural exchange.
- To provide activities to establish the museum to be an education centre.
- To provide a safe, clean, comfortable and friendly environment and achieve a high level of visitor satisfaction.
- To establish a good collection on the heritage of astronomy and space science of the region.
- To build a highly motivated, committed and satisfying workforce.

Values

- Visitor focus
- Quality
- Creativity
- Professionalism
- Continuous improvement