

To: Delyth Jewell MS
Chair, Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee
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Welsh Parliament, Cardiff Bay
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Dear Delyth Jewell MS

I am writing to you to make you aware of the news that Cardiff City Council is planning to launch a consultation on a proposal to close the Museum of Cardiff.

Cardiff City Council's consultation asks residents to choose between an option to take the Museum out of the Old Library and make it a mobile attraction to save £266,000 per year, or an option to keep the museum and find savings elsewhere. The Museums Association (MA) firmly opposes the proposal to close the museum and to make it a mobile attraction.

The MA is a UK-wide professional body representing everyone who work in and with museums. I am bringing the matter to your attention as we are extremely concerned by this proposal and the impact the potential closure will have on Cardiff residents, local businesses, tourism, staff members and the museum collection.

The Museum of Cardiff is an award-winning and internationally recognised museum which plays a vital role in the city's cultural life. The museum provides a range of social benefits for the local community and beyond, and actively contributes to Cardiff City Council's principal well-being objectives, which seek to create safe, confident and empowered communities in Wales. The 'People of Butetown' exhibition, which documented the history of Cardiff's ethnically diverse communities, is testament to the ways in which Cardiff Museum has actively served to empower the voices of the city's racialised communities, who have been frequently marginalised within the Welsh cultural mainstream. The closure of the Museum of Cardiff would be a significant loss to the cultural vibrancy of the city.

The museum has received investment from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and other local and national funders such as the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund. Closing the museum so soon after this investment would jeopardise any future sources of funding.

The proposal to convert the museum into a mobile or pop-up museum is also of concern. Mobile museums can be effective in reaching out to communities, but this would take substantial investment. We are also concerned about the future of the current collections as no provision is made in the proposal for the care and storage of the collections. Once the decant and storage costs are taken into consideration, it is probable that such costs would outweigh projected short-term savings.

The Museum of Cardiff has long pioneered community engagement; closing the museum would mean losing a thriving cultural asset that is consistently delivering against local and national priorities.

We recognise that local authorities are in a tough financial situation and are having to make difficult decisions. However, closing a much-loved local museum will not solve the problem. The museum makes an important economic contribution to the city. Spotlight data from 2020 shows that Welsh museums contribute £134m annually to the Welsh economy, therefore, this proposed closure is a short-term saving with a long-term cost. The museum is also a tourist attraction which brings visitors to the city who will subsequently spend money in shops and restaurants, further contributing to the local economy.

The Museums Association is working with the Federation of Museums and Art Galleries of Wales to make the strongest possible case for the retention of the museum for the people of Wales. We would be grateful for your support in raising awareness of the potential closure of the Museum of Cardiff and in finding a solution which will not result in the loss of such a valuable cultural institution.

Yours sincerely,



Sharon Heal

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