



CROYDON
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Councillor Simon Letts
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Councillor Mike Fisher
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Hon Ed Vaizey MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Culture,
Communications and Creative Industries
Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)
100 Parliament Street
London SW1A 2BQ

11 October 2013

Dear Minister

The London borough of Croydon and Southampton City Council are writing to you jointly regarding the current museums accreditation scheme managed by Arts Council England.

As councils we are committed to the provision of excellent services for local communities. We recognise the value that culture plays in developing our local economies and enhancing the lives of our communities. Indeed for that reason both our Council's are keen to develop our cultural offer. We have invested heavily in the cultural sectors in our constituencies and hope to continue this work in the future. Amongst the wonderful assets we have stewardship of, we are fortunate to have wonderful collections, which have helped engage and educate visitors and residents alike.

As you know the current financial climate presents challenges for many authorities, including our own, but we are keen to ensure that these challenges do not result in a poorer cultural offer. To that end we want to use our cultural assets effectively to invest in cultural services, so that new opportunities are developed and the quality of the existing services can be maintained. Options to achieve this may in some instances involve the sale of some objects from our cultural collections.

At present, we are very challenged in this regard by the expectations of the Accreditation Standard as set out by the Arts Council and the adherence to the guidelines provided by the Museums Association, a representative body of museum professionals. The prevailing view is that cultural assets should not be sold but if they are, in exceptional circumstances the benefits from any sale should be reinvested specifically in the collections from which they originate, rather than the broader cultural offer. This limits innovation and flexibility – qualities that government is encouraging local authorities to adopt.

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Hon Ed Vaizey MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Culture,
Communications and Creative Industries

We urge you to review the current Accreditation Scheme and its requirements regarding the sale of objects from museum's collections. A more flexible approach which would protect collections, facilitate some disposals and allow investment of receipts in a broad range of cultural services would in our view be more appropriate. It would contribute significantly to securing further investment in the cultural sectors of our communities..

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S Letts', written over a horizontal line.

Councillor Simon Letts
Leader
Southampton City Council
Email councillor.s.letts@southampton.gov.uk
Tel: 023 8083 2434

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Mike Fisher', written over a horizontal line.

Councillor Mike Fisher
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