

RENAISSANCE
museums for
changing lives



**Renaissance:
Taking stock of the achievements of
regional museums hubs
The national perspective**

October 2006

Contents

		Page number
Section One	Introduction	3
Section Two	What have been the big achievements so far? the PSA targets	5
	• looking beyond the targets	5
	• engaging more people and building audiences	6 6
	• developing organisations and their workforce for the benefit of users	10
	• creating new opportunities for people to enjoy collections	12
	• Designation Challenge Fund	
Section Three	What else has Renaissance achieved?	14
Section Four	What are the lessons that can be learned so far?	16
Section Five	Conclusions	18

Section One: Introduction

1. This report takes stock of the progress of the Renaissance programme between 2003 and 2006. In particular, it draws together the key achievements of the regional museum Hubs established in each English region, including links to the work of the Designation Challenge Fund (DCF). The report also summarises a number of lessons learned from the operation of the programme to date.
2. Renaissance is the national development strategy for regional museums and galleries in England¹. Since 2003 it has involved a major injection of Central Government funding to help modernise and transform museums and, in doing so, increase the number and range of people who benefit from – and are inspired by – those museums. The Renaissance programme is managed on behalf of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Department for Education and Skills by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA).
3. Renaissance involves a new framework for developing the museum sector in England based upon regional museum Hubs (described below), MLA's Regional Agencies, national museums, those regional museums who have collections which are designated as being of outstanding national or international importance and other museums working in an integrated way to reach and engage larger numbers of people with high quality services.
4. At the heart of the Renaissance framework is a network of nine regional Hubs. Each Hub comprises a consortium of four to six museum services working together to increase capacity and develop services for the benefit of users, both within their own museums and across the wider museum community.
5. A phased approach was taken to the development of the Hub network with three 'Phase One' regions (the North East, South West and West Midlands) receiving full funding by 2005/06 and the remaining six 'Phase Two' regions due to receive 60% of full funding by 2007/08.
6. As well as the development and delivery of activities through the regional museum Hubs, Renaissance funding has also:
 - supported MLA's Regional Agencies, including the operation of the Museum Development Fund which benefits the wider museum community in each region
 - provided funding to support the development of collections designated as being of national or international importance through the DCF
 - encouraged the setting up of Subject Specialist Networks of museum staff to share knowledge, collections expertise, research and interpretation skills
 - funded Collections Link, a new national advisory service for collections management issues
 - funded the Museums Association's Diversify! programme.

¹ In the remainder of this report, reference to 'museums' encompasses both museums and galleries

7. In the period up to March 2006, Renaissance received an overall investment of Central Government funds of £72 million, of which £40.48 million supported the work of regional museum Hubs and £3.8 million was awarded to 39 projects under the DCF. The breakdown of the funding provided to regional museum Hubs and through the DCF programme is set out in Tables One and Two below

Table One - Funding provided to the regional museums hubs: 2003 - 2006

	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	Total (2003-2006)
i) Phase One Hubs				
North East	£960,000	£2,467,000	£3,343,000	£6,770,000
South West	£1,340,000	£3,149,000	£5,181,000	£9,670,000
West Midlands	£1,420,000	£3,410,000	£5,420,000	£10,250,000
Total Phase One funding:	£3,720,000	£9,026,000	£13,944,000	£26,690,000
ii) Phase Two Hubs				
East of England	£220,000	£720,000	£1,214,000	£2,154,000
East Midlands	£200,000	£729,000	£963,000	£1,892,000
London	£250,000	£946,000	£1,324,000	£2,520,000
North West	£220,000	£820,000	£1,402,000	£2,442,000
South East	£260,000	£908,000	£1,548,000	£2,716,000
Yorkshire	£210,000	£676,000	£1,180,000	£2,066,000
Total Phase Two funding:	£1,360,000	£4,799,000	£7,631,000	£13,790,000
Overall totals:	£5,080,000	£13,825,000	£21,575,000	£40,480,000

Table Two - DCF awards: 2004-2006

East of England (7 awards)	-	£689,389
East Midlands	-	NIL
London (6 awards)	-	£688,846
North East (2 awards)	-	£197,842
North West (5 awards)	-	£438,030
South East (7 awards)	-	£689,158
South West (5 awards)	-	£394,518
West Midlands (4 awards)	-	£443,448
Yorkshire (3 awards)	-	£258,760
Total:	-	£3,799,991

Section Two: What have been the big achievements so far?

The PSA Targets

8. At the outset of the Renaissance initiative, DCMS required MLA and Hubs collectively to meet two Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets:
 - to increase by 25% the number of contacts between school age children and regional museums by 2005/06 (PSA1)
 - to generate an additional 500,000 visits to regional museums by new users predominantly from social classes C2, D, E and ethnic minorities by 2005/06 in order to demonstrate how Renaissance is helping to increase and diversify museum users (PSA2).
9. In both cases these PSA targets have been exceeded:
 - an increase of 50% in the number of school age children in contact with Hub museums between 2002/03 and 2005/06 – with contacts at all Hub museums in 2005/06 totalling some 1.16 million school age children
 - over 910,000 new users from C2, D, E groups and ethnic minorities have visited Hub museums between 2004 and 2006 – exceeding the target by more than 400,000 people.
10. The PSA1 target concerned with the number of school age children and regional museums is measured through a constant sample of:
 - pupils visiting Hub museums with their schools
 - outreach work by Hub museums with school age children.
11. The breakdown of the overall PSA1 figures show that a major proportion of the 50% increase nationally was achieved by the three Phase One Hubs (the North East, South West and West Midlands), reflecting the higher funding they received for their education and other work. The overall 50% increase in Hub museums' contacts with school age children comprises a 120% increase by the three Phase One Hubs and a 20% increase by the remaining six Phase Two Hubs.
12. A significant feature of the work of all Hubs was the major increase in museums' outreach work – amounting to a 664% increase in such activity with school age children compared with 2002/03. This was made possible by the expansion in all Hub museums' education staff as a result of Renaissance funding. The next part of the report provides further information about the work undertaken by all Hub museums with schools and their pupils.
13. In terms of the PSA2 target to secure additional visits to regional museums by new users drawn from priority groups, this is monitored by:
 - determining the proportion of new users from each of the priority groups, drawing on the annual survey of a sample of visitors to the Hub museums, described in paragraph 22. (A new user is defined as someone who is making their first visit to any museum in at least 12 months)

- applying that proportion to the total number of visits to Hub museums by UK based adults.

14. An analysis of the data for all Hub museums has confirmed that a significant proportion of the number of new users from priority groups was achieved by the three Phase One Hubs. The 910,000 new users from the priority groups is made of some 391,000 visitors to the three Phase One Hubs and over 519,000 to the six Phase Two Hubs.

15. Again this reflects the increased funding provided to Phase One Hubs, including their work with new audiences and those from priority groups. The next part of the report illustrates the range of activity undertaken by all Hubs in engaging with new users from the priority groups.

Looking beyond the targets

16. As well as meeting these specific Central Government targets, Renaissance has achieved much more and made a real impact in reaching a wide range of new audiences, transforming the quality of museum services and raising standards. It has done so by:

- emphasising the value of museums as places where people of all ages can learn about their past and the world in which they now live
- engaging people with services and experiences which enrich their lives
- encouraging social inclusion and instilling a greater sense of belonging within communities
- modernising the services which museums offer to make them more relevant to people's everyday lives.

17. The next part of the report describes the wider achievements of Renaissance and illustrates those achievements with specific examples of activity in different regions. The achievements are divided according to the three Priority Areas of the Renaissance programme:

- engaging more people and building audiences
- developing organisations and their workforce for the benefit of users
- creating new opportunities for people to enjoy collections.

i. Engaging more people and building audiences

18. As demonstrated by the work of Hubs in exceeding the PSA1 target, there has been a major expansion by all Hub museums in their work with children, young people and their teachers. This has reinforced the role of museums as centres for imaginative and creative learning for pupils of all ages. The 2005 evaluation of the impact of learning arising from Renaissance's education programmes² highlighted a number of important achievements and successes:

² Evaluation report by University of Leicester 'What did you learn at the museum today?' (2006)

- **pupils of all ages respond enthusiastically to the learning they encounter in regional museums**, with pupils experiencing high levels of enjoyment and inspiration, as well as being able to personalise their learning to the group activity they experience in museums. For example the “*Lazarus*” project in Nottingham engaged with 21 local schools to make collections available for learning; and themed days at Chatham Historic Dockyard have had a noticeable impact on the performance of under-achieving boys
- **older pupils find regional museums make school work more inspiring**, with many able to progress considerably in their understanding as a result of their direct engagement with objects and information available within museums. For example extensive work to support Key Stage Three pupils was carried out in Hampshire; the “*Museum in Transit*” project in Plymouth toured secondary and primary schools with objects and displays; and the “*Young Curators*” collections based project in Wolverhampton secured very positive feedback from pupils and teachers and is now being extended to other parts of the region
- **teachers consider the quality of museum based learning to be consistently high and are working in partnership with Hub museums to develop new learning programmes**. Teachers remain highly enthusiastic about Hub museums’ ability to offer powerful ways of teaching and learning for all children. For example in the South West teachers have been involved in developing Extended Learning Packages as a model for best practice partnerships with schools; and in Manchester a new Hub funded Primary Consultant post has been created within the Manchester Education Partnership to work with teachers in developing museum based learning across the city
- **teachers are using regional museums flexibly and imaginatively** in curriculum related and, increasingly, inter-disciplinary work. For example the “*Transformers*” project in Cambridge developed cross curricular science, RE and citizenship programmes; whilst in Coventry the award winning “*Kids in the Blitz*” introduced an innovative living history programme using theatre
- **museums are working successfully with children at risk of social exclusion** – over 30% of visits made to Hub museums were from schools located in the 20% most deprived areas in England. For example in Sheffield the museum worked with four secondary schools in the Education Action Zone and an artist in residence to introduce new learning programmes
- **Hub museums are working with high numbers of children with special educational needs** – 12% of the schools visiting regional museums are special schools whereas they only represent 5% of all schools in England. For example in London the Geffrye Museum worked with pupils from a special school in Hackney through programmes such as its after schools club
- **Hub museums are delivering successful programmes to schools on an outreach basis**. For example in the West Midlands the “*Museum without Walls*” initiative involved out of hours and outreach projects for pupils; in the North East, the “*Magic Bus*” involved taking museum education programmes into local schools; and the Museum of London’s outreach service to

secondary schools involved professional actors and theatre companies delivering sessions in class workshops or whole year performances

- **online material and e-learning guides have been developed to support museum based learning.** For example in Yorkshire the Hub developed dedicated e-learning spaces and online resources on a coordinated basis; whilst in the South East the Hub launched the *“Making the Most of Museums”* which guides teachers through the process of organising museum visits
- **Hubs are supporting the wider museum community to develop their work with schools.** For example the *“Sharing Benefits”* programme in the West Midlands established seminars, workshops and training on developing educational services; the North East’s regional education team developed school programmes and undertook specialist training for museums across the region; and the South East Hub developed the *“ABC of Working with Schools”* to support museums across the region in providing services for schools.

19. As a result of their work with schools, Hub museums are directly contributing to Government’s education priorities – they are promoting pupils’ creativity; they are supporting the development of personalised learning; and by providing high quality, creative and pleasurable learning opportunities for children of all ages they are playing a powerful role in helping deliver the *“Every Child Matters”* agenda.

20. In addition to their work with schools, Hub museums have attracted more people overall. **Over 13 million visits were made by people to Hub museums in 2005/06** – a 5.3% increase in visitor numbers since 2002/03, representing an increase of some 542,000 visits.

21. Regional museums also have played an increasing role in providing formal and informal learning opportunities for adults, both within museums and in a variety of community settings:

- **over 297,000 adults took part in educational activities at Hub museums in 2005/06.** For example in Essex the *“Bench Mark”* project worked with young offenders to redesign park benches using Colchester Castle as the inspiration for their work; whilst in London the *“Amazon to Caribbean”* and *“West Indian Front Room”* exhibitions engaged with large numbers of the Afro-Caribbean community
- **161,000 adults participated in Hub museums’ outreach activities in 2005/06** – an 87% increase in such activity since 2002/03. This has developed many new exciting partnerships with adults who have not previously engaged with museum activities. They include the *“Curiosity Shop”* exhibition in the North East which toured local shopping centres; in Bolton the *“Local Treasures”* community outreach work with non-traditional museum users of all ages; and in the East of England work with the local Chinese community resulting in an exhibition of their photographic work in town centres
- **some 10,450 adult community groups took part in Hub museum activities in 2005/06**, either on or off site. For example in Lincolnshire the

museum worked with the National Archives, libraries and the local Portuguese community to document their life experiences; in the South West programmes were developed to improve people's basic skills; and the "Touching the Treasures" project in Stoke worked with groups such as asylum seekers and people in sheltered housing to provide digital access to collections

- **a wide range of family learning initiatives have been developed**, bringing together parents and children (including those who are pre school age) within Hub museums and community venues. This has helped promote the family friendly nature of museums and has been a key means of targeting those who are not traditional visitors to museums. For example:
 - in the South West the Hub developed holiday and Saturday family learning activities and extended family provision, resulting in an increase of over 70% in children using museums out of school hours
 - at Manchester Art Gallery family users doubled during 2005/06 as a result of specific new activities for families
 - in the North East work with families culminated in the "Celebration of Fatherhood 2005" event
 - in the South East the Hub supported 30 non Hub museums in the Thames Valley in a joint campaign to become more family friendly, drawing on Oxford University Museums experience from winning the Guardian's Family Friendly Museum award in 2005
- **extensive work has taken place to engage with specific communities who are new to museums.** For example work with refugee groups in London to promote community cohesion; projects with the traveller community in Luton; and engaging young adults through Exeter's "Surfs Up" exhibition which subsequently toured throughout the region.

22. As well as reaching new audiences, **Renaissance is also concerned with delivery of high quality services to all who use museums.** The 2005 annual survey of a sample of visitors to Hub museums³ found that:

- the vast majority of visitors to Hub museums (96%) continue to be satisfied with their visit, with the proportion who are very satisfied having increased to two-thirds of visitors (67%)
- a large proportion of visitors (83%) consider Hub museums to be an exciting place to visit and almost two thirds (63%) left the museum feeling inspired
- they gained new knowledge as a result of their visit (80%)
- collections are displayed in ways which make it easy for people to understand (89%)
- for 50% of visitors, their visit was better than they expected.

³ Ipsos MORI visit exit survey 2005

ii. Developing organisations and their workforce for the benefit of users

23. **Renaissance has enabled the recruitment of significant numbers of additional staff** to Hub museums to run new initiatives (for example education and learning programmes) and build the capacity and quality of existing services. In total, over 370 new staff were recruited to Hub museums – 215 in the three Phase One Hubs and some 160 in Phase Two Hubs.

24. **Renaissance has also encouraged the modernisation of museums and the reorganisation of their services.** For example, in the North West the Specialisms Fund was used to develop *“Inspiring the Workforce”* involving the appointment of organisational learning and evaluation ‘champions’ within each Hub service which has been instrumental in effecting organisational change; whilst in the East of England the Hub has developed new approaches to improve access to their services, particularly for disabled people, including work with museums across the region.

25. **A major programme of workforce development and training has been put in place**, for staff in Hub museums and in the wider museum community. Specific initiatives have included:

- the recruitment of 17 trainees into Hub museums from ethnic minority communities to build their careers in museums, through the Positive Action Trainee programme
- support for leadership programmes. For example in the West Midlands where the first group of managers have taken part in the Leadership and Management Development Programme
- training and development of front of house staff in a number of Hub museums to create a better service for users. For example in the South West, Yorkshire, South East, North West and East of England regions
- the introduction of new training opportunities for museum staff at all levels. For example in the East Midlands the creation of an NVQ Centre at Lincolnshire enabled staff across the region to gain NVQ qualifications
- specific initiatives to support the development of staff in the wider museum community. For example:
 - the *“Sharing Skills”* initiative introduced by the South East Hub as part of their Specialisms Fund, including a *“Skills Bank”* providing free access to expert advice
 - the *“Core Museums Skills”* programme run in the North East
 - a major programme of regional training events in London, including *“Say it again, say it differently”* supporting local museums to produce scripted communication and exhibition text
 - programmes of training in collections care and conservation run by the West Midlands Hub (the *“Renaissance at Work”* programme)
 - the creation of a Museums Skills Coordinator for the South West.

26. **Hub funding has strengthened and extended the network of Museum Development Officers (MDOs)** to provide advice, support and training to the wider museum community. For example in the South East, West Midlands, South West and East of England regions; whilst in Yorkshire the Hub and Regional Agency jointly funded a new post to support local museums achieve Accreditation.
27. **New programmes have been developed to support volunteers** including the appointment of volunteer coordinators to develop new volunteer opportunities. For example in the North East and at Oxford University Museums.
28. Renaissance has levered significant additional funding into regional museums to support their development. Museums who are part of **regional Hubs have levered in over £194 million of additional funds** (both revenue and capital) from other sources during the period from 2003-2006. This included funding from other Central Government programmes (such as regeneration and neighbourhood renewal), Regional Development Agencies, the National Lottery, other local authority funding streams and commercial sponsorship
29. One specific example of such leverage is the redevelopment of Hull's Wilberforce and slavery collections. Renaissance funding supported the project management and initial consultation process for the development and was instrumental in kick starting the £3.7 million overall transformation of Wilberforce House in time for the 2007 commemoration of the abolition of the British slave trade.

iii. **Creating new opportunities for people to enjoy collections**

30. Renaissance has enabled regional museums to develop the quality of their collections, how they are displayed and interpreted. Between 2004 and 2006, Hub museums:
- **undertook major programmes to redisplay permanent collections.** For example the redisplay work carried out by Bristol on the Bristol School of Paintings; and in the West Midlands the redisplay of permanent collections at all Hub museums, such as Ironbridge's "*Art of Industry*" display and Birmingham's "*How Art is Made*" which followed extensive local consultation and involved interactive sessions with local artists
 - **presented innovative and high profile exhibitions.** For example Renaissance funded the learning element of Sheffield's "*Palace and Mosque*" exhibition of the V&A's Islamic collection which was seen by 19,000 visitors and launched the "*Pillars of Light*" programme explaining Muslim cultures across Yorkshire; whilst Exeter's Leonardo exhibition from the Royal Collection attracted 40,000 visitors
 - **developed more innovative and engaging approaches to interpret their collections.** For example at Cambridge the "*Learning on the Move*" project developed an audio visual guide on hand held computers providing an interactive introduction to their collections; whilst at Manchester Museum their "*Collective Conversations*" initiative improved the interpretation of its collections as well as engaging a wide range of local communities

- **recruited new staff to build museums' capacity and address conservation backlogs.** For example in the East Midlands the recruitment of ten Collections Access Assistants and a World Cultures Curator has led to 163,000 records being created or amended; whilst at York considerable work took place on the care and documentation of its previously hidden collections concerned with archaeology, geology and biology
- **promoted online access to collections, learning material and objects.** For example in the North East where a team of documentation officers were created to work across the region to develop collections knowledge; at Brighton and Hove the major increase in use of their online database as a result of work by the Renaissance funded documentation and digitisation team; and in London a new integrated website combining various collections under the theme of "*Exploring 20th Century London*", developed by the Hub and DCF.

31. Specific initiatives were also developed to **support collections held by the wider museum community** in each region. For example:

- in the East of England, non Hub museums were supported to develop new ways of working, including introducing virtual access to their collections
- at Exeter a Conservation Development Officer was appointed to support the conservation work of local museums
- in the North East the curatorial needs programme supported projects looking at collections by topics across the region
- in London a comprehensive directory of London museums undertaking diversity activities was developed ("*Untold London*") and is now being replicated in other regions.

Designated Challenge Fund programme

32. The DCF programme supported 39 projects between 2004-2006 in museums with Designated collections (both Hub and non-Hub museums) to raise the standards of those collections. This involved a wide range of activity to improve their care, conservation and display and, in turn, improve user access to those collections.

33. Where projects were undertaken by Hub museums, DCF funded activity complemented the Hub's other programmes to create opportunities for people to enjoy collections (as described above) and therefore contributed directly to achieving the Renaissance vision. Those DCF projects undertaken by non Hub museums also supported the Renaissance vision by engaging more people with collections, helping organisations and their workforce to develop, as well as improving the conservation and management of collections which are of national or international importance. DCF funded activity has encompassed:

- work with schools and communities to provide them with direct access to collections and dedicated study facilities
- increased work with volunteers and other means of engaging and consulting with local communities

- new interactive exhibition material and gallery trails to improve displays, interpretation and access to collections
- new web-based resources to develop online access to collections information and object interpretation
- new and refurbished storage facilities (including mobile units) to halt the deterioration in the condition of Designated collections
- work to reduce museums' documentation backlogs in order to improve collections management and improve public access
- the digitisation of Designated collections to make images more readily available
- leveraging in some £1.8 million of partnership funding to support the projects from other sources, in addition to the DCF funding of £3.8 million.

34. A summary of all DCF awards in 2004-2006 is contained in a final report which can also be searched by project theme. This document is available from MLA on request.

35. Arising from the operation of DCF projects, there are some important conclusions and lessons learned which have wider application to the work of Hubs and the Renaissance programme as a whole:

- through DCF projects, Renaissance has engaged with an extended range of important regional museums outside of the Hub networks, enabling those museums to prioritise effort on their collections of national or international importance and open up increased access to those collections
- DCF has also empowered museums with Designated collections to explore innovative approaches to working with new, diverse audiences, using their collections in different ways – for example on an outreach basis. (Both Hubs and non Hub museums with Designated collections will be collecting the same data from 2006, to demonstrate the overall number of users being reached across the Renaissance programme)
- DCF projects have demonstrated the significant opportunities which exist to promote increased on-line access to collections – a number of DCF projects have engaged with important new audiences through web based activity
- there is considerable potential for Hubs to collaborate more closely with museums with Designated collections on collections development work and audience development initiatives – both Hub and non Hub museums have much to learn from the other's successes and achievements. At present links have started to be formed between some Hub and non Hub museums to work together and share expertise. But there are opportunities to extend this further – for example through Subject Specific Networks, which are being led by both Hub and non Hub museums
- the importance of establishing mechanisms for Hubs and non Hub museums with Designated collections to draw together best practice in collections based activity which can be shared more widely, so as to avoid reinventing wheels.

Section Three: What else has Renaissance achieved?

36. As well as the specific successes described in Section Two, Renaissance has also brought about a number of less quantifiable – but nevertheless very important – achievements:

- Renaissance funded activity has helped raise the profile of museums generally, both with the public and partners at a local, regional and national level
- Renaissance has proved a catalyst for change within museums and generated a shared sense of purpose amongst Hub museums
- the increased emphasis being given to education and learning across regional museums' overall work as a result of Renaissance and the way this is helping to break down barriers and achieve real organisational development in those museums
- the increasing integration of Renaissance funded activities and posts into Hub museums' mainstream services and how this is leading to the modernisation of the museum sector generally
- the opportunity which Renaissance has provided to regional museums to be more outward looking, innovative and confident in trying our new approaches – and where necessary to take risks – which would not have been possible without the freedom provided by Renaissance funding
- an increase in the motivation, commitment and self esteem of staff in Hub museums arising from the opportunity to develop new services and address previous under investment through Renaissance funded programmes
- the very positive working arrangements which have developed within all regional museum Hubs – involving museums who may well have not worked together previously – and the partnerships which have been put in place to deliver new services. This has involved new collaborations:
 - with users and specific communities who are new to museums, arising from greater consultation and an ability to respond effectively to their needs
 - between Hub museums' staff at all levels working together on shared agendas (for example collaboration between learning teams in each region)
 - with Hub museums and Regional Agencies (for example in the joint development of regional museum strategies, on workforce development initiatives and support for the wider museum community)
 - with local museums within each region who are not part of the Hub
 - with regional and local agencies from outside the museum sector, with Hubs becoming recognised as regional partners in wider cultural, economic and social agendas (such as education and community cohesion) and, as a result, improving the strategic position of the sector overall.
- the regional leadership role which Hubs and Regional Agencies have jointly assumed in supporting the development of the sector within their region (for

example through joint work to develop and implement regional museum strategies)

- Renaissance is demonstrating the success of investment in museums with funding bodies and providing a clear evidence base, although more work is needed to measure the longer term impact and value of the programme
- Renaissance has encouraged museums to adopt a stronger performance management culture and improved use of visitor/user data.

37. These less quantifiable achievements – when taken alongside the more visible outputs from Renaissance – are seen as important measures of the added value and benefits of the Hub concept.

Section Four: What are the lessons that can be learned so far?

38. Renaissance has unlocked a wide range of enthusiasm and support for the programme's ambitions, with many practical examples of what has been achieved described earlier in this report. There are also a number of important lessons which can be learned from Renaissance activity to date and taken into account during its future development. These are divided into firstly, issues of a strategic nature concerning Renaissance and secondly, those concerned more with Hubs' operational activity.

i. Strategic issues

- the importance of continued clarity over the Renaissance vision, clarification of the respective roles of those involved in delivering that vision – within Hubs, the MLA Partnership and across the wider museum community – and effective advocacy of what Renaissance is achieving
- embedding Renaissance in museums' organisational development so that its impact deepens further across the sector and museums are receptive to change and new ideas
- the crucial importance of continuing to maintain staff support within Hub museums for Renaissance and a recognition of the potential changes which will be needed to traditional roles and responsibilities within museums
- the importance of Hub museums continuing to cater for the needs of their existing users whilst also reaching new audiences
- the need to balance reaching large numbers of users in order to meet Renaissance targets and achieving impact with relatively small numbers of non traditional museum users who represent important opportunities to extend museums' reach and influence
- the importance of communicating the benefits of Renaissance to the wider museum community, how those benefits and lessons learned are being shared across the sector and the role of Hubs as beacons for the sector as a whole
- the need to deepen the impact of Renaissance for the wider museum community, and align the work of MDOs and the use of the Museum Development Fund more closely with Hubs.

ii. Operational issues

- the need for Hubs to avoid over stretching themselves by developing too many freestanding programmes and projects, and instead focusing on fewer priority initiatives
- developing and maintaining relationships with a wide variety of partners takes considerable time and commitment – particularly with groups who are not traditional museum users, where relationships, and the museum's credibility, have to be established from scratch

- the difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff and the continuing perception amongst potential new staff of Renaissance being a time limited programme
- the need for Hubs to work more closely with those museums with Designated collections – so far the engagement between Hubs and those museums with DCF funding has been patchy, although the picture varies between regions
- the importance of Hub programmes of work continuing to reflect their different regional characteristics, whilst ensuring lessons learned are shared between regions and opportunities for collaborative working are fully exploited
- the need to recognise the competing demands on senior staff time and added responsibilities which Renaissance places on heads of service within Hub museums, as well as putting in place the necessary infrastructure to enable Hubs to handle their increased administrative and financial responsibilities
- the opportunities to increase cross regional working between Hubs and share good practice.

Section Five: Conclusions

39. This report has summarised the many positive achievements, impact and value for money of the Renaissance programme to date and, in particular, the role played by Hubs and the DCF.
40. The opportunity now exists to broaden and deepen the impact of Renaissance, building on the programme's successes so far with the implementation of the Hubs' plans for 2006-2008. In doing so, Renaissance is laying the foundations for a transformed and reinvigorated museum sector across England, able to play a direct role in improving people's quality of life.

October 2006

The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) and the nine regional agencies work in partnership to provide strategic direction and leadership for museums, libraries and archives across England. Together we work to improve people's lives by building knowledge, supporting learning, inspiring creativity and celebrating identity.

Current news, developments and information on our activities are available to view or download from our website. www.mla.gov.uk

Copies of this publication can be provided in alternative formats. Please contact MLA publications on 020 7273 1458.

Museums, Libraries and Archives Council
Victoria House
Southampton Row
London WC1B 4EA
Tel: 020 7273 1444
Fax: 020 7273 1404
Email: info@mla.gov.uk

Registered Charity No: 1079669