



## **Museum Accreditation and Comprehensive Performance Assessment – a guide for museums and local authorities**

August 2008

### **Introduction**

MLA's Museum Accreditation Scheme sets nationally agreed stands for UK museums. It supports museums to achieve a recognised standard and to identify further areas for work and development that will support continuous improvement. Accreditation builds upon the Museum Registration Scheme, which has been in place since 1988. The name of the scheme was changed to Accreditation in 2004 when a new standard was introduced.

The Audit Commission, the independent watchdog for local government, has confirmed in 2006 that Museum Accreditation will form the basis of a performance indicator within the culture service assessment of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA), the means by which local councils in England, and the services that they provide to the public, are assessed.

This guide sets out what this means for local councils, and for museums.

### **What has been approved?**

- The Audit Commission has confirmed the inclusion of the Museums Accreditation as a performance indicator within the culture service assessment.
- The definition of a museum used in the definition of Best Value Performance Indicator 170 (BVPI 170) is as follows: "Only count those museums that meet the Museum Association definition (1998) and where the museum is run by the Authority or the Authority contributes at least 20% of the running costs net of charges or provides the building." [Best Value Performance Indicators 2005/06: Guidance Document](#), Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2005 (page 217).
- A council's performance against this indicator will inform the culture service assessment score. This score then feeds into the overall CPA judgement for the council.
- Further information on how this indicator will be used in the culture service assessment is available in the 'CPA – the Harder Test – guide to service assessments' on the Audit Commission website ([www.audit-commission.gov.uk/cpa](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/cpa))

**Which local councils and museums are affected?**

- The Museum Accreditation indicator will only be applied in the this way for single tier and county councils as there is no culture service assessments for district councils.
- The indicator will apply to all top tier councils that **EITHER** directly provide a museum service (in-house provision) **OR** which provide support in the form of at least 20% revenue funding to museums they do not directly provide including museums managed by trusts on behalf of the council **OR** which occupy a building provided by the council. If a museum is in receipt of local authority support in this way, then Museum Accreditation helps the council ensure that it is getting value for money.

**What is CPA?**

CPA measures how well councils are delivering services for local people and communities. It includes an assessment of a council's cultural services through the culture service block. The culture block uses performance information data from across the whole range of a council's cultural services – arts, museums, libraries, archives and sport – to reach a judgement about how well those services are performing. The judgement is expressed in terms of a score which feeds into the overall assessment of a council's performance.

Local authorities are major providers of museum services – both directly and in terms of support to the independent and university sectors. MLA has worked with the Audit Commission to ensure that the culture assessment includes performance indicators that can help councils assess how well their museum services, and those that they support, are performing.

**Why include museums within CPA?**

By including museums' performance information within the Culture Block, a council can be assessed on the full breadth of its cultural offer to local people. It also gives councils the chance to see how well their museums are performing compared to other museum services. This means that they can plan how to improve their museum services.

The museum sector will benefit from being included within the culture service assessment because a council's overall performance and CPA score will rely on the performance of its cultural services. Including Museum Accreditation within the culture service assessment will encourage investment to ensure that in-house museum services and other museums supported by the council are meeting accepted standards. This will benefit museums and it will benefit local communities.

**Museum Accreditation and CPA**

Museum Accreditation is the national standard for museums, and as such is a robust indication of the quality of the service that a local authority is either providing directly or supporting with a revenue grant or by providing premises. To be able to compare museum services' performance and to encourage improvement, as well as allowing a

contribution to overall CPA scores, museums will be assessed against clear thresholds. The threshold and hence the scores are derived from a sequence of levels based on the status of each museum in relation to the Registration or Accreditation standard.

These levels take account of the fact that MLA's process of inviting museum to apply for the new Accreditation standard will continue until 2009 and that museums already invited to reapply retain the status gained under the Registration standard until a formal decision on their Accreditation applications has been made by an Accreditation Panel.

**Level 2 (will score as being above the upper threshold for CPA purposes)**

All museums counted under the definition of BVPI 170 fully registered or fully accredited as at 24 October 2008.

**Level 1 (will score as being between the upper and lower threshold for CPA purposes)**

All museums counted under the definition of BVPI 170 provisionally registered or provisionally accredited as at 24 October 2008.

OR

One or more museums counted under the definition of BVPI 170 fully registered or fully accredited as at 24 October 2008 **AND** one or more museums counted under the definition of BVPI 170 provisionally registered or provisionally accredited as at 24 October 2008.

OR

One or more museums counted under the definition of BVPI 170 fully registered or fully accredited as at 24 October 2008 **AND** one or more museums counted under the definition of BVPI 170 not participating in registration or accreditation as at 24 October 2008.

OR

One or more museums counted under the definition of BVPI 170 fully registered or fully accredited as at 24 October 2008 **AND** one or more museums counted under the definition of BVPI 170 provisionally registered or provisionally accredited as at 24 October 2008 **AND** one or more museums counted under the definition of BVPI 170 not participating in registration or accreditation as at 24 October 2008.

**Level 0 (will score as being below the lower threshold for CPA purposes)**

All museums counted under the definition of BVPI 170 not participating in registration or accreditation as at 24 October 2008.

OR

One or more museums counted under the definition of BVPI 170 not participating in registration or accreditation as at 24 October 2008 **AND** one or more museums

counted under the definition of BVPI 170 provisionally registered or provisionally accredited as at 24 October 2008.

**Not Applicable and Exclusions**

The indicator BVPI 170 will not apply to Councils that do not have any museums that meet the definition of a museum used in the indicator and Authorities where all museums fall into the Exclusions. Once excluded museums have been identified, the level will be based on those museums which meet the definition of a museum used in BVPI 170.

The following museums should be excluded from the indicator:

- Museums closed for refurbishment, including those with provisional registration or provisional accreditation
- Museums that have not yet been to an Accreditation Panel for a decision on an application for registration or accreditation and have been opened to the public since 1 January 2005
- Museums that are not yet participating in Registration or Accreditation BUT have made an application or have been invited to apply by the Regional MLA and have responded in writing with an intention to apply

**Summary table**

<b>Level</b>	<b>Status of museums as at 24 October 2008</b>
3	To be confirmed
2	All fully registered or fully accredited
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One or more fully registered or fully accredited and one or more provisionally registered or provisionally accredited</li> <li>• One or more fully registered or fully accredited and one or more provisionally registered or provisionally accredited and one or more not participating</li> <li>• One or more fully registered or fully accredited and one or more not participating in registration or accreditation</li> <li>• All provisionally registered or provisionally accredited</li> </ul>
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One or more provisionally registered or provisionally accredited and one or more not participating</li> <li>• All not participating</li> </ul>
-	Excluded museums <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed for refurbishment</li> <li>• A decision on status not yet made and have been open since 1 January 2005</li> <li>• Not participating but have made an application or have been invited to apply and have confirmed intention to apply in writing</li> </ul>
Not applicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No museums meeting the definition directly run or supported</li> <li>• All museums are excluded</li> </ul>

### **What are the timescales?**

- The Audit Commission has decided that the Museums Accreditation performance indicator for the 2008 culture service assessment (which will be reported in February 2009).
- It has been agreed that 24 October 2008 acts as a cut-off point for performance to be taken into account in the 2007 culture service assessment. So, if a council is at Level 1 on 24 October 2008 and achieves Level 2 in November 2008, Level 1 will be used to determine the result for this indicator in CPA 2008. The Level 2 score will not count until 2009.

### **What do I need to do?**

If you are a **council** preparing for CPA assessment in 2008, you need to:

- Know which museums the authority provides in-house or supports through providing revenue or premises
- Know whether these museums participate in the Museum Accreditation or Registration schemes

If any museums do not participate in Accreditation or Registration then you need to contact your Regional Agency for Museums, Libraries and Archives to discuss the Accreditation of such museums and to develop an action plan to achieve this. Councils should however bear in mind that promoting a venue a museum will not automatically imply that it will function as one for the purposes of Registration or Accreditation. The regional MLA will provide advice on this point. If the council gives revenue funding or premises to museums it does not directly provide, the action could include adding participation in Accreditation to contracts or Service Level Agreements.

If you are a **council museum** that is currently not participating in Accreditation or Registration, then:

- Make contact with MLA Council in the first instance
- Find out who is responsible for performance management and CPA for your council directorate, department or section. Work with them to ensure that you get the corporate support necessary to gain Full Accreditation. If appropriate, ensure that this support is built into relevant SLAs, contracts or business plans.

If you are responsible for a **museum in receipt of revenue funding or premises** from a council (but not directly provided by the council) follow the advice for council museums **and**

- Use the opportunity that CPA provides to make contact with those people in the council with responsibility for performance and CPA within cultural and leisure services.

**District Councils**

Although there is no culture service assessment for district councils, those providing or supporting museum should continue to participate in and gain the benefits from Museum Accreditation and Registration. It is the best means by which councils can ensure that museums meet meaningful service standards, and a way by which councils providing funding to the independent and university sectors can ensure they are getting value for money.