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**From:** D J Adams McGilp [djam@gaelstrom.com]  
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**Subject:** Highlands & Islands Museums Forum[Scanned]

Please see attached facsimile of my presentation to the Museums Association conference in Edinburgh two weeks ago. It represents a membership consensus on critical issues, and suggests themes worth exploring, broadly congruent with priority action points suggested in James Boyles's letter of August 20.

Thank you.

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## **INDEPENDENT SECTOR SUSTAINABILITY CRISIS**

### **Peripherality**

wee places, often in the middle of nowhere

transport, communications, visitor numbers, sales, investor confidence

### **Seasonality**

restricted hours, winter closure

staff morale, service level agreements, expansion opportunities, community spirit

### **Bureaucracy**

inflexible standards, procedural burdens

registration, accession, DDA legislation, collections management, income tax and VAT

### **Viability**

part-time / volunteer staff, financial vulnerability

reliance on/exploitation of dedicated, committed and qualified personnel; management training, potential loss of appropriate human resource



## **INDEPENDENT SECTOR SOLUTIONS**

### **Resource clusters**

**destination and regional collection marketing**

pools of artefacts, interpretative material, publications, expertise, exhibition programmes

### **Service changes**

**alternative / cyclical asset use**

offset running costs of empty or under-used buildings and spaces; sub-lets, sales, franchises, community use in exchange for support services

### **Incentives**

**unobstructed routes to providing local cultural services**

service partnerships with public and private sector; local authorities, private business, overseas participants; cut red tape to encourage these developments

### **Skills**

**education, training, personal rewards, sector recognition**

market to school-leavers and undergraduates; embrace virtual museum concept, court new generation of IT specialists, 3D modellers, interpretation and communication specialists; pay staff properly, lobby government to acknowledge economic and cultural impact

## **SOLUTION MECHANISMS**

### **Self help**

**membership organisation creation and support**

obvious and cost-effective benefits, maintain momentum on special projects and sector-wide issues

### **Diversification**

**more than a museum: the cultural experience**

the place, the people, the food, the souvenirs, the produce, the atmosphere, activities, links to other locations or similar collections

### **Partnership**

**rationalisation of registration & quality assurance**

removal of obstructions to practical partnerships, influence protocols rather than suffer prevailing conditions

### **Personnel**

**the right people in the right job, fairly treated**

service conditions charter, pay based on skills, qualifications, experience, expertise; minimum rates (overtime or operational scales) and maximum hours, reward the luminaries and support or sack under-performers, understand roles of trustees, managers and staff



# HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS MUSEUMS FORUM

## THE FUTURE

### Infrastructure

merged collections, shared responsibilities

risk of further loss of Scotland's unique cultural legacy: long-term benefits must outweigh disadvantages

### Service delivery

the mainstream museum package

external pursuits assimilate local or regional museology (routes to sustainability / profit)

### Marketing

whole recreational experiences

incorporate museum or collection experiences into destination and product marketing - weekend breaks, service partnerships with private sector

### Training

recruit, retain, refresh

acknowledge future challenges, engage and groom dynamic individuals, reward them appropriately, let them share their expertise sector-wide (these are free brains - use them)