

Evaluation of the London Local Authority Museum Improvement Programme

Final Report

Yew Consulting Ltd
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Executive Summary

1. The London Local Authority Museums Improvement Programme¹ was launched in May 2008. The Improvement Programme is part of the wider cross-agency London Cultural Services Improvement Programme, funded and supported by the Museums Libraries and Archives Council, Arts Council England, Sport England and Capital Ambition the Regional Efficiency and Improvement Partnership for London. It is designed to enable and assist the museums to improve their capabilities and profile through a process of cyclical self-assessment, peer-supported improvement, improvement planning and joint working within the network.
2. This paper reports on the second year evaluation of the Improvement Programme. It has been commissioned by the London Museums Hub to establish if the key goals of the Improvement Programme have been achieved over the two years of the Programme's operation, and builds on the first year evaluation report by Yew Consulting published in April 2009.

The Improvement Programme

3. Twenty one London boroughs out of a total of 23 eligible boroughs have now participated in the Improvement Programme.
4. The majority of participating services have:
 - completed a self assessment of their service, including 360° review, using the 'Culture and Sport Improvement Toolkit' (CSIT) benchmark
 - participated in a peer challenge, both for their own service and in support of another service
 - developed a written improvement plan
 - submitted bids to the Improvement Fund provided by the London Museums Hub to implement one or more specific improvements identified in their improvement plans.
5. Throughout the Improvement Programme support has been provided to the participating services by the Museum Development Officers of the London Museums Hub, the London Cultural Improvement Programme project team and a commissioned trainer.

The Evaluation Findings

6. This evaluation has been informed by:
 - telephone interviews with 19 lead museum officers responsible for the Improvement Programme at their museum, plus a group discussion with museum officers at an Improvement Network meeting
 - interviews with 15 senior managers from participating local authorities
 - key documentation including the year two participants project questionnaire and improvement plans, the listing of the funding awards made to both year one and two participating museums and the year one case studies.
7. The consultation involved 20 out of the 21 participating museums/authorities. A range of views were presented about the benefits and impact of the Improvement programme and whether it has delivered the programmes goals. The majority view was that it has been of value to be a

¹ For ease of reading throughout the report we refer to the Improvement Programme.

part of the Local Authority Improvement Programme and that services for the public had improved as a result.

"Being able to see how others do things was an eye opener for some staff. It changed attitudes and mind sets"

Year one museums officer

"We found it a very beneficial programme. It provided a opportunity to step back and take a more holistic view of our service and challenge things we do well and don't do well"

Year one senior manager

8. A number of museums encountered difficulties in engaging senior managers and elected members in the Improvement Programme and in raising the profile and understanding of the museum service across the authority.

"The whole team found the process useful, they bonded as a team looking at the priorities. However if we had done it properly and got senior managers on board earlier we could have got more out of it"

Year two museum officer

9. Full findings from the research and consultation are presented in the main report.

Conclusions

10. Based on the evidence available the Local Authority Museums Improvement Programme has achieved three of its four goals.

- Goal one - increased partnership working and a commitment to sharing best practice and skills through the Improvement Network - Achieved
- Goal two - increased profile of museum services within Councils and enhanced understanding within the Council and Local Strategic Partnership of the impact of the service on wider goals and targets - Not achieved
- Goal three - improvement projects which demonstrably improve services and address improvement priorities - Achieved
- Goal four - demonstrable understanding and commitment to the values and habits of continuous improvement and excellence amongst the participating museum services - Achieved.

11. The Improvement Programme has delivered service improvements in museums across London that will bring real added value to individuals and communities. It has supported and benefited individual museum officers and teams and encouraged a culture of continuous improvement. New partnerships have been formed and relationships are in place that will benefit the public in the future.

12. There is a better understanding in many museum services of the contribution their service makes to wider goals and priorities and of how this can be demonstrated. Keeping this focus will be important in the future.

13. In a small number of authorities the museum service now has a higher profile across the Council and senior officers and elected members have a better understanding of how it can contribute to corporate priorities and targets, but this is not universal. The Improvement Programme has not managed to raise awareness and get the support at senior levels or in Local Strategic Partnerships that it had hoped would be achieved.

14. The context for public services and for museum services has significantly changed during the period of the Improvement Programme and challenging times lie ahead for most museums. The learning from the Improvement Programme and the delivery of some of the latest round of improvement projects will undoubtedly help museums to position their service in the new landscape, and the continued provision of the Improvement Network will provide a source of ongoing advice and support.

1.0 Introduction and Methodology

- 1.1 The London Local Authority Museums Improvement Programme² was launched in May 2008. The Improvement Programme is part of the wider cross-agency London Cultural Services Improvement Programme, funded and supported by the Museums Libraries and Archives Council, Arts Council England, Sport England and Capital Ambition the Regional Efficiency and Improvement Partnership for London. It is designed to enable and assist the museums to improve their capabilities and profile through a process of cyclical self-assessment, peer-supported improvement, improvement planning and joint working within the network.
- 1.2 This paper reports on the second year evaluation of the Improvement Programme. It has been commissioned by the London Museums Hub to establish if the key goals of the Improvement Programme have been achieved over the two years of the Programme's operation, and builds on the first year evaluation report by Yew Consulting published in April 2009.
- 1.3 As required in the project brief, the evaluation examines the extent to which the Improvement Programme has achieved the following goals:
- evidence of increased partnership working and a commitment to sharing best practice and skills through the Improvement Network
 - increased profile of museum services within Councils and enhanced understanding within the Council and Local Strategic Partnership of the impact of the service on wider goals and targets
 - improvement projects which demonstrably improve services and address improvement priorities
 - demonstrable understanding and commitment to the values and habits of continuous improvement and excellence amongst the participating museum services.

² For ease of reading throughout the report we refer to the Improvement Programme.

2.0 The Improvement Programme

2.1 Twenty one London boroughs out of a total of 23 eligible boroughs have now participated in the Improvement Programme. A map showing the participant authorities is provided in Appendix A.

2.2 The following museums were year one participants in the programme:

- Brent Museum, London Borough of Brent
- Bromley Museum, London Borough of Bromley
- Bruce Castle Museum, London Borough of Haringey
- Cuming Museum, London Borough of Southwark
- Greenwich Heritage Centre, London Borough of Greenwich
- Hackney Museum, London Borough of Hackney
- Hall Place, Danson House and Erith Museum, Bexley Heritage Trust
- Honeywood Heritage Centre, Little Holland House and Whitehall, London Borough of Sutton
- Kingston Museum, London Borough of Kingston
- Orleans House Gallery, London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames
- Redbridge Museum, London Borough of Redbridge
- Valence House Museum, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham
- William Morris Gallery and Vestry House Museum, London Borough of Waltham Forest

2.3 In year two museums in eight London Boroughs participated:

- Church Farmhouse Museum, London Borough of Barnet
- Clocktower Museum, London Borough of Croydon
- Enfield Museums Service, London Borough of Enfield
- Hillingdon Local Studies and Archive Service, London Borough of Hillingdon
- Islington Museum, London Borough of Islington
- Keats House Museum, City of London
- Leighton House, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
- Museum of Fulham Palace, Fulham Palace Trust/London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham

2.4 Hounslow's museums service started the programme in year one but withdrew at an early stage.

2.5 The majority of participating services have:

- completed a self assessment of their service, including 360° review, using the 'Culture and Sport Improvement Toolkit' (CSIT) benchmark
- participated in a peer challenge, both for their own service and in support of another service

- developed a written improvement plan
- submitted bids to the Improvement Fund provided by the London Museums Hub to implement one or more specific improvements identified in their improvement plans.

2.6 Throughout the Improvement Programme support has been provided to the participating services in the form of advice, a formal training programme and local improvement networking events by the Museum Development Officers of the London Museums Hub, the London Cultural Improvement Programme project team and an approved Local Government Improvement and Development (formerly IDeA) trainer.

3.0 Evaluation Findings

3.1 This evaluation has been informed by:

- telephone interviews with 19 lead museum officers responsible for the Improvement Programme at their museum, plus a group discussion with museum officers at an Improvement Network meeting
- interviews with 15 senior managers from participating local authorities
- key documentation including the year two participants project questionnaire and improvement plans, the listing of the funding awards made to both year one and two participating museums and the year one case studies.

3.2 The consultation involved 20 out of the 21 participating museums/authorities. In 14 authorities both participating museum officers and senior managers were consulted. In five authorities the consultation involved only the museum officer. In one authority only the senior manager was interviewed. A full list of consultees is provided in Appendix B.

3.3 Key findings are set out below, with our conclusions provided in section four.

Consultation with museum officers

3.4 Telephone interviews took place with the lead museum officers in year one and two authorities and a short workshop took place with officers at the Improvement Programme network meeting in October 2010. Although referred to as museum officers it should be noted that the person interviewed was identified by the Improvement Programme project officers as the lead officer for the Improvement Programme and included service heads as well as curators and museum education officers.

3.5 We have summarised the findings from the consultation against the four key goals of the programme and by year's one and two of the Improvement Programme.

Year one museum officers

3.6 Museum officers from 11 of the 13 year one participating museums were consulted. We were not able to consult with a representative from Greenwich due to the previous post holder having left³ and no new museum officer having been appointed and Kingston, where the officer did not respond to our requests for an interview.

Evidence of increased partnership working and sharing of best practice and skills

3.7 Four museum officers stated that they had used learning or good practice from another authority involved in the programme which had resulted in service improvement including in record keeping, volunteer management, friends groups, advocacy and community engagement. Three museum officers indicated that they had identified good practice or learning from other authorities but had not yet been able to implement any change.

3.8 Three officers did not feel they had been able to use any learning or good practice from the programme to improve their service. One commented that the programme did not bring anything new to their service and another that there was very little information available throughout the programme on good practice. One did not know if they had used any

³ However the former post holder is now the museum officer in a different authority involved in the programme and was consulted as part of the process.

learning or good practice due to only recently becoming involved in the Improvement Programme following the departure of her manager.

- 3.9 Several officers specifically identified the peer challenge as a valuable source of learning, although one authority commented that their own peer challenge had been with an authority who was not performing as well as their own and had provided little good practice or learning for them. The peer challenge was seen by some to not only help identify areas for improvement and alternative ways of working but also as a confidence builder, helping officers identify where they are doing things well.

"Being able to see how others do things was an eye opener for some staff. It changed attitudes and mind sets"

- 3.10 Three museum officers confirmed that they had developed new partnerships with other museum services involved in the programme through their funded projects. The majority indicated that they were working with a range of partners but not specifically with services involved in the museum improvement programme. Four authorities commented on improvements in partnership working within their own authority as a result of the programme including with library and heritage services, children's services, adult education and with internal communications teams.

- 3.11 The consultants working on funded projects were also identified by some officers as a source of good practice and new ideas.

"An external view has been valuable"

- 3.12 However one museum was not wholly satisfied with the work provided by the consultants and felt that the end product, whilst having some value, was not sufficiently tailored to their own specific circumstances or requirements.

- 3.13 Although year one officers were not specifically asked about the network, several museum officers identified the network as a good source of contacts, advice and good practice.

"If I have got a problem I now have someone to pick up the phone to"

"I have created a peer support network that I can use to bounce ideas around"

Impact on raising the profile of the museums service and on increasing understanding about the contribution of the museums service

- 3.14 Four museum officers stated that their involvement in the Improvement Programme had helped to raise the profile of the service and understanding within their Council and a further one expects it to do so once the recommendations from their latest funded project around advocacy are implemented. Examples of how this has been achieved include:

- the involvement of senior officers and elected members in the self assessment and/or peer challenge
- delivery of a high profile museums volunteer programme, now considered to be an example of good practice within and outside of the Council
- provision of training for front of house staff resulting in better customer services and receipt of a National Customer Services Award
- presentation of a report into the future service delivery options for the museum.

- 3.15 Two museum officers felt that their service already had a high profile within the authority and that there was a good understanding of how their service contributes, and so involvement in the programme had made no or little difference.
- 3.16 Four museum officers did not feel that the profile of their service and understanding of its contribution had been raised across the Council through their involvement in the programme.
- 3.17 Six museum officers felt that their involvement in the programme had raised the profile of the service externally with the public and stakeholders, as a result of consultation, though not at a strategic partnership level. A further one expects it to do so in the future.

Delivery of improvement projects that demonstrably improve services and address improvement priorities

- 3.18 All of the year one participating museum officers stated that their service had benefited from their involvement in the Improvement Programme. One museum officer was not able to say definitively due to only recently becoming involved in the Improvement Programme, but did identify their funded project as a benefit.
- 3.19 Examples of direct service improvement arising from the programme and funded projects included better customer service and more motivated staff and volunteers, increased engagement of volunteers, more joined up and customer orientated publicity and improved exhibitions. Other areas of service improvement identified included having a clearer sense of direction and purpose, improved team work, better connectivity to corporate priorities, improved retail skills, better understanding of the future options for service delivery and improved data capture and evaluation.
- 3.20 A number of the museums gave a qualified response when asked whether their involvement in the Improvement Programme had helped them to be more adaptable as a service or to provide a more efficient service. Many felt they were already an efficient and adaptable service, or were already well on the way to being so, and found it difficult to specifically identify how the Improvement Programme had assisted them. Some commented on the difficulty of separating out the contribution of the Local Authority Museums Improvement Programme from other aspects of service improvement that were going on in the current climate, where museums have no choice but to bring about efficiencies.
- 3.21 Two felt it had made them more efficient, including through having a more strategic approach, having a better understanding of what the public want and by joining up more their exhibitions and collections and associated activities and publicity. Three said it had not yet made them more adaptable or efficient but that it might in the future once their latest funded projects were complete related to areas such as IT, value for money and benchmarking.

Understanding and commitment to continuous improvement

- 3.22 Eight museum officers confirmed that they are taking action to ensure that service improvement continues. This is mainly through reviewing areas for improvement annually and the inclusion of improvement priorities in service or business plans. No museums expected to repeat the full self assessment again in the immediate future, although five thought they would revisit it 'at some point'. One officer suggested a 'lighter touch' strengths and weaknesses approach would be adopted instead.

- 3.23 Of the remaining three museums two were not able to say how continuous improvement would be continued within their service due to organisational or staff changes. One felt that the changing context for museum services meant that the improvement programme and self assessment tool had been overtaken by other issues and survival, rather than improvement, would be their priority.

Overall comments on the programme

- 3.24 General comments on the programme included:

"It has sharpened up our view of what we do and helped us to focus on what we do well and what needs improving"

"The grant funding was really important. If people questioned why our service was involved in the process we could say both that we are learning and that there will be some money available to put into practice service improvements"

"The focus groups and surveys we did as part of the programme have influenced our service. It has made us stop and think - what do people want to see?"

"It made us look at our service in a different way and make links to the Local Authority golden threads"

"Overall it was a useful process to go through. I personally learnt a lot from it and the service benefited"

- 3.25 A small number of other comments or suggested improvements for the Improvement Programme were made. These included:

- make it clearer at the start who should attend the initial training on self assessment and peer challenge, as they will be leading the process
- a revised version of the self assessment questionnaires would be useful, that is not so intensive and appears as less of a personal critique of an individual's performance
- review the questionnaire – it is too long, over elaborate, uses the wrong language and doesn't differentiate who should be filling it out
- consider how wider staff teams can be involved in the network.

Year two museum officers

- 3.26 Museum officers from all eight year two participating museums were consulted.

Evidence of increased partnership working and sharing of best practice and skills

- 3.27 One museum was able to provide an actual example of having used learning or good practice from the Improvement Programme to improve their service, which related to improvements to their schools provision. No other specific examples of using learning or good practice were provided although a number commented more generally that the peer challenge had been useful or helpful, providing a different perspective on their service.

- 3.28 All of the participating officers felt that their involvement in the Improvement Programme had strengthened or developed either their own skills or those of a member of their team. Examples given included team members having a greater awareness of the wider political arena and wider cultural service; improved understanding of how to challenge and review

services to identify areas for improvement; improved evaluation skills and an increased awareness of how to engage and communicate with young people.

"We now have a better ability on our side – we are clearer and can better articulate our direction and contribution"

- 3.29 With respect to partnership working, two participating museums gave tangible examples of partnership working with other services that had arisen as a result of their involvement in the Improvement Programme. Several participants referenced work with partners outside of the Improvement Programme, such as the British Museum, and many commented that they were willing to work in partnership if the right opportunity came along.
- 3.30 Five of the museum officers stated that being involved in the museums improvement network had been useful to them. Benefits included helping individuals understand more about the museums sector and being able to meet and discuss the latest developments and issues with other museums managers and staff from the London Museums Hub.
- 3.31 Three of the museum officers either had not attended any meetings or did not find the network meetings useful. One commented that they did not feel there were enough people of management level at the meetings and that at the first meeting they attended there was an old fashioned and negative tone to the sessions. A second commented that they had not attended as the programme was not of interest and dates had clashed and the third that they could not attend meetings as they are the sole museum officer.
- 3.32 Two officers commented that the location of the meetings in East London is difficult to get to and requires considerable travel time to attend.
- 3.33 All of the museum officers said they expected to stay in touch with or actively involved in the network.

Impact on raising the profile of the museums service and on increasing understanding about the contribution of the museums service

- 3.34 Two of the museum officers stated that their involvement in the Improvement Programme had raised the profile of the museum service and increased understanding of the impact of their service on wider goals and targets within the authority, with a further two indicating they expect this will happen once their funded improvement project is complete. The remaining four did not think that being involved in the Improvement Programme had raised the profile or understanding of their service within the local authority and did not expect it would do so in the future.
- 3.35 With respect to raising awareness and understanding of the museums service outside of the authority at a strategic level no officers felt that this had yet been achieved through their involvement in the Improvement Programme. Four felt that awareness and understanding of their service among some of the public and stakeholders could be increased as a result of them being involved in consultation exercises, but the remainder did not expect it to happen.
- 3.36 Five of the museum services indicated that it was museums services staff only that had been involved in the Improvement Programme. Two had involved their line managers or heads of service. One museum had involved the Director of Cultural Services and Head of Policy and Performance in the review.

Delivery of improvement projects that demonstrably improve services and address improvement priorities

- 3.37 All of the year two museum officers stated that they felt their service had improved or will improve as a result of having been involved in the Improvement Programme. As a number of the services had only recently started to implement their improvement plans and funded improvement project(s), some only felt able to comment on expected rather than demonstrated impact.
- 3.38 Examples of anticipated or actual improvement from their funded projects included the introduction of new ideas resulting in improved exhibitions and more effective communication with the public, and better customer and front of house services following training of staff and volunteers. Other areas of service improvement identified included having a clearer strategic direction, more focused services, more public involvement, partnerships having improved and better systems being put in place for evaluation and performance management.
- 3.39 There was a mixed view from participants on whether their involvement in the Improvement Programme had helped them to be more adaptable as a service or to provide a more efficient service. Three museums did not feel that this had or would be achieved, with the remainder positive. However most museums found it difficult to give very specific examples of how their service had become more adaptable or efficient. Where individual examples were given they included having a much stronger self awareness within the museum service of their strengths and areas for improvement, being a more responsive service for partners and an improved ability to present accurate performance information about their service and its impact.

Understanding and commitment to continuous improvement

- 3.40 The majority of museum officers stated that their involvement in the Improvement Programme had increased their own and/or their team's understanding of the need for continuous improvement. The two that did not commented that continuous improvement was already well understood and embedded into current service delivery.
- 3.41 Three museums had implemented changes to the way they work since starting the Improvement Programme and a further two anticipate future changes being implemented, for example once the recommendations from reports on audience development and advocacy are implemented. Two stated that they had not made changes, one because they felt they were already providing a good service and the second because the uncertainty over the future of the museum meant they were fire fighting and not in a position to implement change.
- 3.42 Given many of the year two museums have only recently completed their improvement plans and not yet delivered their improvement projects, limited evidence is available yet to demonstrate that the principles and practice of continuous improvement will be continued in the future. However five museum officers stated that they will be incorporating it into future service planning and delivery, with proposed actions including:
- revisiting the self assessment after a period of time
 - feeding identified areas for improvement into service plans
 - tying responsibility for delivery of targets into personal appraisals and work programmes

- 3.43 Of the remaining three services, one felt that continuous improvement was already a part of what they do and two felt that current uncertainties meant they could not say if or how it might be a part of future service planning and delivery.

Would you recommend being involved in the Local Authority Museums Improvement Programme to other museum services?

- 3.44 All of the museum officers said that they would recommend being involved in the Local Authority Museums Improvement Programme to other museum services.

Comments made about the programme included:

"It was a very positive experience...we have lots to build on...It was good for staff to have an opportunity to talk to someone from outside the service"

"It was a good thing at the end of the process to have the opportunity to bid for grants. Without that it competes alongside everything else, but the grants enable you to address an identified need and are a good feature"

"The whole team found the process useful, they bonded as a team looking at the priorities. However if we had done it properly and got senior managers on board earlier we could have got more out of it"

"Yes I would recommend it but with a proviso. It is time consuming so don't do it unless you are going to do it properly, you need to be motivated and have capacity.... It is a very interesting process and reveals a lot"

"Initially we didn't want to do it and discussed delaying it but our Executive Director wanted us to be involved...in retrospect we are glad we have done it"

Other comments

- 3.45 A limited number of other comments were made about the programme. This included:
- museum officers valuing the support provided during the programme by the London Museums Hub Museums Development Officers
 - the challenge of self assessment – it was felt that some of the questions in the self assessment were about matters outside of the museum service control or areas of responsibility which made it difficult to complete
 - support for the peer challenge as a interesting and useful process.

The museum officer discussion group

- 3.46 A short evaluation workshop was held with ten museum officers who attended the Museums Improvement Network meeting in October 2010. The aim of the session was to get feedback from both year one and year two participants on the extent to which they felt the goals of the programme had been achieved. Each of the goals was put up as a statement and participants were asked to say whether they agreed, partially agreed or did not agree that they had been achieved within the context of their own museum service. The reasons behind those views were then explored further and participants were also invited to share any other comments they would like to feed into the evaluation of the Improvement Programme.
- 3.47 A summary of the feedback provided is shown below.

- 3.48 Five museum officers agreed with the statement that ‘there is evidence of increased partnership working and a commitment to sharing best practice and skills through the improvement network’, with five partially agreeing.
- 3.49 Among those that partially agreed comments included:
- “We have made links with partners and become more familiar, but not yet actively worked on projects together...yet!”*
- “The network has created a sounding board to share ideas/solutions with peers”*
- “Increased communications with other museums. Keen to work in partnership”*
- 3.50 One museum officer agreed with the statement ‘There is increased profile of the museum service within councils and enhanced understanding within the council and Local Strategic Partnership of the impact of the service on wider goals and targets’. They supported this by saying that the Council leader, chief executive and cabinet member was supporting the museum’s development.
- 3.51 Five people partially agreed and four disagreed. Comments on this goal demonstrated that many museum officers had found it difficult to engage senior managers and that some services felt that they needed more support from the start from the Museums Hub to getting more senior people involved, possibly making it a condition of involvement in the programme.
- 3.52 Seven museum officers agreed with the statement that ‘Improvement projects have been delivered which demonstrably improve services and address improvement priorities’. Two partially agreed and one disagreed, primarily because of timing in their implementation.
- 3.53 Eight museum officers agreed and two partially agreed with the statement ‘There is demonstrable understanding and commitment to the values and habits of continuous improvement and excellence among the participating museums’. Supporting comments included:
- “All our staff engaged in the improvement programme and are now able to advocate the benefits”*
- “Improvement targets are now part of staff appraisals”*
- 3.54 In terms of other comments about the Improvement Programme process the majority of officers felt that the self assessment and peer challenge were valuable parts of the process and identified useful issues or formalised (sometimes already known) weaknesses, although one officer who had no support and was working alone felt it was a ‘hideous’ process which revealed little by way of new ideas. There was comment on the fact that the self assessment questions could be confusing, with respect to whether it was about the museums or wider organisation and as it was not customised for museum services.
- 3.55 The improvement planning process was felt to be good at focusing thinking onto key areas/priorities, although some felt they would have benefited from a bit more time and support to do this as it got ‘squeezed’ with tight deadlines.
- 3.56 The funding for projects identified in the improvement plan was valued, although comment was made that the change of criteria for subsequent rounds of improvement project funding ‘meant improvement plan priorities were almost irrelevant’.

- 3.57 The Improvement Network was viewed as a good network and a place for people to work together. One comment was made about which members of staff from museums teams are 'allowed' to attend or get involved in the network.
- 3.58 The Museums Hub team who have supported the Improvement Programme were considered to be supportive and helpful, for example assisting with interpreting language when doing the self assessment, acting as a critical friend and helping with activities such as writing consultant briefs.
- 3.59 Other comments that were made related to the start of the process. Some felt that the real value of being engaged in the programme had not really been explained well at the start and they had not initially understood it. Another comment related to more information being made available at the start about what was going to be involved, although it was also acknowledged that this could potentially be off putting for some people! There were mixed views on the training, not everyone felt the initial training was valuable.

Consultation with senior managers

- 3.60 Telephone interviews took place with 15 senior managers from year one and two participating authorities. The level of manager interviewed varied across authorities. The managers to be interviewed were initially identified by the Improvement Programme Project Manager. However in many instances requests for interviews with managers at a Director or Assistant Director level were referred to Service Head level.
- 3.61 Each manager interview focused on the extent to which the managers were aware of or had been actively involved in the improvement programme and the perceived benefits and impact of the programme.
- 3.62 We have summarised the findings from the consultation against three of the four key goals of the programme and by year's one and two. Insufficient information was provided from the senior managers interviews to comment separately on the goal of increased partnership working and sharing of best practice and skills, although some evidence is included in their responses to the other goals.

Year one managers

- 3.63 Senior managers from seven of the year one participating authorities were consulted. We were not able to consult with managers from Brent, Greenwich, Redbridge or Southwark. In Sutton and Waltham Forest the lead museum officer interviewed was also the Service Head and were seen by that authority as their senior manager representative. To avoid duplication their views are only reflected in the museum officer consultation.
- 3.64 The responses set out below exclude Bexley where the senior manager spoken to had not been involved in the Improvement Programme and did not have sufficient knowledge of the Programme or its impact on the museum to participate in the evaluation.

Impact on raising the profile of the museums service and on increasing understanding about the contribution of the museums service

- 3.65 All but one manager were aware of the Improvement Programme. Five stated they had been actively involved in the Improvement Programme, including in one or more of the self assessment, peer challenge and improvement planning. One had only had minimal involvement through being interviewed as part of the improvement project.

- 3.66 Three managers stated involvement in the Improvement Programme had helped raise the profile of the museum service and understanding of how the museum contributes to corporate priorities. Two qualified these comments, one stating that the change was not significant yet and another that despite profile and understanding having been raised the context for the service was now very different and the service was now facing a proposal possible closure.
- 3.67 One stated that although profile and understanding had increased she felt that this was more to do with other factors.
- 3.68 Two said that their involvement in the programme had not raised the profile of the museums service or understanding of its contribution.

Delivery of improvement projects that demonstrably improve services and address improvement priorities

- 3.69 Four of the managers stated that their museums service had improved or will improve as a result of being involved in the Improvement Programme. Two felt that they had improved but found it difficult to confirm if that was because of the Improvement Programme or other factors.
- 3.70 All of the managers were aware of, though didn't necessarily have detailed knowledge of, the improvement plan and funded improvement projects.
- 3.71 Examples of improvements arising from their involvement in the Improvement Programme or funded projects included:
- better customer service as a result of better trained staff
 - improved understanding among staff of how the museum service can deliver corporate priorities
 - better understanding of staff training needs
 - improved data collection
 - better service planning and new audience development

One manager commented on the importance of the funding being available to support the improvements:

"The funding was critical to make things happen. However much of a priority something may be, without funding it would not have happened"

- 3.72 In one other authority the result of the funded improvement project has however been a disappointment. The manager stated they invested a lot of staff time in the project but that the end product did not meet their needs and has not had the impact they wanted.

Understanding and commitment to continuous improvement

- 3.73 Five managers stated that being involved in the Improvement Programme had strengthened or improved understanding within their museum staff of continuous improvement. One manager felt that their service already had an understanding of continuous improvement and a commitment to its delivery before starting the Improvement Programme.

- 3.74 Where wider cultural improvement planning was taking place, managers felt that the contribution of the museums service was helpful.

"Learning from the Museums Improvement Programme has been helpful to our CSIT process"

"Museums officers have offered advice and participated in peer evaluation as part of our wider cultural improvement activity"

- 3.75 Three of the managers commented that bringing officers from different museums/ authorities together as part of the Improvement Programme had been a positive benefit, enabling ideas to be shared and individual museum officers to discuss issues with their peers. Some also commented on the value of the peer challenge.

"It was useful to get an external perspective and interact with other authorities"

Would you recommend being involved in the Local Authority Museums Improvement Programme to other museum services?

- 3.76 All of the managers said they would or probably would recommend getting involved in the Improvement Programme to another authority.

"We found it a very beneficial programme. It provided a opportunity to step back and take a more holistic view of our service and challenge things we do well and don't do well"

"I would recommend involvement very strongly. The process of involving the whole team in looking at the service and the peer challenge were very useful and we learnt a lot"

"I would absolutely recommend it. For a small authority to be involved brings real benefit."

"I probably would recommend it if they needed to analyse where they are, where they need to be. However under the current funding constraints it could just end up being about cuts, so it may need to change to become more of a survival tool"

Other comments

- 3.77 One other comment made about the programme was that it would have been useful for the peer challenge to have been done by another service such as a communications department or planning, rather than another museums service to gain a different perspective.

Year two managers

- 3.78 Senior managers from all eight of the year two participating authorities were consulted.

- 3.79 The responses set out below exclude Hammersmith and Fulham and the City of London where the senior managers spoken to did not have sufficient knowledge of the Improvement Programme or its impact on the museum to participate in the evaluation.

Impact on raising the profile of the museums service and on increasing understanding about the contribution of the museums service

- 3.80 All of the managers were aware of the Improvement Programme. In terms of involvement in the Improvement Programme one was actively involved in most aspects and has briefed and where appropriate involved other senior managers and elected Members in the authority, one had limited active involvement primarily through the peer challenge and four had not been actively involved.
- 3.81 The majority did not have a detailed knowledge of the Improvement Programme or of the direct impact it has had, or found it difficult to state whether recent improvements were as a result of the Improvement Programme or other improvement activity or developments in their service or authority.
- 3.82 Two managers did not think that their involvement in the Improvement Programme had raised the profile of the service or understanding of its contribution to corporate priorities within the Council.
- 3.83 One manager stated it had raised the profile of the museum within the Council and improved understanding and one that they thought it would in the future. In the first authority the Chief Executive had visited the museum and spent time with the service, partly in response to their raised profile and new partnerships.
- 3.84 One manager felt that it had successfully raised the profile of issues relating to the delivery of a modern museum service, but not yet the understanding of the contribution the service makes, although felt that other developments in the future may realise that aim.

Delivery of improvement projects that demonstrably improve services and address improvement priorities

- 3.85 All of the senior managers thought that their museum service had improved or will improve as a result of the Improvement Programme. Four of the managers were aware of the improvement plan, two were not. All six were aware they had received funding for one or more improvement projects though with varying degrees of knowledge about the project and its impact.
- 3.86 Examples of improvements arising from their involvement in the Improvement Programme or funded improvement projects included:
- increased understanding among the museums staff of how the museum service can help deliver Council priorities
 - increased ability to draw down funds from other sources
 - greater confidence among staff about their service and the quality of their offer leading to new partnerships and relationships
 - improved publicity for the service
 - a strengthened ability to 'make the case' for their service
 - the museum and the wider children's service working better together
 - improved community engagement
 - improved ability of the museums team to manage and deliver big projects
 - starting the process of modernising the service.

Understanding and commitment to continuous improvement

- 3.87 Three managers felt that their service already had an understanding of continuous improvement and a commitment to its delivery and that their involvement in the Improvement Programme served to demonstrate that. Three others felt that it had improved understanding, including one who commented that the service now realised it could not 'stand still'.
- 3.88 Several authorities commented on wider cultural improvement work that was also taking place, with two specifically indicating that work done as part of the Improvement Programme would feed into that process.
- 3.89 The majority felt that areas for improvement would be reflected in future service or work plans, with the caveat that this may not happen if additional resources were required.

Would you recommend being involved in the Local Authority Museums Improvement Programme to other museum services?

- 3.90 All of the managers said they would or probably would recommend getting involved in the Improvement Programme to another authority.

Other comments

A limited number of other comments were made about the programme. This included:

- the need for capacity and ownership within the authority to really benefit from the Improvement Programme
- concern about possible duplication between the Museums Improvement Programme and the wider Culture Improvement Programme and that it does not encourage the integration of museums services with wider cultural or heritage services
- comment that the review can raise unrealistic expectations about Council resources being made available at the end of the process to address areas of improvement
- comment that the questions asked of senior managers/members as part of the self assessment were quite 'pedestrian' and didn't really work in an authority where culture already has a high profile and is quite forward thinking
- a suggestion that the peer challenge might be more challenging/critical if undertaken by someone not involved in a museum service
- a suggestion that in future it includes more about cost efficiency.

Key documentation

Year two questionnaire

- 3.91 A questionnaire was distributed by the Improvement Programme project team to participants from the year two participating museums services who attended the training sessions. Questions related to their engagement in the programme and the training provided. Six responses were received representing five of the participating Borough's.
- 3.92 The full evaluation report undertaken by the project team is provided in Appendix C. The summary and conclusions from the evaluation report are shown below.

Summary and conclusions

Overall the survey demonstrated a positive response to the training programme. Outputs from the programme included:

- *increased understanding of the London Cultural Improvement Programme*
- *improved motivation for individual participants*
- *a self assessment survey for each service*
- *a peer-led challenge report for each service*
- *an improvement plan resulting in a successful bid to the Improvement Fund for each service*

The survey question 6 about the content of each training session in fact highlighted that the schedule for the training was felt to be a problem by some participants. Those who had not managed to complete the self-assessment and peer challenge stages of the process would certainly have found this more challenging. Future programmes could look at how best to address this issue. Several of the services chose to involve their MDOs in the process and that may be an option to encourage services to stick to schedule.

Time and resources were also cited as factors which limited the effectiveness of the 360 degree review process. This was clearly the process with which more of the services struggled. Although encouraged to attend by Senior Managers within the local authority few participants were subsequent able to include them in the process.

Use of the 'CSIT' terminology was also queried by some participants, who felt that this rendered it to be too generic to be useful within the museum context.

Funded improvement projects and case studies

- 3.93 The table on the next page lists the improvement projects that received funding as part of the Improvement Programme.

<i>Authority</i>	<i>Improvement plan projects (LAMIP funded projects shown in bold)</i>
Barking and Dagenham	Survey of staff training needs - £5,000 Value for money and benchmarking - £10,500 (with Enfield)
Barnet	Advocacy through awareness raising events at Church Farmhouse Museum to celebrate its 350 th anniversary this year -£6,000
Brent	Establish baseline data and consultation with audiences - £4,000. A further £5,000 funded was provided for this project from Renaissance. Volunteer Training Programme - £8,853 (with Croydon)
Bexley Heritage Trust	Community engagement and consultation - £5,000
Bromley	Options appraisal for the future of the museums service - £4,000
City of London	Community outreach and analysis of impact and strategic planning - £5,000 Collaboration and quality volunteer offer - £4,075
Croydon	Community engagement toolkit - £5,000 Volunteer training programme - £8,853 (with Brent)
Enfield	Advocacy project to raise awareness within the local authority - £5,000 Value for money and benchmarking - £10,000 (with Barking & Dagenham) Alternative delivery models; options appraisal - £7,000
Greenwich	Non user research - £5,000
Hackney	Organising audience data to demonstrate impacts/outcomes - £10,000 with Kingston and Richmond
Hammersmith and Fulham	Audience development - £5,000
Haringey	Front of house staff skills development and benchmarking - £3,550 Skills development programme - £3,500
Hillingdon	Strategy for communication and advocacy - £5,000
Islington	Audience development strategy - £5,000 Community empowerment £5,000
Kensington and Chelsea	Development of a volunteer programme - £5,000
Kingston	Organising audience data to demonstrate impacts/outcomes - £10,000 with Hackney and Richmond
Redbridge	Non user research - £5,000 Demonstrating effectiveness £7,537
Richmond	Organising audience data to demonstrate impacts/outcomes - £10,000 with Hackney and Kingston

	Demonstrating effectiveness £8,440
Southwark	Non user research - £5,000 Value for money and service modelling - £5,800
Sutton	Volunteer development and staff communications - £2,664
Waltham Forest	Front of house staff skills development and benchmarking - £5,000

- 3.94 Eight case studies relating to year one Improvement Programme funded projects were provided by the London Museums Hub and have been reviewed to inform this evaluation. The projects were:
- Working with casual staff and volunteers – Sutton
 - Demonstrating against local authority priorities through effective use of museum data – Richmond, Hackney and Kingston
 - Consulting and engaging local groups – Greenwich
 - Front of house staff training and qualifications – Haringey
 - Non user consultation – Redbridge
 - Audience Research - Brent
- 3.95 Some of the case studies are focused on the project or process rather than end result or benefit that it brought to the public. This may be because the improvement projects highlighted were at varying stages in their development and implementation at the time the case studies were written, so not all were able to confirm the full impact of their project yet.
- 3.96 However overall the lists of funding awards granted and the case studies demonstrate that:
- areas for improvement identified in improvement plans are being addressed through Improvement Programme funded projects
 - different ways of working are being adopted
 - improvements to museum services have taken place or are forecast to take place.

4.0 Conclusions

- 4.1 In this section we draw together our conclusions on the Improvement Programme's success in achieving its four goals and state whether we think this has been fully, partially or not achieved.
- 4.2 Not all of the participating museums services or managers provided feedback on every area covered by the evaluation. Therefore wherever possible evidence from a combination of sources has been used to enable conclusions to be reached.

Have the goals of the Improvement Programme been achieved?

Goal 1 - Evidence of increased partnership working and a commitment to sharing best practice and skills through the Improvement Network

Achieved

- 4.3 The consultation and review of funded improvement projects confirms that some museum services are working together to deliver improvements in areas of common interest and that there is a positive approach towards working in partnership. Several museums have improved the way they work with other services in their own authority and have engaged with new external partners.
- 4.4 Only a small number of museums provided actual examples during the consultation of having used shared learning and good practice from the Improvement Network to improve their services to date. However it is clear that learning and good practice are being applied as improvement projects are implemented. The external input into the peer challenge process was felt to be useful and informative by the majority of participants and the Improvement Network meetings, and/or the contacts made through the Network, are generally seen to offer a discussion and learning platform. The Improvement Network is valued by most museum officers and all of them indicated they would like to stay involved in the network, even if they do not physically attend meetings.

Goal 2 - Increased profile of museum services within Councils and enhanced understanding within the Council and Local Strategic Partnership of the impact of the service on wider goals and targets

Not Achieved

- 4.5 From the consultations and group discussion it is clear that engaging senior managers and elected members in the Improvement Programme has been an area of difficulty for many museums, also reflected in our own difficulty in consulting at a senior level for the purposes of this evaluation. In a number of instances, particularly among the year two participating museums, the museum officers or team has completed the Improvement Programme without any other input or support.
- 4.6 Even where service managers and senior managers have been interested and supportive of the Improvement Programme, they have not always considered it to be necessary or appropriate to be actively involved, seeing it as a service level activity and not a priority for their level of management.

- 4.7 Given this difficulty it is not surprising that more than half of the museum officers and senior managers consulted believe that their involvement in the Improvement Programme has not resulted in raising the profile of their museum service within the Council and enhancing understanding of the impact of their service on wider goals and targets.
- 4.8 However in a small number of cases this has been achieved and was felt by those involved to have made a significant difference.
- 4.9 None of the participating museums have provided evidence of having raised their profile or understanding of the impact of their service with the Local Strategic Partnership.

Goal 3 - Improvement projects which demonstrably improve services and address improvement priorities

Achieved

- 4.10 With respect to services being more adaptable and delivering efficiencies as a result of being involved in the Improvement Programme the consultation highlighted mixed views on whether this had been achieved.
- 4.11 However the consultation, funding awards and the case studies clearly demonstrate that identified areas for improvement are being addressed through the improvement projects, including the adoption of different ways of working and approaches to service delivery. Museum officers and senior managers believe that services have improved with some clear and tangible improvements for customers having been delivered, for example in front of house services.
- 4.12 Not all of the improvement projects have been completed or fully implemented yet, but there is a confidence among the participating museums that they will have a positive impact. Improvements that relate to service planning or processes, for example developing audience development plans and improved data collection functions, are expected to result in tangible improvements for customers in the future.

Goal 4 - Demonstrable understanding and commitment to the values and habits of continuous improvement and excellence amongst the participating museum services.

Achieved

- 4.13 The consultation confirms that being involved in the Improvement Programme has consolidated or strengthened understanding of the need for continuous improvement in many services and in some instances enhanced individual and team skills. The majority of participating museums completed a self assessment, peer challenge and improvement plan and are implementing improvement projects.
- 4.14 Many museums are incorporating areas for improvement into service or work plans, and some in to individual staff appraisals. In a small number of authorities museum officers have shared their knowledge and skills with colleagues from different cultural services engaged in improvement activity.
- 4.15 There is little commitment among authorities to undergoing the whole Improvement Programme again within a specified time period. However a number of services have stated

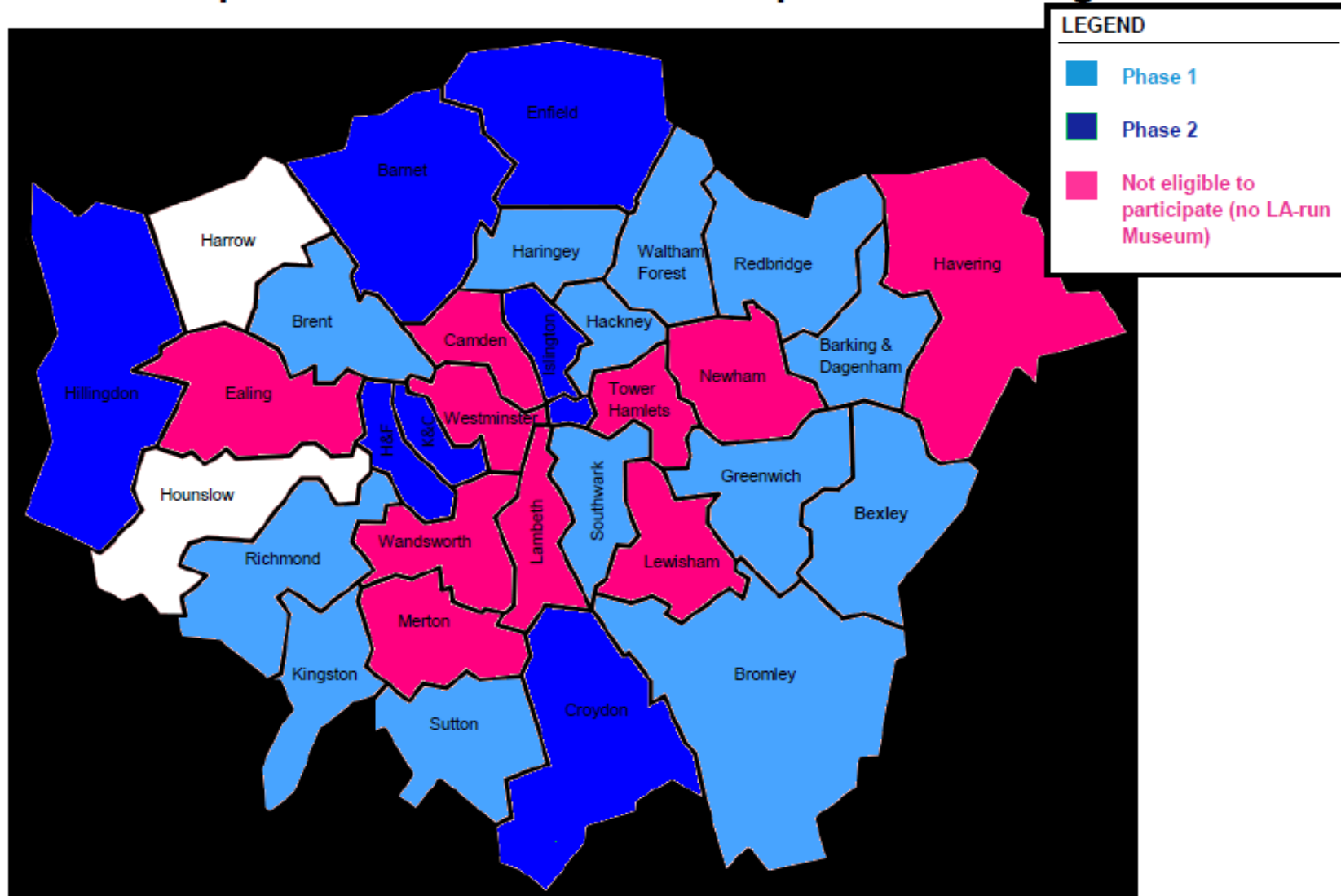
that the values of continuous improvement are now embedded into their service, with some indicating an intention to undertake a future service review.

Overall conclusions

- 4.16 The Local Authority Museums Improvement Programme has delivered service improvements in museums across London that will bring real added value to individuals and communities. It has supported and benefited individual museum officers and teams and encouraged a culture of continuous improvement. New partnerships have been formed and relationships are in place that will benefit the public in the future.
- 4.17 There is a better understanding in many museum services of the contribution their service makes to wider goals and priorities and of how this can be demonstrated. Keeping this focus will be important in the future. As improvement projects are implemented museums need to report on the impact they have and the benefits that they bring to the public and the wider community, not just on the improvement planning or the process that took place.
- 4.18 In a small number of authorities the museum service now has a higher profile across the Council and senior officers and elected members have a better understanding of how it can contribute to corporate priorities and targets, but this is not universal. The Improvement Programme has not managed to raise awareness and get the support at senior levels or in Local Strategic Partnerships that it had hoped would be achieved.
- 4.19 The context for public services and for museum services has significantly changed during the period of the Improvement Programme and challenging times lie ahead for most museums. The learning from the Improvement Programme and the delivery of some of the latest round of improvement projects will undoubtedly help museums to position their service in the new landscape, and the continued provision of the Improvement Network will provide a source of ongoing advice and support.

Appendix A – Map of Improvement Programme Participants

Participation in the LA Museum Improvement Programme



Appendix B – List of Consultees

Year One Lead Museum Officers

Barking and Dagenham Council - Chris Foord
Bexley Heritage Trust - Sarah Fosker
Brent Council - Gill Spry
Bromley Council - Marie-Louise Kerr
Hackney Council - Jane Sarre
Haringey Council - Deborah Hedgecock
Redbridge Council - Gerard Greene
Richmond Council - Miranda Stearn
Southwark Council - Judy Aitken
Sutton Council - Jane Allen
Waltham Forest Council - Lorna Lee

Year Two Lead Museum Officers

Barnet Council - Gerard Roots
City of London - Jan Pimblett
Croydon Council - Rob Shakespeare
Enfield Council - Val Munday
Hammersmith and Fulham Council
Hillingdon Council - Carolynne Cotton
Islington Council - Cheryl Smith
Kensington and Chelsea Council - Daniel Robbins

Year One Senior Managers

Barking and Dagenham Council - Heather Wills
Bexley Council – Judith Mitland
Bromley Council – David Brockhurst
Hackney Council – Ceryl Evans
Haringey Council - Diana Edmonds
Kingston Council – Grace Mcelwee
Richmond Council - Ian Dodds
Sutton Council - Same contact as above (Jane Allen)
Waltham Forest Council - Same contact as above (Lorna Lee)

Year Two Senior Managers

Barnet Council - Tom Pike
City of London - David Pearson
Croydon Council - Pauline Scott-Garrett
Enfield Council - Julie Gibson
Hammersmith and Fulham Council - Michael Hainge
Hillingdon Council - Daniel Waller
Islington Council - Howard Barnes
Kensington and Chelsea Council - Semenua Seshier

Appendix C – Evaluation report of the Local Authority Improvement Programme Training by the London Museums Hub

Evaluation of the London Local Authority Museum Improvement training programme 2009-10

This report provides a summary of findings from a survey carried out online by the London Museums Hub via Survey Monkey into the second year of the London Local Authorities Museums Improvement Programme (LAMIP). LAMIP is run by MLA London on behalf of Capital Ambition and the London Museums Hub as part of the London Cultural Improvement Programme.

LAMIP programme

The programme took place from July 2009 to March 2010 and involved four and a half days of workshop and network activities as well as participation in a peer led challenge process.

Training sessions 09/10 included:

Workshop: introduction and self-assessment training	8 July
Peer led challenge course – 2 days	29 & 30 Sept
Planning and Implementing the Improvements Workshop	24 November
Local Improvement Network Meeting	09 Feb

The trainer Steve Wood was supported by two actors for the duration of the Peer led Challenge Course. One or more Museum Development Officers was present throughout each of the training sessions.

Eight local authorities participated in the 09-10 LAMIP programme: Barnet, City, Croydon, Enfield, Hammersmith and Fulham (in co-operation with the Museum of Fulham Palace), Hillingdon, Islington, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

Each authority was encouraged to send two representatives to each of the training sessions. This was not possible for each authority and not all participants could attend all of the training sessions.

Summary and conclusions

- Overall the survey demonstrated a positive response to the training programme. Outputs from the programme included:
 - Increased understanding of the LCIP programme
 - Improved motivation for individual participants
 - Self assessment survey for each service
 - Peer-led challenge report for each service
 - Improvement plan resulting in a successful bid to the Improvement Fund for each service
- The survey question, 6, about the content of each training session in fact highlighted that the schedule was felt to be a problem by some participants. Those who had not managed to complete the self-assessment and peer challenge stages of the process would certainly have found this more challenging. Future programmes could look at how best to address this issue.

Several of the services chose to involve their MDO's in the process and that may be an option to encourage services to stick to schedule.

- Time and resources were also cited as factors which limited the effectiveness of the 360 degree review process. This was clearly the process with which more of the services struggled. Although encouraged to attend by Senior Managers within the LA few participants were subsequent able to include them in the process.
- Use of the 'CSIT' terminology was also queried by some participants, who felt that this rendered it to be too generic to be useful within the museum context.

Methodology

The online survey was emailed to 13 people who had participated in the training sessions after completion of the programme. The survey is designed to look at the effectiveness of the training element of the programme. Improvement projects for those participating in the 09-10 programme are now underway and should be completed by the end of November 2010. This survey will be followed in early autumn 2010 by a more in depth, qualitative analysis with individuals which will assess the overall impact of both the 08-09 and 09-10 programmes.

Seven people accessed the survey and 6 completed it. While the level of responses is less than half of the total number of trainees, three of those approached for comments had in fact not completed the training. Responses were received from 5 of the 8 participating boroughs and may therefore be seen as representative.

The survey was comprised of 10 questions, with space provided for individual comments. Questions invited responses on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 representing the upper end of the scale. All of those who completed the survey indicated that they will be happy to participate in future evaluation exercises.

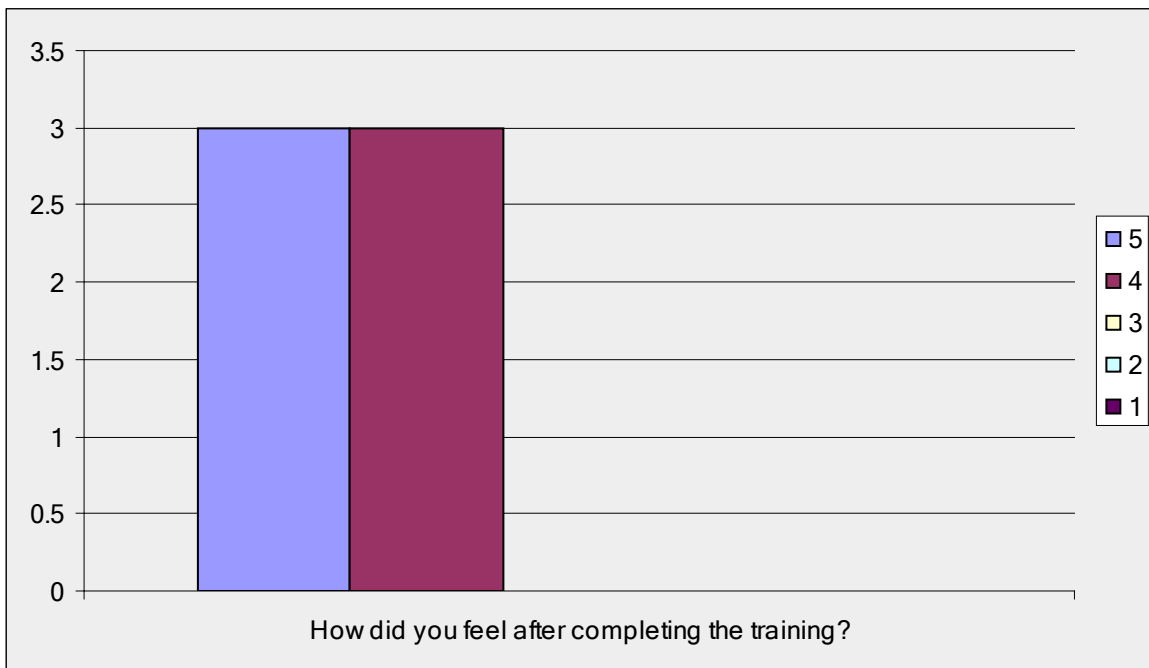
Question 3 How did you feel about starting this programme?

Responses to this question indicated that 3 of the 6 respondents were largely self-motivated attendees.



However 3 of the 6 indicated that to some extent they felt obliged to attend. This suggests that in future communications to Museum Managers should be more carefully tailored to address their concerns.

Question 4 How did you feel about the programme after completing the training?



After completing the training there was a clear improvement in the ratings given to participation; all participants indicating that they now considered themselves to be highly motivated about their involvement in the programme.

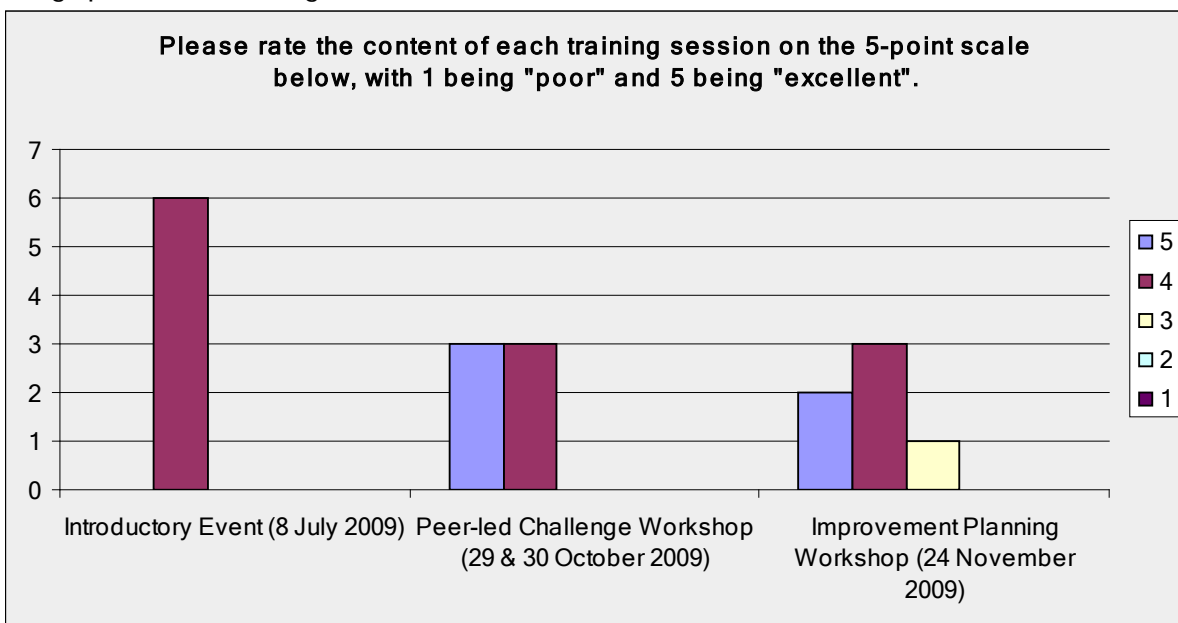
Question 5 Effectiveness of the trainer



Most responses indicated that trainees were satisfied or more than satisfied with the effectiveness of the trainer Steve Wood.

One respondent commented: *'The trainer was interesting and motivating.'*

Question 6 Please rate the content of each training session on the 5-point scale below, with 1 being "poor" and 5 being "excellent".



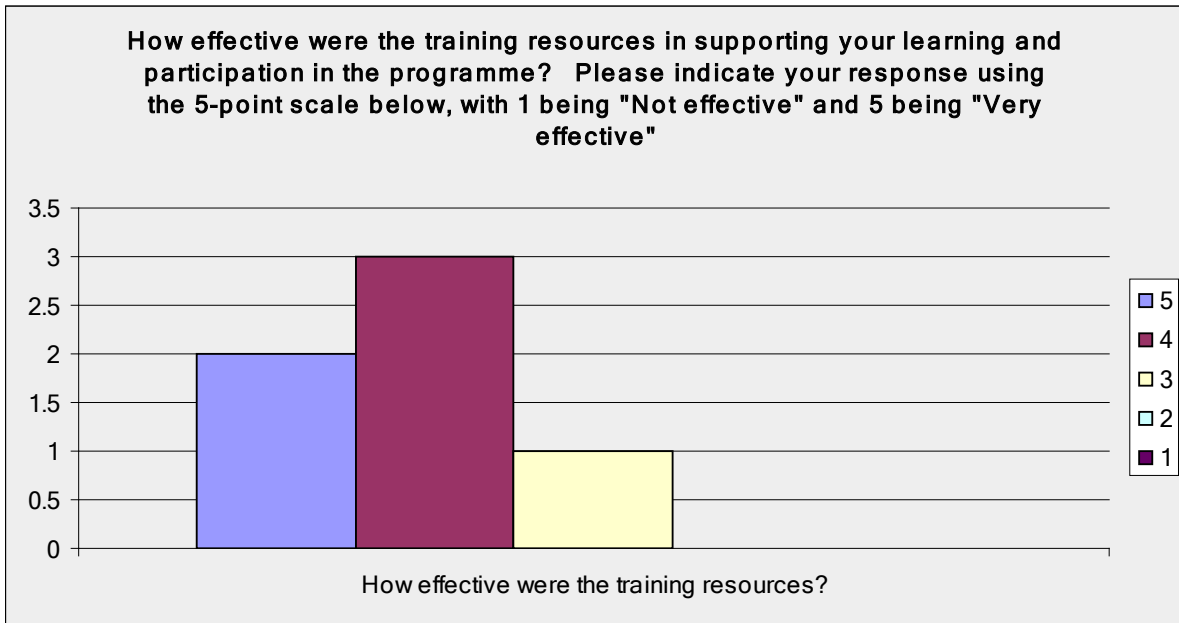
Each of the three training sessions was highly rated:

- All six respondents rated the Introductory Event at 5.
- 50% of respondents rated the peer-led challenge workshop as excellent.
- The improvement planning workshop received ratings from 3-5 from all respondents. The wider range of responses perhaps reflects differences in the extent to which participants had been able to complete the self-assessment and peer-led challenge stages of the process.

Ideally all participants should have completed the first two stages prior to attending the improvement planning Workshop and future programmes should look at how the timetable could be developed to ensure that all attendees are at the same stage.

One comment expanded further on this point *"The schedule was a bit difficult, as the introductory workshop took place at the beginning of the summer, when everyone was going away and we couldn't carry out the assessment. By the time they got back, we were due for the next session already. No time of year would have suited everyone I guess, but I did feel pushed for time at every stage of the programme."*

Question 7 How effective were the training resources in supporting your learning and participation in the programme? Please indicate your response using the 5-point scale below, with 1 being "Not effective" and 5 being "Very effective"



All six respondents rated training resources at 3 or above with 2 rating them as 'very effective'.

"The resources provided was generally good, but there was a lot of it - it would have helped if the key pieces were highlighted, eg. the benchmark and templates for each stage."

Question 8. To what extent did the training sessions provide the skills and knowledge required to conduct the following processes? Please indicate your response using the 5-point scale below, with 1 being "The training did not provide adequate skills and knowledge" and 5 being "The training did provide adequate skills and knowledge"



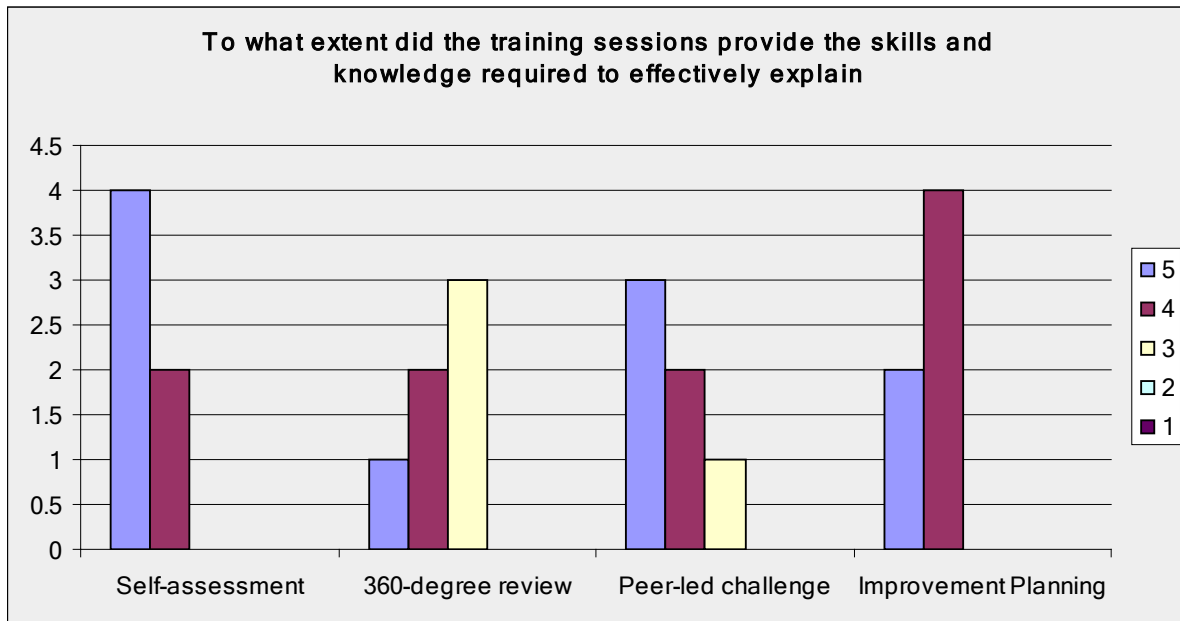
All six rated the self-assessment training at 3 or above with 50% rating it at 5 i.e. 'training and skills had provided adequate skills and knowledge to conduct self-assessment'.

There was less satisfaction with the skills and knowledge to carry out the 360 degree review; 3 of the 6 respondents rating this at only 3, mid-way between the two statements. This may reflect the need for training to provide more assistance specifically geared towards the circumstances of staff from small museum services within a Local Authority environment. It was for example clear that many of the museums struggled to involve senior managers in the 360 degree self-assessment process, as one respondent put it "*we did not have the time or resources to meet with many people or use the many skills we were taught*". The same respondent noted that this part of the programme "*veered too much towards the theoretical and was too big for the needs of small museum departments within local councils*".

The museum programme deliberately replicated the language of the wider CSIT programme to ensure that museum service staff would be conversant with the terminology in use by colleagues involved in the provision of sports and culture for the Local Authorities. However the use of terminology was queried; "I do think that the process could be further refined for museums as elements of the CSIT criteria are repetitive and / too generic to be relevant"

Future programmes may need to consider whether this issue might be addressed, either through revisions to the course materials or via improved communication with potential participants. Responses indicate that participants felt happier with the peer-led challenge process with 3 of the 6 satisfied that they were equipped with adequate skills and knowledge to carry out the challenge. All respondents rated the improvement planning training within the range 3-5 with most respondents scoring it at 4. One respondent expressed concern that the training seemed "to be focussed on the self-assessment and peer-led challenge parts of the process rather than the improvement planning process".

Question 9 To what extent did the training sessions provide the skills and knowledge required to effectively explain the following improvement tools to your colleagues? Please indicate your response using the 5-point scale below, with 1 being "The training did not provide adequate skills and knowledge" and 5 being "The training did provide adequate skills and knowledge"



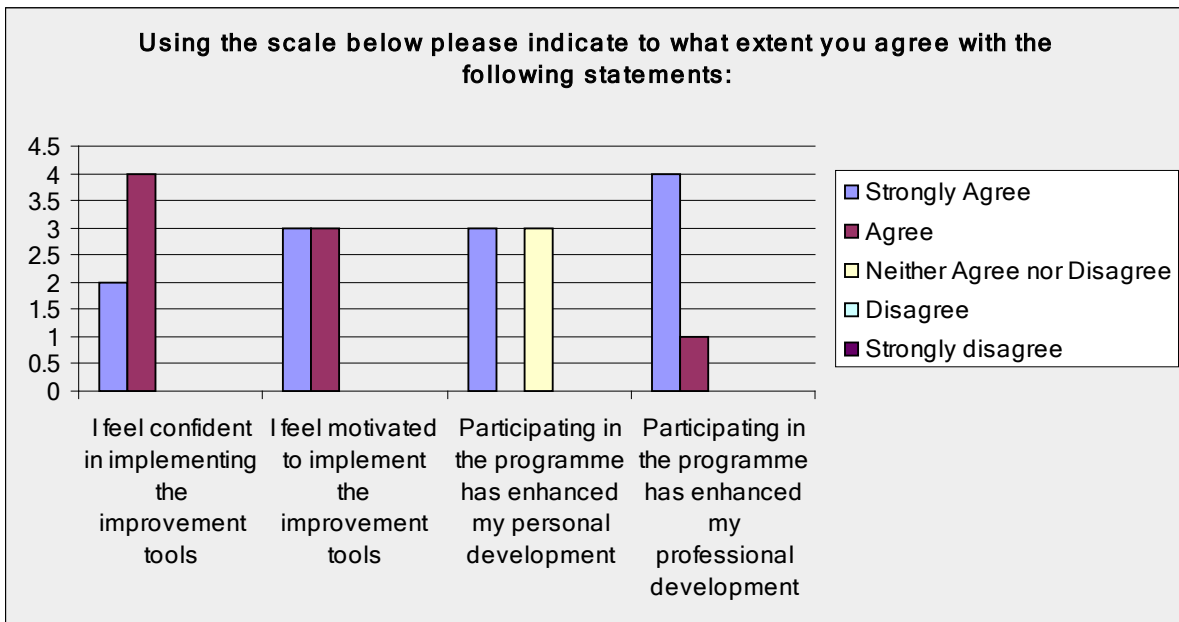
All respondents were completely satisfied that they could adequately explain the self-assessment process. There was however less satisfaction regarding participants' abilities to explain the 360 degree review process. Again this may be an indicator that the programme needs to address the lack of communication between Museum Services and their Senior Managers as part of the introductory work.

There was more satisfaction with the Peer-led Challenge and improvement planning processes, which perhaps reflects added confidence resulting from peer involvement.

"This was a very valuable exercise. The peer lead challenge increased the staff's morale as the external assessment said we were better than we thought we were!"

Question 10 Using the scale below please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements:

- I feel confident in implementing the improvement tools
- I feel motivated to implement the improvement tools
- Participating in the programme has enhanced my personal development
- Participating in the programme has enhanced my professional development



It is encouraging that respondents feel that their skills and professional development have been enhanced through participation in the programme. There was less certainty regarding the programme's impact on the personal development of participants; in future provision of a summary of the skills and knowledge from each of the training sessions might offer participants a clearer understanding of its personal usefulness.

One respondent commented favourably regarding the quality of the venue and the supportiveness of the MLA London team but went on to note that a downside had been the negativity of some fellow trainees, particularly during group exercise activities. This view seems to be backed up by another respondent who found the course 'demotivating'. These comments will be fed back to the trainer, for consideration in the design of future training exercises e.g. more frequent swapping might prevent the onset of a negative outlook within a particular group.