

19th January 2016

Cllr. Nick Wilkinson
Lancaster City Council
Dalton Square
Lancaster LA1 1PJ

Dear Cllr. Wilkinson,

I write on behalf of Lancaster University in support of the motion to Council 'Working in Partnership - Reviewing Options for Lancaster Museums'.

The motion calls for the City and County Councils to work together to investigate and appraise the option to create a Lancaster wide organisation for Museums. We understand the current budgetary situation that Councils currently face, but note the importance of the Lancaster museums from a cultural perspective as well as a potential driver for economic development through tourism.

The principle of Lancaster museums working under a single umbrella organisation and in partnership with business, community, education and arts institutions should be explored fully as a potential opportunity to increase income from sources beyond this grouping, improve the museum offerings and improve the overall visitor experience of Lancaster.

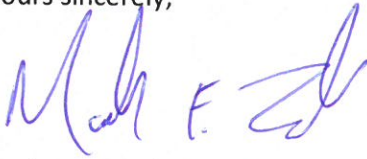
From a Lancaster University perspective a rich cultural offering that raises the profile of Lancaster as a City and makes it more attractive for internationally excellent staff is vital. We already have an excellent partnership with the Dukes, working collaboratively to engage our students better with the cultural assets of the City and provide improved opportunities around the arts as part of our widening access actions. We also make a significant financial contribution directly into this programme in the Dukes. Moreover, we provide a substantial investment and subsidy from our own resources to the cultural network of the City via the Regional Heritage Centre, Peter Scott Gallery and the Ruskin Library.

In addition, as part of the wider cultural offer we provide to the community through Lancaster Arts in terms of our music, theatre and artistic events programme and we are existing custodians of collections containing significant heritage artefacts, sculptures, ceramics, paintings and more including Ruskin, Hepworth and Pilkington's Lancastrian Pottery. We would want our current investments to stand alongside other museum offerings. In this context we are uneasy that aspects of the city's heritage offer, for example, the Judges' Lodgings, are at risk.

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To confirm our position, we would support the review of the option for a Lancaster wide museums organisation and feel that it would be an opportunity missed if this option was not assessed in detail before any Lancaster wide museum buildings or exhibits were sold or transferred. If an options appraisal goes ahead the University would certainly be happy to provide a person to sit on and take part in any group.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mark E. Smith', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Professor Mark E. Smith
Vice-Chancellor
Tel. 01524 592001
Email. vc@lancaster.ac.uk