

Museums Galleries Scotland consultation response for the Burrell Collection (Lending and Borrowing) (Scotland) Bill Committee

The Burrell Collection (Lending and Borrowing) (Scotland) Bill was introduced in the Scottish Parliament on 29 May 2013, promoted by Glasgow City Council. It will allow Glasgow City Council and the Burrell Trustees to lend items from the Burrell Collection and to borrow items to be displayed alongside the collection, removing the current restrictions included within the gift agreement and bequest of Sir William Burrell to the City of Glasgow Corporation. This private bill is supported by Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS).

The Burrell Collection is of national significance and has been formally awarded this status in October 2009, as part of Glasgow City Council Museums' Recognised Collection of National Significance.

MGS recognise the Council's obligations to manage their collections, and those for which they are responsible, and to maintain the collections under suitable environmental conditions which ensure their security and long-term preservation. The Burrell Museum in Pollok Park, Glasgow is in need of significant renovation and refurbishment. During the four year period anticipated that would be needed for such work, the building will be closed to the public and the Collection would therefore not be accessible to the public. Taking selected parts on tour and allowing international lending would greatly increase the access to the Collection and further demonstrate the importance of the Collection as it becomes available to a wider audience of researchers, experts and the public. The enhanced knowledge that could be gained would be valuable to the understanding of the Collection and would inform future interpretation and learning activities, to the benefit of future visitors and may provide opportunities for revenue generation.

Since the agreement between Sir William Burrell and the City of Glasgow Corporation in 1944, there have been significant improvements to practices and standards in collections care. MGS recognises that national and international standards exist to ensure that lending and transportation of museum collections are conducted under strictly observed conditions. MGS welcomes the inclusion of the code, under section 1(2) of the Bill, which Glasgow City Council would be required to agree with the Burrell Trustees and then publish. This Code would support museum curators acting on behalf of the Burrell Trustees and Glasgow City Council, and set out the basis upon which the powers of lending and borrowing would be exercised. The inclusion of a required standard of collections care from the borrowing institution, whether as an Accredited Museum or equivalent standard, ensures that the process follows current best practice and that the collection is a safeguarded.

MGS actively encourages and supports museums in fulfilling the aims of [*Going Further: The National Strategy for Scotland's Museums and Galleries*](#), which advocates that Scotland's collections are internationally important and should strive for the global

recognition they deserve. The proposed international lending would support work by Glasgow Museums towards the six of aims of the National Strategy; in particular it clearly fits to Aim 6, '*Develop a global perspective using Scotland's collections and culture.*' The Burrell Collection could play a key role in developing strong international connections and highlighting the importance of the Collection to much wider audiences. The international loans would develop the image and profile of Scotland, Glasgow and the Collection itself. The changes to the agreement would also allow the Burrell to '*Maximise the potential of our collections and culture*' (National Strategy Aim 1), help to '*Forge a sustainable future for sector organisations and encourage a culture of enterprise*' (Aim 4) and '*Foster a culture of collaboration, innovation and ambition* (Aim 5).

The process of introducing the Private Bill to the Scottish Parliament has not been undertaken lightly. MGS recognises that Glasgow City Council have followed a thorough process to get to this stage. The Burrell Trustees have been involved at all stages to ensure that the sentiments of William Burrell's original agreement are respected and the changes to museology practice are reflected. MGS supports this Private Bill, and the benefits and opportunities it will bring to the Collection, Glasgow City Council and the Scottish museum sector.