

**NATURAL  
HISTORY  
MUSEUM**

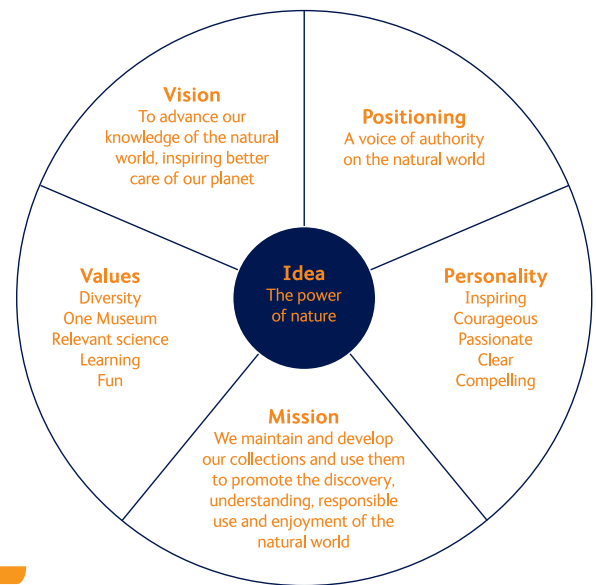
# Corporate Plan Update 2010/11

Our vision is our aspiration for the Museum, which is: **To advance our knowledge of the natural world, inspiring better care of our planet.** Our positioning, the way we want to be perceived by all our stakeholders and audiences, is: **To be a voice of authority on the natural world.** Our mission is a description of why we are here and what we do, and is: **To maintain and develop our collections, and use them to promote the discovery, understanding, responsible use and enjoyment of the natural world.**

[2009/10 was a very successful year for the Museum.](#)

We celebrated the life and work of Charles Darwin to mark his bicentenary, saw an increase in capital investment leading to much-needed refurbishments and maintenance, welcomed our 25 millionth visitor since free admission was reintroduced, completed and opened the Darwin Centre representing the largest investment in the Museum since the opening of the Waterhouse building, hit a record four million visitors, appeared on screen with the broadcast of the BBC's *Museum of Life* documentary and started to promote the International Year of Biodiversity. This next year looks as exciting, as well as challenging.

The world has changed significantly since the beginning of the five-year period this Corporate Plan covers. The recent economic crisis has led to an uncertain future in regards to funding. This means the Museum will have to prioritise its work by focusing on delivering two corporate priorities for 2010/11 that help us move towards the realisation of our brand.



## Public value and brand shift

It is imperative we demonstrate our value to all our stakeholders and change their perceptions of the Museum, to ensure all our work is recognised, especially during these challenging economic times. By being valued for all we do, we can secure the long-term future of the Museum.

That is why in 2008 we commissioned Opinion Leader to conduct some research to provide us with baseline data on how we are currently perceived amongst our key stakeholders, to see how far we are from our aspirational brand positioning: **to be a voice of authority on the natural world**. This research also provides us with a framework for the Museum's public value, which can be measured through ongoing quantitative research amongst samples of the stakeholder groups. Measurement of brand perceptions in our people will be measured through the staff survey. We want to ensure all our people understand the brand and are happy in their work.

We will use the brand shift/public value research to guide our work, to ensure we reach the needs of our stakeholders by informing our next five-year Corporate Plan for 2011–16 and our new delivery strategies: Science, Public Engagement and Corporate Services, to achieve our positioning and ultimately our vision. This will help us prioritise our resources. We will also use this research to make a case for funding through our advocacy work.

We identified our key stakeholder groups as:

- **our people**
- **government and parliament**
- **our funders**
- **our visitors**
- **teachers and learning opinion formers**
- **the global scientific community**
- **the media**
- **non-visitors (members of the general public who have not visited us)**

Opinion Leader undertook an initial phase of qualitative research in 2008 through in-depth interviews with inner-circle stakeholders – those who know us very well – from government and parliament, the media, teachers and learning opinion formers, funders and the global scientific community. A public discussion event was held with visitors and non-visitors, and a limited staff survey undertaken.

The key findings from the initial qualitative research were very positive, as well as reinforcing some of what we already know and highlighting areas for improvement. There is widespread recognition of the huge value the Museum provides amongst our closest stakeholders. The research tells us, perhaps rather obviously, that our non-visitors (members of the general public who have not visited us) quickly change their perceptions of us and value us more when they visit. The findings also show that the Museum's scientific research has the most potential to move perceptions amongst all our stakeholders and make the Museum more exciting, modern and relevant.

There is widespread awareness of the Darwin Centre, and stakeholders feel this could unite the two parts of the Museum and enhance its public value. The Darwin Centre is a clear illustration of what we can achieve when we all work together. The focus this provided will help inform the development of the new Corporate Plan for 2011–16.

Research participants were also able to identify ways in which the Museum can enhance its public value, mainly through going beyond its walls and ensuring our exhibitions remain engaging and up to date. Those are some of the areas we will focus on in the next five years.

## Corporate priorities for 2010/11

We measured the perceptions of our stakeholders and our public value again in winter 2009, and the results show that we are making progress towards our brand shift, which can in part be attributed to the successful completion and opening of the Darwin Centre. We will continue to monitor our progress towards realising the benefits for the Darwin Centre, as stated in the first corporate priority for 2010/11.

Following the broadcast of the BBC documentary *Museum of Life* and our leadership of the International Year of Biodiversity-UK (IYB-UK) partnership, we will continue to work towards delivering the brand shift in 2010/11. As we develop the new Corporate Plan for 2011–16, delivery of our brand shift and ultimately achievement of our brand positioning **to be a voice of authority on the natural world** will be our main focus for the next five years. The new Corporate Plan will prioritise our work by setting clear objectives that break down how we will achieve this.

We have identified the following corporate priorities for 2010/11. These do not encompass everything we do, but we must all work towards delivering them.

1. **Maximise the benefits from the opening of the second phase of the Darwin Centre.**

Why? The Darwin Centre is a major opportunity to deliver our brand shift and delivery of the identified benefits in our benefits realisation plan will have positive impacts across the whole Museum.

- Benefit 1: Enable the Museum to continue to deliver internationally competitive research through provision of functional and adaptable modern research facilities.
- Benefit 2: World-class management and preservation of world-class collections for future generations.
- Benefit 3: Increased public engagement with our science.
- Benefit 4: Spearhead the realisation of the Museum's vision to create one museum and to change the way we are perceived by stakeholders (internal and external).

2. **Prepare a strategic response to possible changes to funding due to the challenging economic climate.**

Why? We face a number of significant challenges in the near future as the impact of the difficult economic climate continues. We will prioritise our work and look at how we can make further efficiency savings. We will continue a transparent, robust and fair process to help determine where savings can be made. Our vision and brand will dictate the areas of Museum business that we will prioritise.



## Our intellectual territory

In 2009, we defined our intellectual territory or areas of our expertise, which we will proactively promote to all our stakeholders. This is a critical piece of work as it provides us with a guide for all our activities, especially in public engagement. We will also create official corporate Museum viewpoints/position statements on topical issues that we will either promote or use to react.

Our intellectual territory is:

- Collections
  - natural history collections management
  - science heritage
- Research
  - diversity of nature: evolution, biological and geological diversity
- Knowledge transfer
  - bioinformatics
- Public engagement
  - science and society

Further information can be found on the Directorate section on the Resources page of the Intranet.

## Key strategies

We continue to develop our key strategies, with the Science Strategy now published and the Public Engagement and Corporate Services Strategies due to be published later in 2010, ahead of the new five-year Corporate Plan. These strategies will deliver the overarching aims of the new Corporate Plan and provide us with a number of clear, understandable objectives that progress us towards our vision.

We are looking to the future and will need to focus on delivering the Masterplan Development Framework, in particular looking at putting our remaining collections into at least the minimally acceptable storage conditions, the consolidation and enhancement of scientific work areas and the redevelopment of our permanent galleries. This will depend on future government funding, our ability to fundraise for these projects as part of the Evolution Campaign and our ability to generate our own income in the context of a difficult economic climate.

We are developing our new five-year Corporate Plan a year early, during 2010, to reflect the changing economic and political climate. This will help us prioritise our work and ensure we are best positioned when public funding and the wider economy stabilises.

## Thank you

Thank you for your continued hard work and efforts. The Darwin Centre is an example of what we can achieve when we work together as one museum, and we must continue to work closer together to achieve our vision and ensure the Museum's long-term future.