

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

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| Decision Maker: | Executive Member for Culture and Recreation |
| Date: | 25 April 2013 |
| Title: | Arts and Museums Service – Accreditation Return 2013 and collections management policies for approval |
| Reference: | 4698 |
| Report From: | Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services |

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to inform the Executive Member for Culture and Recreation that Hampshire County Council Arts and Museums Service has been invited by Arts Council England to submit Museum Accreditation Returns for 16 of its museums and heritage sites by 29 April 2013.
- 1.2. This is the latest phase in the national scheme that has set the standard for museums in the UK since 1988. Hampshire County Council museums have achieved the standard since it was first introduced and when it was known as the Museum Registration Scheme. Its name was changed to the Museum Accreditation Scheme in 2004. It is the standard that many funders use to decide whether an organisation is eligible to apply for funding so it is essential that the museums remain Accredited.
- 1.3. The purpose of this paper is also to invite the Executive Member to consider and approve three collections management policies that have been revised in preparation for inclusion in the Accreditation Return – Collections Development Policy (Appendix 1), Documentation Policy (Appendix 2), Care & Conservation Policy (Appendix 3) and the Access Policy Statement (Appendix 4).

2. Contextual information - Accreditation Scheme

- 2.1. Accreditation is the UK standard for museums and galleries and is managed by the Arts Council in England. It defines good practice and identifies agreed standards, thereby encouraging development. It helps guide museums towards being the best they can be for current and future users.
- 2.2. The aims of the Accreditation scheme are:

1. To encourage all museums and galleries to achieve agreed standards in:
 - how they are run (Organisational Health)
 - how they manage their collections and
 - the experience of users.
 2. To encourage confidence in museums as organisations that manage collections for the benefit of society and manage public funds appropriately.
 3. To reinforce a shared ethical and professional basis for all museums.
- 2.3. The benefits of taking part in the Accreditation Scheme are:
- **Patronage** - demonstrates that the museums have met a national standard, which strengthens applications for public and private funding and gives investors confidence in the organisation.
 - **Performance** - serves as an authoritative benchmark for assessing performance, rewarding achievement and driving improvement.
 - **Profile** - raises awareness and understanding of museums, so building confidence and credibility both within the governing body and among the public.
 - **People** - helps museums to improve their focus on meeting users' needs and interests and developing their workforce.
 - **Partnerships** - helps museums to examine their services and to encourage joint working within and between organisations.
 - **Planning** - helps with forward planning by formalising procedures and policies.
- 2.4. The national Accreditation Panel requires the following types of evidence to be submitted for each museum:
- **Organisational health** – clear statement of purpose, acceptable constitution, appropriate management arrangements, effective forward planning, secure financial arrangements, appropriate workforce, emergency plan and an environmental sustainability policy statement
 - **Collections** – satisfactory arrangements for ownership of collections, policies approved by the governing body (Hampshire County Council) for Collections Development, Documentation and Care & Conservation supported by appropriate plans and procedures for their implementation
 - **Users and their experiences** – an Access Policy Statement approved by the governing body, evidence of consultation, evaluation, customer care, effective learning and communication with visitors through exhibitions, access to stores, research and activities based on collections.
- 2.5. The museums managed by Hampshire County Council were last required to provide evidence that they all met the Accreditation Standard in 2009. All the museums met the standard but a small number of 'Areas for Improvement' were identified by the national Accreditation Panel, all of these have either

been dealt with or will be addressed in the 2013 Return. Those that will be addressed in the 2013 Return include 'Forward planning' for the service as a whole and confirmation of the 'management arrangements' for the Gosport Discovery Centre, SEARCH and Milestones.

3. Contextual information – Collections management policies

3.1. Collections Development Policy 2013-2018 (Appendix 1)

- 3.1.1. Formerly known as the Acquisitions and Disposals Policy, this Policy sets out the principles that will ensure Hampshire County Council continues to develop the collections in a responsible and ethical manner. It provides clear procedures and decision-making processes common to all Accredited museums. By implementing this Policy we will continue to demonstrate the public benefit in our approach to collections development. It provides a basis for open and transparent decision-making and an informed dialogue between the Arts and Museums Service, our district and borough partners, other funding bodies and stakeholders.
- 3.1.2. This Policy applies to material which Hampshire County Council, as the 'governing body' owns and Hampshire County Council Arts and Museums Service has accessioned into the collections or intends to own and accession into the collection. Acquisition is defined as the process of obtaining legal title and ownership to an object with the intention of using it for museum purposes.
- 3.1.3. Hampshire County Council Arts and Museums Service also cares for some collections that are owned by other bodies, including the pre-1991 Gosport Borough Council Collections and those owned by a number of trusts. The owners of these collections will be consulted before any significant changes, including rationalisation of material, are considered, and these changes would not proceed without their agreement.
- 3.1.4. This Policy mirrors the changes that have taken place to Hampshire County Council's museums services since the last Policy was written and approved in 2007. The development of the Hampshire Solent museums partnerships are reflected in the increase in collaboration between museums to avoid duplication and encourage joint working, particularly as a strategy to increase access to collections and improve standards of collections care potentially through a joint collections centre.
- 3.1.5. The Policy takes into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, expertise, storage and care of collections arrangements by focusing future acquisition on very specific types of material that are needed for very specific reasons such as 'Big Theme' exhibitions and contemporary collecting to reflect the material culture of under-represented groups. This is designed to release capacity to focus on the assessment of objects that no longer fall within our collecting policy and should enable significant savings in our future storage requirements. It is important to note that through the accreditation process any such action would sit within an ethically robust and nationally approved framework for museums and collections.

3.2. Documentation Policy 2013-2018 (Appendix 2)

3.2.1. The aim of this policy is to ensure that Hampshire County Council Arts and Museums Service fulfils its responsibility in relation to the security, management and access to collections information by:

- Improving accountability for the collections
- Maintaining at least minimum professional standards in documentation procedures and collections information, achieving the highest standards wherever possible
- Improve access to the collections through digitisation
- Extend access to collections information, particularly through digital media
- Strengthening the security of the collections.

3.3. Care and Conservation Policy 2013-2018 (Appendix 3)

3.3.1. The purpose of this document is to outline the policy for the care and conservation of the collections belonging to Hampshire County Council Arts and Museums Service. The stewardship and care of the collections is central to the aims and priorities of the Arts and Museums Service as identified in the Arts and Museums 2012-15 Service Plan and the commitment to excellence.

3.3.2. It is the intention of the Arts and Museums Service to manage the collections to the highest possible standards as outlined in documents such as the *Benchmarks in Collection Care* published by the Arts Council. This will be achieved by a combination of preventive and remedial conservation and improvements to the quality of our storage facilities ensuring the continuation of the long-term preservation of the collections.

3.4. Access Policy Statement 2013-2018 (Appendix 4)

3.4.1 The Arts and Museums Service recognises that there are potentially many different barriers to accessing museums, collections and services. The Access Policy Statement commits the service to working towards the elimination of these barriers wherever possible and links its work in this area to the Hampshire County Council Culture, Communities and Business Services' Equality Objectives.

4. Finance

4.1. There are no anticipated financial implications in the short-to-medium term.

5. Progress to date and next steps

5.1. October 2012: Internal working group formed to pull together the evidence required for the three areas of museums activity that will be assessed.

5.2. January to March 2013: Arrangements made for joint management committees for the individual museums to consider and approve the budgets

and service plans for each museum for 2013/14 enabling both pieces of evidence to be included in the submission along with equivalent documentation for 2012/13.

- 5.3. January to March 2013: Arrangements made for joint management committees to be given a report for information on the 2013 Accreditation Return, invited to examine the draft Collections Development Policy and offered a presentation on both Accreditation and the Collections Development Policy at their next round of meetings in late Spring.
- 5.4. February 2013: Key museums in the Hampshire Solent area invited to comment on the Collections Development Policy. Their responses have been incorporated into the version of the policy attached to this report.
- 5.5. 11 April 2013: Collections management policies, including the new Collections Development Policy, the Documentation Policy and Care and Conservation Policy to be reviewed by the Culture, Communities and Rural Affairs Select Committee.
- 5.6. 25 April 2013: Collections management policies, including the new Collections Development Policy, the Documentation Policy, Care and Conservation Policy and Access Policy Statement to be considered and approved by Hampshire County Council as the governing body of the Arts and Museums Service in advance of the 2013 Accreditation Return.
- 5.7. By 29 April 2013: Submit online Accreditation Returns for 16 museums with supporting evidence.
- 5.8. May to July 2013: Assessment by Arts Council Accreditation Assessors, which may include a site visit.
- 5.9. After July 2013: Resulting recommendation to be presented to the national Accreditation Panel. Formal notification to be received by the Arts and Museums Service within two weeks of that meeting.

6. Recommendations

That the Executive Member for Culture and Recreation:

- 6.1. Approves the Hampshire County Council Arts and Museums Service collections management policies for Collections Development, Documentation and Care and Conservation and the Access Policy Statement.
- 6.2. Approves the submission of an Accreditation Return to the Arts Council England national Museums Accreditation Scheme within the required timescale.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

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| Hampshire safer and more secure for all: | no |
| Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate): | |
| Maximising well-being: | no |
| Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate): | |
| Enhancing our quality of place: | yes |
| Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate): | |

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

DocumentLocation

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

- 1.1. Not applicable to the Accreditation Return because the process itself requires that an Access Policy Statement is submitted.
- 1.2. An Equalities Impact Assessment of the Collections Development Policy and the Documentation Policy has been undertaken. Both policies will have a positive impact on the equality groups. The Collections Development Policy places an increased emphasis on contemporary collecting with the addition of the following statement: We will work to ensure that the collections are representative of all Hampshire's communities past and present, in consultation with under-represented groups.
- 1.3. Not applicable to the Care and Conservation Policy.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

- 2.1. Not applicable

3. Climate Change:

- 3.1. How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

Both the Collections Development Policy and the Care and Conservation Policy recognise the need to find a more sustainable storage solution for the collections that both reduces energy consumption and creates a more stable environment that will ensure the objects survive in the best possible condition for future generations.

- 3.2. How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

The Care and Conservation Policy will ensure that the environment in which the collections are kept is constantly monitored for pest infestations that may increase as a result of climate change.