

Report

Cabinet Member for Skills & Work and Newport LIVE

Part 1

Date: May 2015

Item No: 2

Subject Collections Review – Museums and Heritage

Purpose The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet Member Leisure and Culture approval for curatorial staff to initiate the process to remove some objects identified in this report from the permanent collections of Newport Museums and Heritage Service in accordance with the Service's Collections Development Policy 2014.

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Ward General

Summary Newport Museums & Heritage Service currently manages its collections based on guidelines set out in the Acquisition and Disposal Policy 2009. A new Collections Development policy is currently under consideration. Both policies set out a framework for collecting decisions and seek to focus on material that demonstrates a link to the locality of Newport. However collecting has not always been so focussed and we manage a number of objects with little connection to Newport or its history. Curatorial staff have identified a number of objects which are of no local, historic or other significance for Newport's collections which they now wish to remove from the permanent collections.

Proposal **To permit curatorial staff to initiate the process to remove identified objects from the permanent collections in accordance with the Acquisitions and Disposal Policy 2009 and the proposed Collections Development Policy 2014.**

Action by Head of Regeneration, Investment and Housing

Timetable Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Museums & Heritage Officer
- Curator
- Curatorial Support Officer
- Head of Finance
- Head of Law and Regulations
- Head of People and Business Change

Signed

1. Background

- 1.1 Newport Museums and Heritage Service meets its responsibility to future generations by ensuring that its collections are well managed and sustainable. The Service recognises the Museum Association's position that ethically managed rationalisations of collections form part of a museum's long-term collections policy.
- 1.2 The Museums Association is a membership organisation providing services to and reflecting the interests of museums and those who work for and govern them. It expects all its members to uphold and promote the Code of Ethics for Museums (2008) and follow its underpinning principles. The Code of Ethics supports the responsible de-accessioning of items so long legal and ethical requirements are met. The term de-accessioning refers to the removal of objects from a museum's collections. Collections rationalisation is supported by the Museums Association if:
- The organisation is legally able to do so;
 - It is carried out within the framework of a collections policy;
 - It is undertaken on the advice of a range of staff and agreed by the governing body;
 - It is carried out with the intention of keeping items in the public domain;
 - It is carried out with public interest and benefit in mind.

2. Reasons for the proposal

- 2.1 Newport Museums and Heritage Service manages its collections based on guidelines expressed in the Collections Development Policy 2014. While current collecting is very focussed on links of objects with the locality of Newport and its communities, this was not always the case in the past. Hence some objects do not have any direct relevance for the interpretation of Newport's history and are of no other value or significance to the collections. Some items lack any related information, such as provenance details, and/or are in bad condition. Curatorial staff would therefore like to remove some selected items from the collections and de-accession them guided by a framework devised by the Museums Association. The framework will ensure that the process is informed by the highest standards of expertise and takes all legal and other circumstances into consideration. Furthermore, it strongly favours the transfer of objects to other museums or public institutions to retain items in the public domain. It is only after due consideration of alternative methods, that objects are destroyed.
- 2.2 The objects listed below have been identified for de-accessioning by curatorial staff.

	Number	Description	Reason for de-accessioning
1	NPTMG:1955.106	Carson Toone (Warminster) cheese press, windlass type	Not relevant for interpretation of Newport's history; not manufactured locally; Cwmbran provenance.
2	NPTMG:1956.73	Roasting tin	Not relevant for interpretation of Newport's history; Poor condition (heavily corroded) and poor provenance ('used in Monmouthshire').
3	NPTMG:1976.154	Butter table	Not relevant for interpretation of Newport's history; Blaenau Gwent provenance.
4	NPTMG:1975.218	Corbett (Shrewsbury) cheese press	Not relevant for interpretation of Newport's history; not manufactured locally; Chepstow provenance.
5	NPTMG:1971.155.1	Blacksmith's forge	Not relevant for interpretation of Newport's history; Blackwood provenance.
6	NPTMG:1984.144.1-7	Jiffy washing machine and relating documents	Not relevant for interpretation of Newport's history; Originally

			obtained for the Museum's School Service but accessioned in 1984; Blackwood provenance.
7	NPTMG:1989.340	Washing machine with reciprocating motion;	Substantial parts non-original; not relevant for interpretation of Newport's history; Vale of Glamorgan provenance.
8	NPTMG:1989.334.2-4	3 of 4 timber baulks found in situ during excavations at the entrance of Bellport enclosed dock; believed to have been a part of the original coffer dam to hold the river whilst the excavation proceeded.	All four timber baulks are very similar and no detailed records relating to their discovery or location in the ground are available; one of the timber baulks to be retained as an example; three others to be laser scanned prior to disposal.
9	NPTMG:1990.62	Dean washing machine with ACME wringer	Not relevant for interpretation of Newport's history; not manufactured locally; Caerphilly provenance.
10	TEMP:2006.1341	Washing Machine, B.T. Brothers Ltd. (London)	No further information; un-provenanced; not manufactured locally; incomplete and in poor condition (heavily corroded)
11	TEMP:2006.1344	Wooden bench	No further information and in very poor condition (extensive woodworm damage and rotten).
12	TEMP:2006.1347	Dishlex dishwasher, mid-20 th Century	Not relevant for interpretation of Newport's history; Neither manufactured nor collected locally; Poor condition (heavily corroded in parts).
13	TEMP.2006.1353	Library Reader	Not relevant for interpretation of Newport's history; No further information; un-provenanced (likely to be from Newport's library service).
14	TEMP:2006.1360	Blackboard	Poor condition (waterlogged wooden frame, rotten); No further information; un-provenanced.
15	TEMP:2006.1362	Butter churn, W. Waide (Leeds)	Not relevant for interpretation of Newport's history; No further information; un-provenanced.
16	TEMP:2006.1387	Wooden table	Poor condition (Leather peeling from top, woodworm damage); no provenance information.
17	TEMP:2006.1377.1-2	Sheet metal clock faces	Poor condition (dirty and corroded); no further information; un-provenanced.
18	TEMP:2006.1385	Fender for boat	No further information; un-provenanced
19	TEMP:2006.1386	Fender for boat	No further information; un-provenanced
20	TEMP:2006.1388.1&2	Pre 1950 library trolleys.	No further information; un-provenanced; likely to be from Newport's library service. .
21	TEMP:2006.1392	Circular table with pulleys.	No further information; un-provenanced.

22	TEMP:2006.1393.1&2	1940-50s kitchen units x 2.	No further information and in poor condition (extensive woodworm damage).
23	TEMP:2006.1398	Sign from mine, 'Search Yourself'	No further information; un-provenanced.
24	TEMP:2006.1400	Cast iron Victorian fireplace.	No further information; un-provenanced.
25	TEMP:2006.1401	Cast iron Victorian fire grate.	No further information; un-provenanced.
26	TEMP:2006.1402	Natmar Company garment marking machine	Poor condition (heavily corroded); No further information; un-provenanced.
27	TEMP:2006.1403 & TEMP:2006.1408	1930s style table and 5 chairs.	No further information; un-provenanced.
28	TEMP:2006.1406	19 th /20 th Century concrete corbel x 2.	No further information; un-provenanced.
29	TEMP:2006.1414	Top of 19 th Century Welsh dresser.	Incomplete item; No further information; un-provenanced.
30	TEMP:2006.1426 & TEMP:2006.1427 (likely to be NPTMG:1966.24.1-2)	Two 19 th Century doors no provenance.	Poor condition and poor provenance.
31	NPMTG:1952.4/R354	Reproduction/poster; <i>Fishing Village</i> by Peggy Wickham	Not signed or limited edition; part of larger collection of reproductions of works of art collected in 1950s for loan purposes
32	NPTMG:1952.136/R441	Reproduction/poster; <i>Poultry Yard</i> by Jan Havicksz Steen	Not signed or limited edition; part of larger collection of reproductions of works of art collected in 1950s for loan purposes
33	NPTMG:1957.102/R857	Reproduction/poster; <i>Adoration</i> by Cerge Dela Tour	Not signed or limited edition; part of larger collection of reproductions of works of art collected in 1950s for loan purposes
34	No number	Reproduction/poster; <i>The Kiosk St Tropez</i> by John C.R. D'oyly	Not signed or limited edition; part of larger collection of reproductions of works of art collected in 1950s for loan purposes

3. The benefits expected

- 3.1 The transfer of objects to other museums or relevant public organisations will impact positively on their use and accessibility. The disposal of identified objects from the permanent collections would free up resources such as valuable storage space. These could be redistributed to enhance the care and interpretation for objects which are of immediate relevance for Newport's collections and communities.

4. Legal impacts

- 4.1 Newport Museums and Heritage Service can only dispose of items it legally owns. The method of entry and current status of all items identified in this report will be investigated thoroughly before any action is taken.

5. Timescales

- 5.1 The process of de-accessioning would be initiated immediately.

6. Any staffing issues

6.1 There are no staffing issues.

7. Financial Summary

7.1 The costs associated with disposal will be negligible and will be met from the Museum & Art Gallery budget

8. Risks

Risk	Impact of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect	Who is responsible for dealing with the risk?
Disposal of items not owned by NCC	M	L	The disposal framework develop by the Museums Association will be applied which includes a thorough investigation of an object's acquisition method and current status.	Museums Officer (Collections & Premises)
Negative publicity for Museums & Heritage Service and NCC	M	L	Application of the disposal framework ensures that all disposals are carried out in an ethical manner and with support of the Museums Association.	Museums Officer (Collections & Premises)

9. Links to Council Policies and Priorities

9.1 The disposal of selected objects outside the current remit of the Service enables the more efficient management of the collections and ensures their relevance for current and future purposes. All disposals will be carried out in accordance with Newport Museums and Heritage Service's Collections Development Policy 2014.

10. Options available

10.1 Retain the material and use valuable resources on its care and storage.

10.2 Initiate collections rationalisation process.

11. Preferred Option and Why

11.1 The preferred option is to initiate the process of disposal to ensure Newport's collections remain relevant and sustainable. This would increase the use of and access to the objects and/or free up resources for the benefit of Newport's core collections.

12. Comments of Chief Financial Officer

12.1 Given the financial challenge that the Council currently faces, and will continue to face for the foreseeable future it is important that the Council assets are carefully managed. Lack of attention to the sustainability of the collections and the immediate relevance for Newport's communities will have an impact upon the limited resource that is currently available to store the collections.

12.2 The costs associated with the disposal of the items identified above are likely to be negligible and will be met from within existing budget provision.

13. Comments of Monitoring Officer

13.1 The proposed removal of these items from the permanent collections is in accordance with the Council's Acquisitions and Disposal policy, given that they have no significant historical connection with the area. However, the Council can only dispose of items that it legally owns.

14. Staffing Implications: Comments of Head of People and Business Change

14.1 There are no human resources implications in this report.

15. Comments of Cabinet Member

15.1 Cabinet Member has approved the report for consultation.

16. Comments of Non-Executive Members

None received.

17. Background Papers

Collections Development Policy 2014
Newport Museums and Heritage Service
(Appendix 1, available to the public on request)

Code of Ethics for Museums, Museums Association, 2008
<http://www.museumsassociation.org/ethics/code-of-ethics> (accessed on 14/10/2014)

Dated: 14 May 2015