

Report



Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture

THIS IS FOR MEMBER CONSULTATION PURPOSES – RESPONSES BY 4PM 08/05/2019

Part 1

Date: 30 April 2019

Subject Care of Collections Policy – Museums and Heritage

Purpose The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet Member Leisure & Culture approval of the proposed Care of Collections Policy [2019] in order to fulfil the requirements of the Museums Accreditation Scheme and maintain accreditation status for Newport Museum & Art Gallery.

Author Newport Museum and Art Gallery Manager

Ward General

Summary The Museums Accreditation Scheme administered by the Arts Council England in partnership with CyMAL: Museums, Archives, Libraries Wales sets nationally agreed standards for museums in the UK. To comply with the updated Accreditation Standard published in 2018, Newport Museums & Heritage Service must have a care of collections policy approved by its governing body. Failure to maintain accreditation status would impact on access to grant aid from bodies such as CyMAL and the Federation of Museums and Art Galleries of Wales.

Proposal To approve the proposed Care of Collections Policy [2019] to maintain accreditation status for Newport Museum and Art Gallery.

Action by Head of Regeneration, Investment and Housing

Timetable Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Strategic Director - Place
- Head of Finance – Chief Finance Officer
- Head of Law and Regulations – Monitoring Officer
- Head of People and Business Change
- Culture & Continuing Learning Manager
- Collections & Engagement Officer
- CyMAL Museum Accreditation Advisor

Signed

Background

The Museums Accreditation Scheme was first launched in 1988. Then known as Registration Scheme for Museums and Galleries, it was revised several times and rebranded Accreditation Scheme in 2004 to ensure its continuing relevance to museums and their users. The scheme is now administered by the Arts Council England in partnership with CyMAL, the Welsh Government's department for Museums, Archives and Libraries in Wales. Its overall aim is to define good practice, identify agreed standards for museums in the UK and encourage organisations to develop and improve. A published standard – last revised in 2018 – sets out the requirements museums must meet to gain or maintain accreditation status. The focus is on the following three areas:

- Organisational health
- Managing collections
- Users and their experiences

The proposed policy sets out the Museum Service's obligations regarding the care it must provide for the collections in its care. Museums are institutions for the long term, and the collections they hold are held in perpetuity for public benefit.

At a basic level the managing authority (NCC) is required to provide suitable well maintained buildings to protect the collections whether they are on display, in storage or subject to research, conservation or other museum activities. This obligation required certain adequate protective measures such as fire detection and alarms and other systems and that these are tested regularly.

The policy also sets out obligations and ambitions in terms of conservation, documentation and emergency preparedness and response.

The reasons for your proposal

Newport Museum and Art Gallery has been a part of the Museums Accreditation Scheme since its beginning in the 1980s.

To comply with the scheme's standards and retain accreditation status, policies with regard to collections care, conservation and documentation need to be in place. These policies need to be approved by the museum's governing body and reviewed at least every 5 years. We have decided to address all areas in one Care of Collections Policy. Internal plans and procedures to implement the policy are in place and reviewed accordingly.

The Care of Collections Policy, last approved by Cabinet in March 2013, is overdue for an update. The submission of the updated policy was delayed to incorporate any changes to the recently reviewed accreditation standards which were published in November 2018.

The benefits expected

There are distinctive benefits of taking part in the Accreditation Scheme:

- Accreditation status is a key factor for CyMAL and other grant-giving bodies in deciding the allocation of grant funding. Museums must be part of the scheme to be eligible for grant funding;
- Accreditation represents a public recognition that a museum meets approved standards in the three key areas;
- It raises the profile of museums and helps to demonstrate to potential donors of objects and collections that the museum is a suitable repository;
- It helps museums improve their focus on meeting users' needs and interests;

- It drives forward planning by formalising procedures and policies.

Legal implications

There are no legal implications to this proposal.

Timescales

Immediate

Staffing issues

The proposed policy commits Newport City Council to ensure appropriate levels of staffing and access to professional advice are maintained but does not set out provisions in detail.

Financial Summary

There are no additional costs.

	Year 1 (Current) £	Year 2 £	Year 3 £	Ongoing £	Notes including budgets heads affected
Costs (Income)					
Net Costs (Savings)					
Net Impact on Budget					

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?
Loss of accreditation status	H	L	Develop policy which meets accreditation requirements and is approved.	Museum and Art Gallery Manager

* Taking account of proposed mitigation measures

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

This policy forms part of a collections management framework and links to the Museums & Heritage Service's Collections Development Policy [2015]. Accredited status contributes directly to Welsh Government's and NCC's wellbeing agenda enshrined in the Well-Being of Future Generations Act and NCC's corporate plan and priorities. Compliance with the accreditation standard enriches people's lives by providing opportunities to take part in cultural activities and ensuring our visitors' experiences meet a range of recognised standards.

Options Available and Considered

Option 1 - To approve the proposed policy and maintain accreditation status.

Option 2 - To not approve the proposed policy and risk the loss of accreditation status. This would impact on the public profile of the Museums & Heritage Service and on access to grant funding

from organisations such as CyMAL and the Federation of Museums and Art Galleries of Wales.

Preferred Option and Why

The preferred option is the approval of the proposed Care of Collections Policy to ensure high standards service delivery are maintained and access to grant aid.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

There are no additional financial implications as a result of approving the policy. There is a risk that if the policy is not approved then Newport City Council will lose accreditation status and not be able to gain access to various grants.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

There are no legal issues arising from the report. The Care and Collections policy is a non-statutory policy which the Council is required to have in place to meet the requirements of the Museums Accreditation Scheme and have continued rights to access grant funding. The policy needs to be reviewed every 5 years and was last approved by the cabinet member in 2013. The revised policy incorporates all the relevant standards for care, conservation and documentation relating to museum collections and meets the requirements of the new accreditation scheme published in 2018.

Comments of Head of People and Business Change

The Newport art gallery and museum are key resources which support the cultural education of current and future generations.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 has been fully considered when writing this report. All five aspects of the sustainable development principle have been reflected in the comments (Long Term, Prevention, Integration, Collaboration and Involvement).

From an HR perspective there are no staffing implication to this report.

Scrutiny Committees

N/A

Equalities Impact Assessment and the Equalities Act 2010

The report and the care of collections policy is for the general well-being of society and its care for shared heritage. The proposed policy does not impact any identified group any more or less than any other, but rather seeks to ensure that the Councils management of its collections is for the benefit of all

Children and Families (Wales) Measure

N/A

Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

This policy forms part of a collections management framework and links to the Museums & Heritage Service's Collections Development Policy [2015]. Accredited status contributes directly to Welsh Government's and NCC's wellbeing agenda enshrined in the Well-Being of Future Generations Act and NCC's corporate plan and priorities. Compliance with the accreditation standard enriches people's lives by providing opportunities to take part in cultural activities and ensuring our visitors' experiences meet a range of recognised standards

This report was developed with the sustainable development principle of the Act in mind,

Long Term

Maintaining accreditation status can support long term sustainability of the museum and art gallery by adhering to national agreed standards, which inspires the confidence of the public and funding bodies. A care of collections policy will set out how the collection will be conserved in the long term.

Prevention

A care of collections policy will look to preserve and manage the museum and art gallery collection in an appropriate way as to prevent damage and deterioration.

Integration

This proposal strongly supports the Wellbeing Goal “*A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language*”. It also supports a number of the other well-being goals and does not adversely affect the others.

Collaboration

The Museums Accreditation scheme has developed over a number of years collaboratively across the Museum’s sector.

Involvement

Comments received from wider consultation, including comments from elected members, are detailed in each application report in the attached schedule.

Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Section 17(1) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 imposes a duty on the Local Authority to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area.

Consultation

Comments received from wider consultation, including comments from elected members, are detailed in each application report in the attached schedule.

Background Papers

1. Revised Care of Collections Policy [2019] – not available to the public;
2. Accreditation Scheme for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom: Accreditation Standard, 2018 – available to the public, <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/accreditation-scheme/about-accreditation> (accessed 3/1/2019);



Collections Care
Policy 2019.doc

Dated: 30 April 2019

NEWPORT MUSEUMS AND HERITAGE SERVICE
NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL

CARE OF COLLECTIONS POLICY
2019

Date of Cabinet Approval:

Date of Review: 2024

Context

Newport Museums and Heritage Service (NMHS) cares for approximately 60,000 objects and discrete collections. The management of these is central to the key activities which underpin the mission statement:

The Museums and Heritage Service exists to inform, educate and inspire the community by conserving and interpreting the heritage of Newport for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations.

NMHS is a service delivered by Newport City Council. Therefore an overall responsibility of Newport City Council for all statements expressed in this policy can be assumed.

1. Aims and Purpose of the Care of Collections Policy

- 1.1. To preserve the objects and collections for the benefit of present and future generations;
- 1.2. To record and preserve information relating to objects and collections;
- 1.3. To maximise the use of collections and associated information and make them accessible to a variety of users in various ways;
- 1.4. To manage the objects and collections to the highest possible standards.

2. Policy Statements

- 2.1. This policy will be reviewed at least once every five years or, when the necessity arises, prior to that.
- 2.2. This policy forms a part of a wider collections management framework and was developed with reference to the Collections Development Policy [2015]. It should be read in conjunction with the Position Statement and Documentation Plan, the Documentation Procedural Manual, the Emergency Preparedness Plan and the Care of Collections Plan.
- 2.3. NMHS is committed to maintaining professional standards of collections care and will ensure appropriate levels of resources are available. This includes adequate levels of staffing and access to professional advice and services.
- 2.4. NMHS accepts that objects in the collections are held in perpetuity and do not constitute assets.
- 2.5. NMHS is committed to the preservation of the collections and to stabilising and improving their overall condition.

3. Scope

- 3.1. This document applies to all objects and collections cared for by NMHS, which includes items accessioned into the permanent collections and un-accessioned items considered part of the accessioning backlog.
- 3.2. It does not apply to education and handling collections purchased for use in activities where damage and consequent disposal is anticipated or to items identified as props.

- 3.3. All objects on loan to NMHS are subject to the same standards of professional care as applied to the collections.

4. Principal Elements

4.1. *Buildings*

- 4.1.1. NMHS provides suitable and well-maintained buildings to protect the collections regardless whether they are on display, in storage or subject to research, conservation or other museum activities.
- 4.1.2. NMHS ensures that appropriate levels of security and insurance are maintained and that security, fire and other protection systems are regularly tested, inspected and maintained.

4.2. *Storage*

- 4.2.1. NMHS applies professional standards and practice in the management of collections storage areas.

4.3. *Housekeeping*

- 4.3.1. NMHS ensures appropriate levels of cleanliness throughout the buildings to minimise the potential threat from mould or pests.
- 4.3.2. Active threats are treated with the highest priority. Any treatment is carried out in compliance with health & safety regulations and specialist advice and expertise is sought where necessary.

4.4. *Handling and use of collections*

- 4.4.1. NMHS aims to maximise access to the collections while ensuring their careful and appropriate use to minimise the risk of physical damage. Professional standards and practice are applied to all museum activities involving the handling and use of collections.
- 4.4.2. Objects are only loaned where borrowers can meet the same professional levels of care and satisfy certain criteria.

4.5. *Environment*

- 4.5.1. NMHS ensures that collections are not subjected to damaging environments regardless whether they are on display, in storage or subject to other museum activities.
- 4.5.2. Environmental monitoring and – where appropriate – environmental control systems are in place and maintained to minimise the risk of damage with regard to unacceptable temperature or humidity, damaging levels of light, gaseous or particulate pollutants.
- 4.5.3. We will help safeguard the natural environment by using passive environment management methods as far as is practical.

4.6. *Conservation*

- 4.6.1. NMHS aims to provide conditions which stabilise the collections and minimise further deterioration thus enabling the long-term survival of and access to the collections. This is achieved through professional levels of care.
- 4.6.2. The emphasis is on preventive conservation measures to stabilise objects.

4.6.3. Remedial treatment is only carried out by trained and accredited conservation professionals and treatment records are added to an object's permanent catalogue record.

4.7. *Documentation*

4.7.1. Recording collection information is central to being accountable for the collections, their accessibility, management, study and use.

4.7.2. All documentation procedures applied by staff or under their supervision meet current SPECTRUM standards.

4.7.3. A procedural manual outlining all documentation procedures in writing is maintained and available to staff applying the procedures.

4.7.4. NMHS aims to be accountable for all objects in its care. This includes new acquisitions as well as material collected in the past.

4.7.5. While information on new acquisitions is recorded to high standards, records for the earliest collections are often very basic, patchy or even missing. NMHS aims to establish at least a basic inventory record for all individual items or discrete collections. A regularly reviewed and updated documentation plan is in place to achieve this.

4.7.6. In the long term NMHS aims to digitise all paper based collections information and create one central computerised documentation system which is maintained in perpetuity. NMHS also aims to create and include digital images of all materials in the collections.

4.8. *Emergency Preparedness*

4.8.1. NMHS maintains an emergency preparedness plan appropriate to buildings and collections to provide effective emergency response and salvage in the event of a disaster such as a fire, flood or other incident.