

Report

Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure

Part 1

Date: 19 March 2021

Subject Development Policy – Newport Museums and Heritage Service

Purpose To seek Cabinet Member approval of the Collections Development Policy.

Author Museum and Art Gallery Manager

Ward General

Summary Changes to the existing policy. Formal approval by the governing body is a requirement to retain full accreditation status under the Museums Accreditation scheme.

Proposal The Collections Development Policy is approved.

Action by Head of Regeneration, Investment and Housing

Timetable This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Head of Law and Regulation – Monitoring Officer
- Head of Finance – Chief Finance Officer
- Head of People and Business Change
- Culture and Continuing Learning Manager
- Collections and Engagement Officer

Signed

Background

A Collections Development Policy provides an agreed framework for Museums and Heritage staff to make ethically sound decisions on the acquisition of museum objects and rationalisation of existing collections. Based on nationally shared principles, it supports the planned approach to collections management.

Museum Accreditation

Newport Museum and Art Gallery is a fully accredited Museum under the Museums Accreditation Scheme. The 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 the Welsh Government's Department for Culture and Sport. 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 November 2018 – sets out the requirements museums must meet to gain or maintain accreditation status. The focus is on the following three areas:

1. Organisational Health
2. Managing Collections
3. Users and their experiences

Reasons for the Proposal

To ensure accreditation standards are maintained, an up-to-date Collections Development Policy must be in place.

The current process of acquisition and collections rationalisation is based on the Acquisition and Disposal Policy approved by the Cabinet Member for Leisure & Continuing Learning in June 2015. Five yearly review of the policy is a requirement for Museum Accreditation to ensure that recent legal changes and changes in professional ethical guidelines are reflected in the document. The proposed policy is attached in Appendix 1.

General Principles for Collecting

General principles for collecting apply to all subject areas and future collecting efforts. Material considered for acquisition must be of relevance to the interpretation and understanding of Newport's past and present. Acknowledging that existing collections are not representative of Newport's diverse makeup, we now actively seek to acquire material linked to under-represented communities and themes.

Social History

Oral histories, in addition to other digital material such as film, will not be collected any longer, but referred to or deposited with the National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales. Material can be accessed when required.

Financial Summary

There are no financial implications arising from the approval of the Collections Development Policy.

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 full accreditation status	M	L	Develop a robust policy which complies with accreditation requirements and is approved.	Museums Officer (Collections & Premises)

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

This policy forms part of a collections management framework and links to the Care of Collections Policy (2019). Accredited status helps individuals and communities enrich their lives by taking part in cultural activities and ensuring their museum experiences meet a range of recognised standards. This policy contributes to Newport City Council's mission of improving peoples' lives and helps realise the strategic priority of identifying Newport as a learning city.

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 Welsh Government and the Federation of Museums and Art Galleries of Wales.

Preferred Option and Why

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

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

There will be no adverse financial impact as a result of approving the Collections Development Policy, there is an annual budget in place which funds exhibitions/displays and a reserve budget for any acquisitions deemed appropriate.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

There are no legal issues arising from the report. The Collections Development 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 2015. 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

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

The report writer has fully considered the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 well-being goals and sustainable development principle in the development of this report. This proposal aims to enable communities to access the heritage of Newport, which is important for the cultural well-being of communities.

Scrutiny Committees

N/A

Equalities Impact Assessment and the Equalities Act 2010

The Museum and Art Gallery is accessible to all and collections and associated information are available through various formats including displays, online/social media content and activities and events. Objects not on display – or any further information relating to the collections – can be accessed on request. Adjustments to meet an individual's needs arising from one of the protected characteristics are made as far as reasonable practicable.

The proposed version of the Collections Development Policy acknowledges that the collections are non-representative of Newport's diverse makeup and highlights that we actively seek to acquire material linked to under-represented communities and themes. Decisions on acquisitions are informed by a series of criteria contained in the Collections Development Policy which is published on our website.

The Equality Act 2010 contains a Public Sector Equality Duty which came into force on 06 April 2011. The Act identifies a number of 'protected characteristics', namely age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation; marriage and civil partnership. The new single duty aims to integrate consideration of equality and good relations into the regular business of public authorities. Compliance with the duty is a legal obligation and is intended to result in better informed decision-making and policy development and services that are more effective for users. In exercising its functions, the Council must have due regard to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act; advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. The Act is not overly prescriptive about the approach a public authority should take to ensure due regard, although it does set out that due regard to advancing equality involves: removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics; taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these differ from the need of other people; and encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

Children and Families (Wales) Measure

Although no targeted consultation takes place specifically aimed at children and young people, consultation on planning applications and appeals is open to all of our citizens regardless of their age. Depending on the scale of the proposed development, applications are publicised via letters to neighbouring occupiers, site notices, press notices and/or social media. People replying to consultations are not required to provide their age or any other personal data, and therefore this data is not held or recorded in any way, and responses are not separated out by age.

Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Collections underpin Museum activities and a number of well-being goals expressed in the Future Generations Act apply to this proposed policy:

A prosperous Wales: Focussed collecting considers available resources including storage space and storage requirements at the point of an object's acquisition and, together with collections rationalisation efforts guided by a Collections Development Policy, results in an efficiently managed collection.

A healthier Wales: collecting driven by a Collections Development Policy is more likely to result in a collection attractive and relevant to Newport's residents and communities. Displays and a range of Museum activities and events inspired by the collections offer a valuable free resource and opportunities for engagement thus contributing to health and well-being.

A more equal Wales: as outlined in the proposed policy, we actively seek to collect material linked to so far under-represented themes and communities thus starting to address an imbalance present in the current collection.

A resilient Wales: the collections and stories associated with objects bear testament to adaption and change throughout Newport's history and contribute to the understanding of the City's past and present.

A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language: To collect and preserve Newport's portable cultural heritage and associated stories is at the core of the proposed policy.

The proposed policy support's the ways of working expressed in the Future Generations Act as follows:

Long-Term: Newport Museum and Art Gallery strives to care for the city's collection for the benefit of current and future generations. A selective and focussed Collections Development Policy best serves this long-term goal, which is at the heart of the Museum's mission.

Preventive: this policy sets out clearly defined criteria for collecting aiming to prevent the accumulation of material which is likely to remain under-used and is of no or tenuous relevance for the interpretation and understanding of Newport's past and present.

Integration: A Collections Development Policy is part of an efficient collections management framework which underpins all Museum activities. These in turn form a part of Newport's wider and vibrant cultural offer.

Collaboration and Involvement: Newport Museum and Art Gallery collaborates with individuals, artists, community and special interest groups on a number of activities and projects such as exhibitions. By fostering these relationships, opportunities to collect objects or artworks meaningful to those involved arise.

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. Draft Collections Development Policy [2020] – not available to the public;



Appendix 1 - Draft -
Collections Develop

2. Accreditation Scheme for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom: Accreditation Standard, November 2018 – available to the public.



Appendix 2 -
AccreditationStandards

Date: 4 March 2021