

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Recreation and Heritage
Date:	21 September 2020
Title:	Hampshire Cultural Trust: Updated Collections Development Policy for 2020-2025
Report From:	Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services

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Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the updated Hampshire Cultural Trust Collections Development Policy (the Policy) in line with 5.6 in Hampshire Cultural Trust's Collections Loan Agreement, which states:

The Trust shall have an Acquisitions and Disposals Policy which shall either be the Council's Collections Development Policy 2013-2018 or such equivalent or replacement policy which may be agreed by the parties and adopted by the Trust. Any changes to the Acquisitions and Disposals Policy shall only be made with the approval of the Council, such approval not to be unreasonably withheld, and in the event of any conflict, the terms of this Agreement shall take precedence over the terms of the Acquisitions and Disposals Policy.

Upon approval, the Collections Development Policy 2020-2025 will replace the Collections Development Policy 2015-2020.

Recommendations

2. That the Executive Member for Recreation and Heritage, on behalf of Hampshire County Council as owners of the museum collection loaned to Hampshire Cultural Trust:
 - a) Approves the Hampshire Culture Trust Collections Development Policy that has been updated in line with standards set out by the Arts Council England Accreditation Scheme.

- b) Provides evidence of the approval that can be submitted to Arts Council England as a requirement for future Accreditation Returns made by Hampshire Cultural Trust.

Executive Summary

3. This report refers to the Hampshire Cultural Trust's Collections Development Policy 2020-2025 that is attached as Appendix 1.
4. This report seeks to:
 - set out the background to Museum Accreditation and the requirement for Hampshire County Council to approve the Hampshire Cultural Trust's Collections Development Policy 2020-2025
 - highlight any key changes to the Policy since it was last updated and approved by Hampshire County Council

Contextual information

5. Museum Accreditation is the UK standard for museums and galleries, and is managed by Arts Council England (ACE). It defines good practice and identifies agreed professional standards, thereby encouraging sensible development. Hampshire County Council museums have achieved the standard since it was first introduced in 1988 with the most recent award having been made in July 2018.
6. Accreditation 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. It is also used as the key benchmark by Hampshire County Council and Winchester City Council in their Collection Loan Agreements with the Hampshire Cultural Trust. It is a requirement of the Councils that the Trust ensures the museums and heritage sites now managed by the Trust continue to meet the Accreditation Standard.
7. The current Hampshire Cultural Trust Collections Development Policy 2015-2020 was approved by the Executive Member for Culture, Recreation and Countryside on 16 July 2015. It is now due for review.
8. Hampshire Cultural Trust Board of Trustees approved the Collections Development Policy 2020-2025 on 30 March 2020. It is now necessary for Hampshire County Council and Winchester City Council to consider and approve the Collections Development Policy and provide evidence of their approval. Details of this requirement have also been sent to Winchester City Council.

9. The Collections Development Policy sets out the principles that will ensure Hampshire Cultural Trust adds and disposes objects within the collections in a responsible and ethical manner on behalf of Hampshire County Council and Winchester City Council. It provides clear procedures and decision-making processes common to all Accredited museums. It provides a basis for open and transparent decision-making and an informed dialogue between the governing bodies, our district and borough partners, other funding bodies and stakeholders.
10. This Policy applies to material which Hampshire County Council and Winchester City Council own, and Hampshire Cultural Trust accessions into the collections on their behalf. Acquisition is defined as the process of obtaining legal title and ownership to an object with the intention of using it for museum purposes.
11. Hampshire Cultural Trust 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.
12. 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 improving the quality of the collections, especially with regards to relevance and public benefit. The Policy also states how to release capacity through the assessment of material that no longer falls within the collecting policy and works to enable savings in our future storage requirements.

Finance

13. By adding paragraph 1.8 to the Policy, it responds to a request by the auditors for Hampshire Cultural Trust to confirm the financial treatment of the collections on the Trust's balance sheet.
14. No significant financial implications are envisaged with this decision as any collection/acquisition decision will take close account of the potential associated costs. The Trust will be focusing upon minimising such costs in line with its policies and business plan.
15. On any occasion where the importance or opportunity associated with a major acquisition may incur significant cost, the Trust will not proceed without discussion with the relevant Founding Authority who retain long-term ownership of the collections.

16. The proceeds of any disposal will be retained in a restricted fund managed by the Trust's in line with best practice. Any exceptional situations will be managed through the accreditation guidance process.

Performance

14. The Collections Development Policy 2020-2025 is largely identical to the current Collections Development Policy 2015-2020. Both are based on the mandatory ACE Museum Accreditation template dated 2014 and reprinted in 2018. Following a shared template allows all museum governing bodies to adopt the most up-to-date legal and ethical framework for collections acquisition and disposal.
15. The differences between the current and the updated Policy are:
 - Updating references to staff roles and organisational policies
 - Confirming the difference in approach to caring for accessioned objects in the collections and historic objects used for handling in educational sessions in line with professional practice
 - Clarifying the criteria applied in making accessioning decisions
 - Setting out more clearly the process and levels of delegation involved in decision making for acquisitions and disposals
 - Simplifying the format
16. Overall, the changes made aim to improve the effectiveness and transparency of the Policy, which will be published on the Trust's website upon approval.
17. The changes further support the Trust's level of caution and care taken when considering the addition of a historic object in the museum collection, with consideration for the long-term legacy of such decisions.

Consultation and Equalities

18. The Policy confirms that the Trust will assess the suitability of an object for inclusion in the collections by considering its public benefit. Evaluating public benefit of an object is informed by ongoing audience research and takes both local interests and regionally shared themes into consideration.
19. None of the changes to the Policy have an impact on the accessibility of the collections or how they are enjoyed and experienced by the public. No public consultation was undertaken specifically for the policy review.

Future direction

20. Once approved, the Policy will guide the Trust's work on developing and improving the museum collections owned by Hampshire County Council.
21. Evidence of the approval by Hampshire County Council will be submitted with the next ACE Museum Accreditation return.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	yes

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.)

Document

Location

None

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

- 2.1 An EIA is not required as no significant changes to the existing policy are included and there are no negative impacts are anticipated.