

Agenda item: 

**Title of meeting:** Culture, Leisure and Sport Decision Meeting

**Date of meeting:** 10 July 2015

**Subject:** Museums Documentation Policy

**Report by:** Director of Culture and City Development

**Wards affected:** All

**Key decision:** No

**Full Council decision:** No

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**1. Purpose of report**

1.1 To present the Portsmouth Museums Documentation Policy.

**2. Recommendations**

**2. That the draft Portsmouth Museums Documentation Policy be approved.**

**2.2 That a Documentation Plan is developed to drive the operation of this Policy.**

**3. Background**

3.1 A Documentation Policy is an essential tool as part of an effective collections management framework for the museums service. It states the aims and methods for the documentation and recording of its collections. Effective documentation of collections is achieved through working practices, creation and maintenance of electronic and paper records guided by the policy statements.

3.2 The Policy provides guidance for staff and decision making in the area of collections documentation. It encourages public confidence in the museum as a suitable repository for collections items.

3.3 The Documentation Policy is one of the key documents museums are required to submit to Arts Council England (ACE) as part of the Accreditation return.

3.4 The aims of the Accreditation scheme, as laid down by ACE are: to encourage all museums and galleries in the UK to achieve agreed standards in how they are run, how they manage their collections and the experience of users.

3.5 Museums are required to reapply every four or so years. It is a continuous process, the Accreditation standards are evolving requirements.

They are designed to drive improvement and development within the museum sector so each round demands more of the applicant organisations. The service achieved full Accreditation for all its sites in previous applications, most recently in 2007. We submitted our new application in April 2015 with the Documentation Policy sent as a draft document.

#### **4. Reasons for recommendations**

- 4.1 A Documentation Policy is a vital tool in a collections management framework. It provides staff with guidance, ensures that council resources are not wasted in undirected measures endorsing the principles of 'value for money' and the appropriate management of public funds.
- 4.2 The various elements of a Documentation Policy are essential parts of audit procedures and control, permitting us to account for the collections items in our care.
- 4.3 A Documentation Policy is one of the required documents to support an application for Accreditation for the museum service. ACE requires that such a document has formal approval by the governing body.
- 4.4 Accreditation is a 'passport' to many services and funding streams from external bodies such as the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). Grants from several external organisations demand full Accreditation status as a condition for grant-aid. It also encourages joint working within and between organisations such as when borrowing items from other institutions.
- 4.5 Full Accreditation status provides proof that the museum meets a professionally recognised quality standard that serves as an authoritative benchmark for assessing performance and that the museum operates ethically and professionally, promoting public confidence in the service.
- 4.6 A Documentation Plan describes current practice and identifies areas improvement and action.

#### **5. Equality impact assessment (EIA)**

- 5.1 An equality impact assessment is not required as the recommendations do not have a negative impact on any of the protected characteristics described in the Equality Act 2010.

#### **6. Legal Implications**

- 6.1 The report addresses all relevant legal issues in respect of the Policy.

#### **7. Director of Finance Comments**

- 7.1 The Collections Documentation Policy outlines the policy for the documentation of the museum collections and is one of the core policies included in the Portsmouth

Museum Collections Management framework. The policy is a requirement for the Accreditation Scheme for museums and its operation forms part of the core museum Service.

7.2 The funding for the operation of this will continue to be met from existing budget resources.

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 Signed by:  
**Stephen Baily**  
**Director of Culture and City Development**

**Appendices:**

Appendix A: Museums Collections Documentation Policy

**Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

<b>Title of document</b>	<b>Location</b>
Arts Council England Accreditation Standard	Electronic download, Collections Manager's folder on 'w' drive
Benchmarks in Collections Care for Museums, Libraries and Archives. A Self-Assessment Checklist, 2011	Electronic download, Collections Manager's folder on 'w' drive
SPECTRUM: The UK Museum Collections Standard, version 4, 2011	Electronic download, Registrar's folder on 'L' drive
PAS (Publically Available Specification) 197:2009	Hard copy, Collection Manager's office, Portsmouth Museum

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport on 10 July 2015.

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 Signed by:  
**Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport**