

## Culture & City Development

### Collections Care and Conservation Policy

#### 1. Introduction

##### 1.1 Our strategic approach, based on our mission statement, assessments of risk, stakeholder needs and interests, and showing the link with this policy and the collections development and collections access policies.

Portsmouth City Council's goal is 'Working together to shape the Great Waterfront City'. By our care and conservation of the archive collections we can ensure that residents, visitors and remote users both now and in the future can enjoy them and learn from them about the history of our city and all who have lived here.

#### 2. Our responsibility for the collections

##### 2.1 The collections in our care are a unique and irreplaceable record of the lives of the people of Portsmouth from the fifteenth century to the present. It is our responsibility to make these records accessible for education and enjoyment and also to preserve them for future generations. Care and conservation are key aspect of our stewardship of these collections.

#### 3 Care and conservation standards we will follow

##### 3.1 Storage of, and access to, archives is covered by legislation as follows:

Local Government (Records) Act 1962

Local Government Act 1972 (section 224)

Public Records Acts 1958 and 1967

The Manorial Document Rules 1959 and Tithe (Copies of Apportionment) Rules 1960

The Parochial Registers and Records Measure 1978 (amended 1992).

##### 3.2 We will manage the care and conservation of the collections according to the International Council on Archives code of ethics for archivists

##### 3.3 In determining our approach to collections care and conservation, we will follow the guidelines PD5454:2012 (the national standard for the storage and exhibition of archival materials) and PAS198:2012 (specification for managing environmental conditions for cultural collections), and the *Benchmarks in Collection Care*.

##### 3.4 We will aim to minimise the need for remedial conservation by acting to prevent damage occurring while items are in storage, being accessed by members of the public, or on display. This will underpin everything we do: from security measures and the storage of the collections to how we make them accessible, and the use of surrogates.

## **4. The impact of collections care and conservation on all aspects of the service**

### **4.1 Security**

Through building design and procedures to be followed by staff, public and volunteers, we will ensure that Portsmouth History Centre and the archive stores are secure against theft and damage by individuals or by 'natural' threats such as fire and flood. We will monitor the effectiveness of these measures and update and improve them as required.

### **4.2 Buildings and storage**

In collaboration with Building Services and other PCC staff we will regularly monitor the condition of the buildings where the archive collections are stored and made accessible to the public. Building Services and any other relevant authorities will be notified as soon as any issues of concern are identified and swift action sought.

### **4.3 Packaging**

When they are received, accessioned and catalogued, newly received items will be assessed and packaged appropriately. The packaging needs of existing items will be assessed when they are produced to the public and returned to storage.

### **4.4 Environmental control**

We will maintain a stable environment (temperature and humidity) within professionally accepted parameters in all storage areas.

### **4.5 Environmental monitoring**

We will monitor the temperature and humidity in the storage areas and take action if the temperature and humidity fall outside professionally accepted parameters.

### **4.6 Housekeeping**

We will ensure that storage areas are kept clean, tidy and uncluttered, and that routine maintenance of services is carried out.

### **4.7 Access (handling, surrogates, reprographics, exhibitions, etc.)**

We will only allow access to the collections if this will not compromise their safety and preservation.

When documents are produced to the public or used in exhibitions, all necessary steps will be taken to ensure that they are not damaged or lost.

Where possible will use surrogates (e.g. photographs, photocopies, microfilm, and digital copies) to reduce the risk of damaging the original items.

#### **4.8 Digital preservation**

Wherever possible we will ensure that 'born digital' and other digital records in our care remain accessible, collaborating with others and sharing knowledge and experience in this fast developing field.

#### **4.9 Disaster recovery and continuity**

We will address any 'disaster' using the Emergency Recovery Plan. This plan is intended to ensure a swift response to any disaster so that damage to collections is minimised and service to all users is resumed as soon as possible.

#### **4.10 Remedial conservation**

We will assess the need for remedial conservation by regular surveys and by monitoring documents requested by the public. We will prioritise documents for conservation by assessing the degree of damage and the need for production.

### **5. Professional conservation support**

**5.1** We will seek professional conservation support as appropriate in order to ensure the long-term care and conservation of the collections.

### **6. Communicating collections care and conservation issues to staff, users, and other interested parties**

**6.1** We will train new staff in the care and conservation of the archive collections, and brief all staff about new developments in this field as they occur.

**6.2** We will induct all users into our procedures for handling the collections, and the reasons that underlie these procedures.

**6.3** When giving talks and presentations about the collections we will include information about care and conservation issues.

**6.4** We will advise members of the public who contact us about how to care for any archives in their possession.

### **7. Date of this policy and when it will be reviewed**

**7.1** This policy was approved by Culture, Leisure and Sport Executive on [...]. The policy will be reviewed and submitted again for approval in June 2019.